

Chapter Nine

The Emergent Transformative Educator at the University of Bath (1965-2003)

'Learning to be' is indeed continuous, lifelong pursuit, in which the self struggles to preserve continuity with past experiences and, simultaneously, to change and develop in order to make sense of current and future experiences. This ongoing tension between continuity and change lies at the heart of what it means to develop and learn across the life span (Tennant and Pogson 1995, p10).

This chapter presents my living educational theory of lifelong learning as a transformative educator in the international context. The present professional self is an integrated whole of its past interactions with its various roles and contexts presented in previous chapters and its aspirations for the future in the next chapter. Tennant and Pogson 1995 capture this process eloquently. Thus my CV is the living curriculum of my lifelong learning as an international educator with spiritual values. Generally I had a difficult yet a rewarding life for myself and for others. I fully enjoyed my professional career. Perhaps that was the purpose of my life Chopra (1996).

Working in overseas projects with many hazardous situations and without a clear understanding of my roles was a difficult task. Settling back in England without many friends and prospective employers holding a low image of overseas experience presented me with added disadvantages. I seem to have lived seven lives (comprised of living in seven countries and seven roles) rolled into one. At every new place I had to establish and dismantle a new home and a new job at a considerable financial loss. However, I loved my professional work intrinsically. Such a working environment has been very fruitful for my professional development. I discovered that to learn from life was to venture into the unknown, which is full of new possibilities for learning.

From my harsh life experiences I have gathered a vast technical knowledge, human understanding and love for all nations and people on this planet. I have contributed more towards the world than what I took away from it. I am proud to be able to make this claim for my professional work in solving educational problems with significant success. With the concept of lifelong learning, globalisation with a human face (Mataasura 2000), and self-

knowledge this dissertation might be an appropriate gift from me to my professional colleagues. It may serve as a mirror through which they may examine and understand their professional lives.

Based on the synthesis of previous chapters the following accounts outline what, how and why of my present professional self. The chapter closes with criteria/standards of professional judgement that might be used in evaluating my continuous professional development. A few aspirations for the future learning are also mentioned. A model of curriculum development in the context of lifelong learning and a model of international education in the context of international aid have emerged with possibilities for improving practice and for further research elsewhere.

Major Transitions and Transformations in Values and Concerns

Life moves as a whole within a vision. We seem to become conscious of some of its elements through personal experiences. My consciousness of the journey of life-long learning evolved from the acquisition and dissemination of technical knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for solving economic problems as a lecturer and a teacher trainer. This led to the understanding and application of human and technology interface in solving educational problems as a change agent. The understanding of the contextual influences developed in Mauritius. Deep understanding of self-knowledge developed recently in writing up this dissertation. These changes seem to have emerged from my professional interests and needs. These transitions were cumulative and overlapping, occurring with changes in my attention. Attention might be the basic element for continuous learning. We are where our attention is present. These transitions are summarised below.



There were three major transformations in my professional life. First, I came to realise explicitly that the purpose of life was to learn for self-development. Self-development is the best form of social development. Our lives are our gifts to society and the cosmos. In this context there are no failures in life and we can use our mistakes for further learning. Secondly, a *mechanistic world-view* emphasising cognitive and behavioural aspects of human development changed into an *organismic world-view* of learning (Skolimowski 1994,

Freshwater 2002) emphasising continuous personal development in interaction with the context. Third, technical education without general education remains incomplete. The three lane educational system in secondary education adopted in England is fragmentary. The significant shifts in my professional values might be summarised as shown below.

- 1) Education for making a living changed to..... Education for making life.**
- 2) Learning from others in formal education toSelf-learning.**
- 3) Certainty of technical knowledge toUncertainty of all human knowledge.**
- 4) Duality to Oneness of the individual self and the universal self.**

My spiritual vision of the sacred oneness of life has not change significantly. With the passage of time this vision became clearer. This philosophy provided the base for the development of my life as a whole. The vision might have originated from my family background. My professional life provided a fertile ground for the seed to sprout and flourish as described in previous chapters. The next heading outlines my emergent values and philosophy of life.

My Philosophy of Life

Mostly my life seemed to take its own route. It was a living entity with continuity making sense of the present with intense observation in the light of past biography and intentions for the future. I tended to live in the present with an inquiring mind and with spiritual values prompting me to take action wherever an opportunity arose. I felt myself in the midst of a fair where I was one amongst the throngs of people engaged in activities significant in those moments. I became part of these activities. Life was interrelationships in people, ideas, and resources in activities. A long experience of international living in a variety of roles reinforced my present philosophy of the sacred oneness of life. This philosophy and later spiritual awakening in Fiji gave direction and meaning to my present life. Probably this philosophy explains why I transcended my assigned roles to own and contextualise social problems in difficult circumstances.

Changes in my career make no economic and political sense to me. For instance, I commenced my career moves from being a professional builder in the construction industry. Probably as a professional builder in the UK I would have been a wealthier person with a

more stable life. Similarly later career moves also make little sense for personal advantage. Only spiritual values seem to provide a reasonable explanation for these moves. That is why I call my 'self' an international educator with spiritual values.

I was conscious of the interplay between reinforcing and limiting forces on me in various contexts. Senge et al (1999) called this interplay a dance of life. Generally I seem to have made a good use of opportunities as gifts from the context for self and social development. Previous chapters have shown how I converted problems into opportunities. Learning to transcend the effects of positive and negative forces is the subject matter of spirituality. It is briefly outlined in the next chapter and I have not travelled afar to achieve that state of mind. According to the spiritual literature the ending of this dance between two opposing forces marks the real liberation of the individual self and its union with the cosmic self.

The Nature of My Technical Knowledge

My technical knowledge consists of **constructional technology and educational technology**, two independent fields of study. I use the term technical knowledge for all man-made knowledge. With growing professional and personal development these fields of study expanded into several related areas of study. For instance, construction technology expanded into constructional technology, construction economics and construction management and education as a distinct discipline was sub-divided into educational and training technology, curriculum development, teacher professional development, institute development, education administration/ management and research. This dissertation has expanded this knowledge into the realm of self-knowledge.

My embodied spiritual values provided the context for the application of this knowledge in the international context to work and live together with affection amongst people of many different nations. Thus the knowledge in this dissertation is my living personal and practical knowledge in which theory is embedded in practice, my philosophy of life, values, needs and wants. This knowledge is obtained through insights from practice made explicit through dialogue with other practitioners, academics and professional literature. This dissertation seems to present my epistemology of international living and living standards of international mindedness. Matasura (2002) wrote:

In the world in which we live today, it is indeed imperative that we continue learning-how to listen to each other, how to accept each other with all our differences, how to

develop a dialogue amongst one another. Only through an attentive and inclusive dialogue will be able to learn to live together in peace (p. 2).

This dissertation has sufficient evidence to show how I attempted to live the spirit of the above statement through my embodied values in the context of international living.

An Emergent Image of the Present Self

I seem to have a sense of responsibility towards personal and social development. In the light of the evidence from the previous chapters of this dissertation and the testimonials from colleagues (**see appendices**), it would seem appropriate to describe myself a transformative educator/ an organic intellectual. **My special traits seem to include a sense of responsibility towards tasks and people, technical competence and an integrated character with spiritual values.** A vast technical knowledge in education and construction technology provided me with flexibility in solving educational problems and my spiritual values provided sensitivity towards other person's needs and point of view. Embodied spiritual values provided an integrated character necessary to create mutual trust, to generate collaboration amongst team members and courage to face uncertainty. These qualities proved useful to live, work and solve professional problems in the international contexts. To express my professional achievements in terms of Boyer (1990) I seem to have acquired the scholarship of teaching, scholarship of application, scholarship of integration and scholarship of discovery.

The Emergent Standards of My Professional judgement in Continuing Professional Development

I operated within the paradigm of continuing professional development with a critical mode of development in confronting my own questions about the mysteries of learning. This dissertation satisfies the following criteria for a professional dissertation (Chambers 2001). I added the last two items to his list to indicate the importance of embodying the other criteria in one's being and sharing one's knowledge with others.

- Enhanced professional practice within a clear framework of professional values;
- Enhanced critical and reflective attitude towards practice;
- Adoption of a research-based approach to personal and organisational development;
- Understanding and articulating the interdependent and transformational relationship of practice and theory.

- The ability to generate learning enriched working environment.
- The ability to embody and reflect the above criteria in one's being.
- The ability to share one's being with others.

The above criteria might be useful for public evaluation of my professional development but I also have my personal criteria to evaluate my learning and contributions in this dissertation and to express my future aspirations. The following list presents my personal celebrations of learning from the EdD program. It has been an expensive yet a very worthwhile learning experience with the extension of the following knowledge into my biography.

- Extension of research on 'teachers' thinking' to problem-based research methodology (Robinson, 1993), a living educational theory approach to action research (Whitehead, 1999).
- Better understanding of the interface between the propositional and practical knowledge and appreciation of the limitations of all human knowledge.
- Discovery of a new model of curriculum development from learner's perspective for an ongoing self-development in the context of lifelong learning.
- Better understanding of teaching as a profession and that of the making of professional educators/doctors of education.
- A critical appreciation of my original conceptual model in this dissertation and the discovery of an alternative conception linking secular with spiritual.
- Celebration of my learning and contributions towards the development of vocational education and training in several parts of the world under very difficult circumstances.
- Creation of a new model of international aid in the form of collaborative action research with the possibility of combining technical aid with learning and living together.
- My present self seems to be standing solidly on the four pillars of education (Delors et al 1996). **The four Pillars of education are:**

- 1. Learning to know;**
- 2. Learning to do;**
- 3. Learning to live together**
- 4. Learning to be.**

The Emergent Model of Curriculum Development of lifelong learning

This dissertation introduces curriculum from student perspective as a living dialogue between the self and its context. In the context of curriculum in this dissertation as a continuous dialogue amongst the various contexts, roles and selves it is meaningless to conceptualise the planned curriculum separately from the operational curriculum. In living they are already mingling and dancing together. This way, curriculum becomes praxis in which theory and practice are united in an embodied action. Thus a form of post-modern and post-structural form of curriculum emerges to liberate curriculum from its past in formal education (See Pinar and Reynolds, 1992 & Reynolds 1998). The curriculum studies become living theories of professional educators in various roles and contexts (Whitehead 1999).

In this form of curriculum development, my learning depended on my self '*owning*' and '*contextualising*' each learning opportunity and the quality of my previous learning. Owning means becoming responsible for self and social development and contextualising means solving genuine problems collaboratively with intent for social good. In this dissertation action taken to fill disjunctures between my selves and roles, between selves and contexts became the living educational theory of my professional self.

I began to understand that this form of curriculum is equally valuable to close the gap between my espoused spiritual values and values in action (Whitehead 1999). A more rigorous version of this conception of curriculum involves conscious living from moment to moment without making personal choices in life. It is form of meditation to understand self-knowledge. According to Krishnamurti (1987), to change oneself all that is required is be aware, to be conscious of what we are saying and implications of it. It is a better form of inquiry for self-realisation. Thus, this dissertation provides a curriculum for holistic self-development including technical and spiritual development in the context of lifelong learning. It transforms curriculum from making a living to making a desired life.

Bloomer (1997), Young, 1998, Quicke (1999) and Tickle (2001) have proposed models for lifelong learning from different backgrounds and contexts. For instance, based on a limited research on FE students, Bloomer (1997) proposed a curriculum from students' perspective for lifelong learning. This curriculum is aimed at understanding oneself fully and for the development of one's command over the generation, utilisation and critical evaluation of knowledge. This dissertation shows that to achieve such an aim can take a lifetime of learning. I suggest that we need a variety of models for curriculum development in our lives

to match a variety of learning needs. The new model of curriculum has added another model to my repertoire of curriculum development models.

The following principles of learning, derived from other theories of learning such as Vygotsky (1978) on social learning; (Lave and Wenger 1991& Tripp 1993) on situated learning, Bloomer (1997) on learning careers and Tennant and Pogson (1995) on Adult learning, support the emergent curriculum from this dissertation.

1. Knowledge is socially constructed and it is a social act.
2. Learning is personal, an expression of human agency.
3. The quantity and quality of learning depends upon our reactions to learning opportunities.
4. Learning and becoming are mutually constitutive, continually transforming.
5. Becoming a person is the result of interaction between agency (person) and structure (context) and it is difficult to predict.

This dissertation makes a useful contribution towards the literature on the living educational theory approach to action research (Whitehead 1999). It adds the living educational theory of lifelong learning of a transformative international educator with spiritual values. Hargreaves and Lo (2000) called such educators *principled* professionals operating on the basis of ethical values. I have come a long way from using theories of learning derived from animal learning to the development of my personal theories of learning for holistic personal development. The new model has come along way from the prescriptive Tyler model (1949) to my own educational theory of lifelong learning.

Collaborative Action Research as an Emergent Strategy to Integrate Technical Aid with International Education.

We know a little about the work of aid agencies and consultants engaged in international education and international aid (Connell, 1984; Linet 1996; Lieberman, 2001). This inquiry makes useful contributions in this direction. Based on my personal experience I have drawn attention to some of the current issues in international aid and offered a few possibilities for improvement for the future.

Perceived Problems in Aid Practices

First I present a few personal observations to illuminate the problem before proposing a solution.

First, International aid is usually focused on technical aid to solve technical problems and ignores the problem of working and living together with mutual respect. I found that learning occurred when, people were open-minded, understanding and respectful towards each other and each other's culture and point of view. This is what I call international-mindedness/Universality/globalisation required to promote international understanding. My way to promote such understanding is to be a model of this concept in my professional life.

Secondly, consultants and aid agencies tended to sell canned training and educational programmes to developing countries. Canned educational and training programs rarely fit the needs of the developing countries. Sometimes they can do more harm than good. We need sensitivity towards the cultural and educational needs of developing countries. Education is considered as a commodity to be bought and sold. It is not used as a service to humanity.

Thirdly, The developing countries tended to seek ready-made solutions to their undefined problems. They rarely used aid to learn to solve genuine problems in collaboration with consultants and aid agencies. This dissertation proposes the use of collaborative action research to solve genuine problems.

The Emergent Solution

Thompson (1998), Pasternak (1998) offered two models of international education in the context of formal education in international schools. Thompson (1998) is based on the findings of empirical research in international schools while Pasternak (1998) constructed his model based on human values. Based on my lived experiences I propose collaborative action research amongst multicultural teams as an additional model for international education and international mindedness. This model has the possibility of combining technical aid with international understanding. This dissertation shows how I used such collaborative action research in some international contexts to inculcate what Hayden and Thompson international-mindedness (1995,1998,1999) through an inclusive dialogue Matasuura (2002) quoted before. This kind of action research has the potential of changing systems and people simultaneously. From my spiritual/universal values such as globalisation, multicultural living and continuous learning for personal and social growth, a truly international person seem to have emerged. I began to experience growth in humility, awareness of unity in diversity and compassion for all creation. Humility resulted from the realisation of the principle of the sacred oneness of creation, my inability to live according to it fully and the

limitations of all human knowledge. This humility inculcated an open attitude towards learning and interest in the mysteries of learning.

I propose that international aid might be better served with the use of collaborative action research by multicultural teams for stakeholder and project development and for the sustainability of projects. This form of Action Research has the potential for the generation of a new epistemology of international education. It might promote self-learning necessary for 21st century and to reward the self-motivated and the committed in our societies. Furthermore, action research replaces the deficit model of training for professional development with an add-on model for self-learning suitable in the context of an organic world-view.

There are some problems in the use of collaborative action research as a universal model for international aid. Action research demands commitment for self and social development. Such commitment is very rare amongst human beings. However, participation in 'Action Research can generate a degree of commitment for improvement. It may be argued that without commitment towards one's duties the popular training model also has a limited impact. It can also be argued that it is difficult to reconcile the logic of theory aimed at creating knowledge for generalisation with the logic of practice aimed at understanding the present and to generate personal and practical knowledge. This dissertation is a living model of this tension. However, the interface between theory and practice in action research integrates present with the past and the future to produce practical knowledge for continuous improvement. More importantly it has the potential for bringing educators and practitioners from international origin together to solve common human problems.

Action Research may not solve all learning problems. It is a significant improvement on the training model used for international aid in appropriate contexts. This inquiry has generated a few new interests in me to pursue in the future.

Future Aspirations

First, the living educational theory approach to action research integrates theory with practice; personal development with professional development and secular development with spiritual development as an ongoing process. This form of action research provides a useful tool for personal and professional development. In the context of international aid collaborative action research such as problem-based action research, has the potential of

bringing people together. In future I intend to promote and support action research in the context of international aid with Whitehead and his team in the University of Bath.

Secondly, practitioners do not have the time to produce written accounts for their learning. I have started to explore professional dialogue as a form of action research aimed at creating new knowledge (Senge 1990; Jenlink 1996; Raelin 2001) and to promote research-mindedness in the daily lives of practitioners who tend to regard research located in academics and universities. The dialogue as a form of research has the potential for researching lived experience (Van Manen 1990).

Thirdly, I have commenced learning to be aware of life from moment to moment without preferences as a form of meditation (Krishnamurti 1987; Miller and Aya 2002; Chopra 1996). The awareness of life from moment to moment and without preference might provide us a new methodology for deep personal understanding and more conscious living. It might be a prerequisite for understanding the world around us more fully. The next chapter presents a new perspective to understand the relationship between the individual self and the universal self.