# **Chapter Seven**

# The Making of A Consultant in Human Resource Development (HRD) in Mauritius (1992-97).

Good quality training is not merely a response to needs: it creates need for training. Poor quality training discredits training generally, making it important to ensure high quality in training programmes. (Punia 1992).

According to Andrea and Gosling, (2001) there are five approaches to educational development: use of reflective practice, educational researchers, training technologists, HRD as a system and consultants as problem solvers. Recently the CBI in the UK produced a useful continuum for people development in organisations. This continuum begins with the development of good training and ends with a learning organisation. According to this continuum organisations and people travel along good training practice, training and development, good staff management, a cultural change, organisation development and a learning organisation. Within this context my work was mainly concerned with the establishment of good training practice as a consultant in Human Resource Development.

This chapter presents my living educational theory as a training technologist in the context of new National Training Boards established to enhance human potential in the private and public sectors of Mauritius. The chapter answers the question: how did I help the host organisations in establishing effective training systems? The Industrial and Vocational Training Board (IVTB) was established to promote trade and technician training in the private sector and the Mauritius Institute of Public Administration and Management (MIPAM) was established to promote management training in the Public Sector. Both Training Boards were new with people without previous training experience to execute their new roles. I was hired as a training technologist to support the local directors and their staff in generating and implementing emerging training policies. I was expected to provide leadership in the executions of various development projects.

The following narrative provides useful insights into the operations of the two Training Boards with different missions, operational strategies and outcomes in early years of their establishment. This chapter shows how the two training boards worked with their consultant differently with different outcomes. This chapter is divided in two parts.

- 1. Part one deals with the IVTB experience with training for trades persons and technicians.
- 2. Part two deals with the MIPAM experience of management training in the public sector.

# Part one: The Consultant at IVTB

Lord give me the patient to accept the things I cannot change, the energy and courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. A Consultant's Prayer (Robinson 2001).

Unlike the previous two projects where I enjoyed much autonomy and client trust, in this project I worked in a constrained and a less supportive environment. Contrary to my values, this organisation operated with truth of power rather than with the power of truth (Whitehead 1994). I continued to work on the basis of my values to make significant contributions towards my professional development and the development of IVTB. The above prayer captures my strategy in this project.

Part one of this chapter provides my living educational theory of training development using the competency model. This IVTB project provided me with three useful and interesting learning experiences in the use of competency-based training.

- (1) Application of the competency-based training to solve a national performance problem.
- (2) Problems and promises of offering a competency-based training programme for trainers.
- (3) Problems and promises of curriculum development based on the competency model. These experiences have high transfer value in other contexts. The following documents are included in appendices to support the following accounts.

A testimonial from the manager of the curriculum division of the IVTB providing information about my personal and professional contributions (**Appendix 10**).

My three-monthly reports presented to IVT Council, the governing body of the Board providing useful insights into the evolving nature of my work in 1994 (**Appendix 11**).

A copy of the final report to the IVT Council providing information about the beginning of the project, major activities undertaken to develop IVTB with successes, failures and some suggestions for its future development (Appendix 12).

The National Trade Certification System in Mauritius (Appendix 13).

The Trainers Certificate in Vocational Training (Appendix 14).

## The following accounts include:

IVTB organisational structure;

My employer and my role;

IVTB in the beginning of my assignment

My contributions and learning experiences;

Early rapid progress and later decline;

Evaluation of the project.

## **Contextual Analysis**

## **Organisational Structure of IVTB**

It might be useful to place my role within the historical context of IVTB. Training in Mauritius had commenced with turnkey projects where the entire training system including curriculum, trainers, training materials and equipment were imported from the developed countries. Many private training centres had sprung up without any quality control. The government established the Industrial and Vocational Training Board (IVTB) in (1989) to establish quality control in training and to encourage industry to train its labour force within organisations.

According to my professional judgement IVTB had a very complex mission statement. IVTB had to advise the government in training matters; promote training in all possible means; rationalise existing training provisions and to establish quality control mechanisms for future development. One organisation without experienced people became the legislature, executive and judiciary in training matters. Excessive power in one organisation was the cause of several operational difficulties of that time.

The IVTB was situated in the Ministry of Vocational Training and Human Resources with a Minister who was also the chairman of IVT Council comprised of members from various interest groups. The council was established to deal with policy matters while the director was the executive head of IVTB with managers and assistant managers to assist him. Most of

the managers of the IVTB were highly motivated with good academic qualifications. However, they had little or no previous training experience within industry and that of their new roles. To make up this deficiency the management of IVTB hired consultants to implement its policy.

## My Role and Responsibilities

I was responsible to the IVT Council for curriculum and staff development, assisting to establish systems and procedures for several emerging tasks such as the National Trade Certification (NTC) system, distance training, apprentice training, trainee performance assessment and quality assurance in training generally. I was situated in the curriculum division, the centre of IVTB, to advise all the related divisions of IVTB. The focus of my attention was to generate an integrated approach to curriculum development within a collaborative culture in action learning.

#### IVTB at the Beginning of the Project

The following episode presents my first impression gathered from several similar episodes. This incident provided me with the base for evaluating later progress. I found that the managers had good academic qualifications and they were committed towards their work. The following incident highlights the need for establishing procedures for various tasks.

I was asked to accompany an assistant manager of the Quality Assurance Division to witness how they conducted trade tests. On arrival at the test site I found that the boiler on which test had to be conducted was not operational, the candidate for the test was not ready for the test. Four of us including myself, the assistant manager, the candidate, a union member accompanying the candidate wasted half day due to lack of any planning. It does not include the IVTB car and a driver and the owner of the factory with the boiler.

#### **My Contributions**

At that time IVTB had two aims. First, establishing new Training Centres to provide sufficient trained workforce for industry with full employment. Secondly, to establish minimum standards in the quality of training centres and trainers. Understandably in the early days the emphasis was on quantity rather than on quality. Within this context, IVTB made rapid progress in establishing new training centres, offering new training programmes and introducing some quality control. My three monthly reports to the IVT council provide

the various activities I was involved in 1994 (see appendix 11). My final report to the council provides a summary of the accomplishments of the whole project and makes a few recommendations for future development (see appendix 12). An outline of my main contributions and learning experiences is provided below.

#### (1) Generation of a Common Vision for the IVTB

My *first contribution* came in the form of the leaflet in **appendix 13.** This leaflet later proved useful for communicating the work of IVTB to our clients. This leaflet provided coherence and inter-relatedness to the work of the various departments of IVTB as suggested in Fullan (1999) and Sarason (1990). The following experience led me to take this initiative.

As in previous projects, during my first few weeks I wished to understand the nature of my task within IVTB before starting my work. I had informal interviews with all the divisional managers, the director and the minister. A shared vision in the minds of the senior staff to develop IVTB seemed to be lacking. Without a common vision it was difficult to take any planned action and to learn from experiences as a team with a common goal. To overcome this difficulty we produced the above leaflet to present a holistic vision of the work of IVTB and to create a collaborative culture within the organisation.

#### (2) Trainer Development to Facilitate Change and to Enhance Quality in Training

As a consultant in curriculum development and staff development I had to convince the management of the value of trainer training and curriculum development to improve the quality of training. Initially the director did not believe in training of trainers. He used to tell me that 75% of the quality of training depends on training materials and 25% on the quality of trainers. However, the teaching staff in IVTB lacked relevant teaching-learning materials mostly purchased from overseas countries.

The *second important contribution* came in the form of two one-week induction programs I designed and executed collaboratively with the IVTB staff with a considerable impact on the teaching staff of the two training centres of IVTB acquired from the Ministry of Education. The staff of these institutions knew a little about IVTB and many were reluctant to join it. Naturally they wanted to know more about IVTB to negotiate their terms of employment. The manager of the curriculum division of IVTB sought my advice to solve this problem. These induction programmes were my response to his request. The main purpose of these programmes was to introduce the IVTB and its training system and to answer the questions

of the staff from the education department. The programmes were designed and conducted with professional care involving all the stakeholders. Later all the staff of these centres joined IVTB. This episode taught us the value of employee induction into new jobs. Many similar induction programmes were successfully offered to new employees of IVTB.

## 3) Development of a Trainers' Certificate to provide Qualified Trainer Status

It took the first director a long time and a number of highly successful training interventions to convince him of the benefits of training the trainers. Ultimately he was so convinced of the value of training to improve quality that he asked me to design and conduct a training programme to provide 'Qualified Trainer Status'. A case study of this training programme was presented in two of my EdD assignments (Punia 2000). *The third contribution* came in providing IVTB with a highly quality training programmes for trainers in training centres to obtain a qualified trainer status. The leaflet in **appendix 14** presents the competence-based planned curriculum (Barnes, 1995). I designed, implemented and evaluated the programme as the programme director in conjunction with the IVTB, the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate and the University of Bath. The participants to this programme found it highly relevant to meet their professional needs. This training programme offers useful knowledge for offering similar programmes elsewhere.

#### 4) Installing a Model for Competency-based Curriculum Development

The *fourth important contribution* came in establishing a new model for curriculum development. The following narrative presents our difficulties in implementing the competency-based curriculum development used in IVTB. We failed to establish an integrated system of curriculum development.

When I arrived, the staff of IVTB used syllabuses converted into behavioural objectives as planned curriculum, staff development did not exist to support implementation and there was no integrated assessment system to match the planned curriculum. In short there was no integrated curriculum development system in vocational education and training. Unlike the British Model ((Hodkinson and Issitt 1995), we developed a local model of competency-based curriculum development. A competency was conceptualised as an element of a job involving specific knowledge, skills and attitudes. The competencies were derived from job and functional analyses conducted at IVTB. The planned competency, content, training strategy and assessment were integrated into an interrelated system for the planned curriculum.

In IVTB we failed to implement the integrated model due to several contextual difficulties. First, the three components of curriculum development (planning, implementing and evaluating) were scattered over two different divisions of IVTB and in two different ministries. These organisations failed to work in harmony and to understand the interrelatedness of their functions. Secondly, implementation required proper management of the operational curriculum. A considerable work needed to be done to improve the quality of curriculum development as a complete system when I left IVTB.

#### (5) Contextualising the Imported Training Programmes

IVTB had commenced its work by importing training systems from several countries using different models of training. For instance, the Italians established the leather craft and shoemaking centre on a factory system of production. The school of hotel and catering was based on the French system; the Germans set up the electronics and electricity training centre; the French set up the Jewellery training centre; the British set up the design centre and so on. The curriculum, staff and equipment came from these countries and the management of IVTB needed to rationalise these programmes to fit their national training system.

I and the manager of the curriculum division spent much time in understanding and adapting the imported training programmes to fit the National Trade Certification NTC system **in appendix 13** imported from Singapore. The consultants from other countries resented validation of their work by another consultant. However, the work finished successfully due to impartiality and technical competence on my part. IVTB was an interesting place to study the different models of vocational education and training prevalent in various countries of the world and the problems of contextualising training systems borrowed from the developed countries. From this exercise I learnt much about the training systems used in many counties of the world. In the context of global education a new interest in understanding vocational education and training in the light of the theory of centres and peripheries is emerging (The Journal of Education and Work, Vol. 14, No. 22, 2001). IVTB provided an ideal spot for such work.

#### My Standards of Professional Judgement in Training Development

The following case presents a training programme used for solving a national performance problem. The following case provides clear evidence to show that training can solve

performance problems when high quality training is judiciously integrated with other factors involved in HRD. This case has a high transfer value in other contexts.

Mauritius has beautiful Botanical Gardens with unusual Fauna and Flora and it is a famous tourist spot. When I first visited the place it was not properly managed. Many bogus tourist guides moved around excessively charging and harassing the foreign tourists. Somehow this news reached the parliament and relevant ministers were asked to look into the matter. There were many stakeholders in this problem: the ministry of tourism, the ministry of agriculture, the ministry of human resources and the police department. After many months in various ministries this problem landed on my desk. The manager of the curriculum division was to design and conduct a training programme for the tourist guides. It was assumed that training was to solve this performance problem. The following narrative will show that training is an element of Human Resource Development as a system made of several inter-related processes. According to me the solution to the problem did not lie in training the tourist guides alone. The whole system comprised of recruitment, training, salary structure of guides, their uniforms, placement and management had to be tackled holistically to solve this problem. The manager of the curriculum division agreed and began to co-ordinate the project with my guidance.

We began by understanding the training problem by recognising and contacting the various stakeholders. Our first task included securing full involvement of all the stakeholders. Secondly we conducted a two-day workshop amongst all the stakeholders to determine the duties of the tourist guides with various competencies, knowledge, skills and attitudes involved in their job. On the basis of this information I designed the curriculum with clear objectives, content, teaching-learning strategy, assessment strategy, evaluation and a certification strategy. The other stakeholders took care of the recruitment of suitable guides, their placement, supervision and other associated matters. We managed to find experienced guides and a scholar who had written a book on the Botanical Gardens to teach the content of the training programme.

This project was an experiment for all of us with no previous experience of handling such a problem. The problem was successfully solved with excellent co-operation from so many people and ministries. Soon after the completion of this project I visited the Botanical Gardens with my son who was visiting Mauritius for a holiday. A smartly dressed young man greeted us and offered to show us around the gardens. His looked and behaved

professionally as I had assumed in designing my training programme. Here was a living proof of the success of our joint efforts to solve a performance problem, not by training alone but by establishing a Human Resource Development System including an improved management and organisational culture (Wright and Geroy, 2001).

#### The Rapid Progress of the Early Years

Truth of power in IVTB dominated decision-making at the expense of professionalism in training. For the first two years the IVTB made rapid progress in setting up new centres and in the registration of private and public trainers and training centres under the leadership of a Minister who had a personality completely different from that of the director. The Minister was an experienced educator, with a cultured and an approachable personality. I believe that the director with tremendous drive to feed his personal ego and the Minister with political insight and a relaxed personality complemented each other. This led to earlier successes of IVTB in establishing new centres and courses. My own work flourished in this environment.

During these early days too many decisions were taken in haste and on the basis of truth of power rather than on power of truth. Action research, self-learning, teamwork, open dialogue and learning organisations (Senge, 1990; Fullan, 1999, Clarke 1999) had no place in IVTB. It was understandable to find the management being busy in establishing new processes and procedures without adequate regard for quality, which was to follow later.

#### **Downtrend and Negative Influences on the Project**

The downtrend came with the departure of the Minister to another ministry; the director's management style and a change of government in the country. The following incident illustrates the director's management style in handling a problem.

Someone from the staff of IVTB leaked out so-called undesirable information to the press while IVTB enjoyed a good image. This information given to the press later proved to be correct. The director tried all sorts of strategies to elicit the identity of the person who leaked out this information. He wanted to punish the person who furnished this information to the press. The staff got divided into factions, all kind of rumours and fears were afloat. The morale of the institute dipped very low.

The director probably suspected everyone including myself. One day I mentioned to him that the morale of his institute was low and that he should not worry about this incident unduly. I

offered him my response in this situation for his consideration. My response to the media would have been to admit the news and promise to correct the situation for the future. All organisations make occasional mistakes. The director persisted with his policy and the more he tried to suppress the news the more it spread.

Probably the final blow to the life of the institute came when the Government changed after the national elections and many other changes followed. For instance, the IVT Council and all the top positions in IVTB changed. During the last few years of my assignment the progress in IVTB had slowed considerably due to changes in policy and in management.

## **Evaluation of the IVTB Assignment**

The successes of IVTB included establishment of a large numbers of new training centres; registration of trainers and training centres to control quality and the establishment of structures and processes for ongoing curriculum and staff development.

When I joined the IVTB it lacked a common purpose, systems and procedures to execute various aspects of its work as depicted in the beginning of this section. When I left IVTB it was fully functional with staff and teaching-learning materials to continue established routines in curriculum and staff development. This was not an insignificant achievement of the people involved in this project. However, there was much to be done to improve quality and to complete the work in progress.

Distance training and apprenticeship training made little progress as additional training strategies as I had predicted in the beginning of my assignment during an interview with the director. The IVTB project might have produced better results in a collaborative action research combining staff development with work development as in my previous two projects. The new director with a different management style did not have sufficient time to understand IVTB and myself when I left IVTB.

At the end of my contract with IVTB I moved to the Mauritius Institute of Public Administration and Management (MIPAM), as a consultant in Human Resource Development (HRD) in a project funded by UNDP. The MIPAM managed to achieve credibility for excellence in training programmes in the public sector within one year of its operation, making it an interesting case study for the development of management training in public sectors.

# The Consultant at (MIPAM)

It is hypothesised that the integration of a systematic and a relational approach in design standards is responsible for curriculum consistency and subsequently for high quality corporate education (Kessels and Plomp 1999 p. 684).

Unlike IVTB engaged in trade and technician training, this project was concerned with management training to improve quality in the public sector. This section presents my living educational theory for the development of training programmes relevant for the managers in the public sector of Mauritius under the guidance of the above quotation. This theory has the potential for transfer in other contexts.

Within a relatively supportive context, teamwork and consultant leadership, MIPAM successfully established a sound training system to earn credibility from the public sector management in one year. Good quality training programmes not only met the training needs but also generated new need for training. However, the professional development of the new training staff could not match the training system development. When I left MIPAM it was difficult to envisage sustainability of the rapid gains made in a very short time.

This section presents the training problem, the solution developed to overcome the problem, my contributions and my developing standards of professional judgements with project evaluation.

#### **Nature of the Training Problem at the MIPAM**

The MIPAM had recently recruited a director, a professor of public Administration from the University of Mauritius. Soon afterwards they recruited three management trainers and I was invited to be one of the members of the recruitment panel. During this event I met the director and other important members of the Public Sector who later invited me to join MIPAM as a consultant in Human Resource Development (HRD). The three trainers and the director were academically well qualified and highly motivated to learn their new jobs. They needed my support to start training programmes based on a sound conceptual framework.

#### My Employer and my Role within MIPAM

After lengthy negotiations I came to MIPAM as a consultant in (HRD) paid by UNDP. I decided to undertake this assignment for two reasons. Firstly, the opportunity emerged when

I was due to leave IVTB. Secondly, MIPAM had excellent buildings and equipment with opportunity to set up a new training system for management in the public sector. It was a new learning experience for me. I was to establish an effective system for training programme development in MIPAM and advise the director in establishing a new training institution. This was to be done in one year, almost an impossible task.

### The Team Learning Problem

The director and the trainer in the Human Resource Development came from the University of Mauritius with an academic background. The other trainers possessed MBA qualifications without any training experience to improve practice. The following episodes provide insights into the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the newly appointed management trainers at the beginning of the project. It is evident that these people had little experience of training program design and that of training strategies appropriate for adult learners aiming to improve practice. I had to guide these academics to think like trainers. The team soon began to learn from first-hand experience under my leadership.

#### Episode 1

While designing a training on 'customer care' the trainers and the director listed a series of topics with two-hour lectures on each topic. They had no conception of the relationship between client needs and the curriculum. They were only familiar with the transmission model of teaching, frequently used in Higher Education where lecturers tend to teach what lecturers know, not what the students need. Furthermore, they had little experience of creating appropriate learning opportunities for adult learners (See episode 2).

#### Episode 2

During first training programme at Rodrigues, an Island of Mauritius, I sat at the back of the class as a critical friend of the trainers. One of the trainers had planned to use a lecture to teach 'communication skills' to a group of clerks from the civil service. He was quite clear about the content but oblivious of the learning needs of the audience, who were not university students preparing for examinations. These people had come to share experiences and insights to improve their practice. Lecturing was not the appropriate strategy for these practical people. I advised the lecturer to provide a simulated experience. We enacted a typical situation from the experiences of the audience. The communication knowledge emerged through discussions following the role-play. The participant involvement in the learning process was superb. The session worked beyond our expectations.

#### The Curriculum Development Model used in the Development of training programmes

To enhance human performance on jobs I had developed a model for HRD in my MPhil Dissertation in (1992). According to this framework HRD consists of several interrelated components such as careful personnel recruitment, placement, induction, support and control, performance appraisal and training. Thus training was only an aspect of the HRD as a system.

I used the mental models generated in FIT figure 4 in chapter 5 to establish SBCD as collaborative action research. In this model training needs, the planned curriculum and the operational curriculum were linked in an integrated system figure 3 in chapter 5. I created a collaborative culture amongst the training team, the consultant, and the top management of the various ministries. This strategy ensured relevance of training programmes to enhance performance within the ministries. This innovation consisted of client involvement in all aspects of the training programmes. I later learnt from my studies for the EdD that Kessels and Plomp (1999) had developed a similar approach to training programme development after five years of empirical research and called it the 'Relations' Approach to Curriculum Development' further explained in the next chapter. This form of curriculum aimed to link training with enhanced performance on-the-job.

## **My Contributions and Learning Experiences**

In addition to providing advice to the MIPAM Board and the director in all training matters in establishing a new training board, my specific contributions included the following items.

- 1) Establishment of a 'relations approach to curriculum development' with related staff and material development.
- 2) Planning, teaching, evaluating and improving ten one-week *training programmes in 'Training Needs Analysis'* to the personnel officers of the public sector.
- 3) Planning, teaching and evaluating training programmes on '*Training Techniques*' for the middle management of two hotels.
- 4) Teaching specific topics in management e.g. Human Resource Development, personal & professional development, communication skills, Total Quality Management, customer care and so on.
- 5) Establishment of a resources centre and a library.

The two testimonials, one from the director in **appendix 15** and the other from the secretary of the MIPAM Board of governors in **appendix 16** provide employer's perspective on my contributions.

#### My Developing Standards of Professional Practice as a Management Trainer

Using action research as my learning strategy, I personally designed, taught, evaluated and improved in quality the training programme on 'Training Needs Analysis'. I used several creative approaches to improve the quality of this training programme. However, I present the following episode as an indicator of my learning in generating a suitable learning experience for managers. The following strategy worked well and it has the possibility of transfer to similar situations elsewhere.

The training programme on 'Training Needs Analysis' was a new experience for me. However, I had developed confidence and ability to solve professional problems systematically by conducting on-the-spot inquiries (Stenhouse, 1975; Schon, 1987). This training programme contained two sessions on the problems of the public sector in Mauritius. I knew little about this topic to teach it through direct teaching. Consequently I decided to use a collaborative inquiry to conduct this session. The following narrative presents the profile of two sessions.

I had twenty adults of many years of experience sitting before me. I divided them into four groups with thick paper cuttings of A-four size and felt pens. I asked them to discuss the topic first and then briefly write their findings on the paper cuttings. On completion of the activity we stuck the findings of each group on a wall in front of the whole group. One person from each group elaborated their work further in the form of a short talk. Finally we looked for an emergent pattern. It was surprising to discover that the findings of the groups were almost identical, providing reasonable reliability and validity to their knowledge.

Our next task was to recommend a strategy to solve the identified problems. At this point I introduced a model of stages of development in organisations from Beeby (1966) and Punia (1992). This model identifies three stages in the development of organisations as illustrated in **figure 7**.

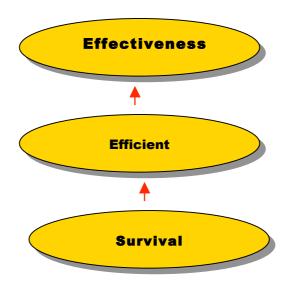


Figure 7-STAGES OF INSTITUTE DEVELOPMENT

According to this model and the group findings we interpreted that the public sector operated at the survival stage. Next we had to work out a strategy to move the sector from the survival stage to efficiency. The groups worked at this problem and returned with suggested solutions. Again there was high validity and reliability in their suggestions. The whole session proved exciting and productive for the trainer and the trainees.

With on-the-spot inquiry we managed to create reasonably valid and reliable knowledge. The reliability and validity increased further with similar findings of the later groups. Furthermore, I found a professional journal reporting research on the problems and solutions of a public sector elsewhere with very similar findings. Lastly, one day we were invited by the Minister of Human Resources for a special meeting in his office to discuss an exciting paper from a consultant from India. This consultant was offering similar results from a study in India. The minister was pleased to hear of our unpublished work at MIPAM. I learnt that research is not just a technique to be used in academic settings to generate knowledge; it is also an attitude of mind to be adopted in learning from practice.

#### Project Evaluation and Suggestions for Further Development.

My final report to UNDP in **appendix 17** includes my evaluation of the project. Basically a sound training system was operational within one year. About one thousand civil servants benefited from the training programmes and MIPAM had earned credibility for the quality of its training programmes. A dramatic increase in requests for training from the various

ministries provided evidence for the quality of training programmes matching client needs. The MIPAM team had managed to operationalise a sound system of training in a very short time. When I left it was difficult for me to envisage how this progress could be sustained in future.

#### **Transformations and Transitions in my Professional Growth**

A professional educator with adequate technical competence and competence to work with other people is evident in the above accounts. At this stage I seem to fulfil the criteria for the award of doctorate in education provided I had submitted a dissertation to show my ability to make my embodied learning explicit to share it with academics (Thorne and Francis 2001). However, the full discursive consciousness of this learning experience developed later through the EdD studies at the University of Bath as presented in the next chapter.