The Reflective Practice Writing Bicycle: The Integration of Experience and Learning

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Part I
Self-Assessment via Reflective Practice Writing: Engaged Journaling

... the front wheel of the reflective practice bicycle

This is an eight-step reflective practice tool imagined as the front bicycle wheel. Step – or spoke – no. 8 moves you forward into a new revolution and slightly further ahead on your journey.

1. Observation: What did you observe today? What did you experience? Listen to the voices. What did you hear? What did you see?
3. Internal (Personal) Reflection: How do you feel about the event now? What do you think were the key elements of the experience? List the participants and their reactions to the situation. What worked; what did not?
4. External Reflection: What might theorists you have read or heard (e.g. in past courses) or persons and experiences you have learned from in life have to offer on the subject of your observation and reflection? What about other readings and past learnings? How would these interpret your observations, reactions, reflections? Think deeply. “What are the larger social, economic and historical forces at work?”
5. Interpretive Analysis: Having considered your own response and the external / theoretical input, how do you interpret the events now? What is your diagnosis? What have you learned? What ethical assessments can you make?
6. Learning Integration: How does this learning fit with what you have known and believed before? How will it change or reinforce your existing belief systems?
7. Personal Transformation: How can this new learning change your outlook and approach to your placement / work and perhaps even to your life? Will it change your moral outlook? Your social values?
8. Transformed / Informed Action: What will you do differently or the same in your next encounter, based upon numbers 1-7 above? How will you be inspired to act? This is the start of a new revolution of the front bicycle wheel.

**Note the cyclical progression:**
Action > Reflection > Theoretical Analysis > Integration > Revised (Transformed) Action

**Long-Term Goal:**
The eight-spoke wheel is a process known as Reflection ON Action. The goal is to become sufficiently familiar with the wheel to engage in Reflection IN Action and thus respond in a more reflective and considered way within the process. Even if achieved, however, it will not diminish but only increase the importance of regular Reflection ON Action and the eight-spoke wheel process.
Part II
Engaging / Processing Reflective Practice Exercises

... the crankshaft and pedals of the reflective practice bicycle

1. Sharing your journal entry with class peers and receiving feedback for “peer mentoring.”
2. Class reflection and role-playing for critique, supportive feedback and class learning.
3. Instructor mentoring.
Part III
Organization / Placement Analysis
... the rear wheel of the reflective practice bicycle

1. Observation: Describe what you see. What strikes you as working particularly well? What impresses you? Are the people involved happy?
2. Interpretive Observation and Analysis I: Can you discern the operational / organizational philosophies at work? What are they? Provide a case that illustrates each philosophy you have identified. What makes this approach work?
3. Interpretive Observation and Analysis II: Can you discern the ethical values that govern this workplace? What might these be? Give examples that elucidate the values you have identified. Why are ethical values intimately connected with the programs? Are they different from what you have known or learned previously?
4. Interpretive Observation and Analysis III: How are the organizational philosophy and values mirrored in the structure and operational culture and practices (policies)?
5. Theoretical Reflection: What do the various theorists you have heard, read and studied have to say about the values, philosophy, operational practices or structures that you have discerned or observed? Can this work on a more widespread scale? Have you seen these same principles at work elsewhere?
6. Contra-Doctrinal Observations: Do you see anything or any practices that are not working effectively or that contradict the professed values of the organization? Why do you think they are not working as they should? Is the problem rooted in operational practices, in personalities, or in the philosophy or values themselves?

7. The Goals-of-life Harness: How will what you have seen and experienced impact your career / life goals and choices? How will it influence your choice of workplace?

