



Gratitude Journaling Practice: A Reflective Currere

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Abstract

In this work, I reflect on the concept of gratitude within the academic setting. Through the practice of journaling, I explore the past, present, and future using the currere method as a framework. I inquired into life events that influenced the development of gratitude. To begin, I asked, “How do I practice gratitude? How do I know if I am grateful? When I practice gratitude, do I feel, think, and behave differently as an educator?” To frame this work, I leaned into the work of Pinar (1975) who developed the currere method. Pinar (2012) states that the method is for teachers and academics who aim to grow personally and those who seek to constantly reconceptualize and understand the impact social change has on our lives. He states,

The method of currere—the Latin infinitive form of curriculum meaning to run the course, or in the gerund form, the running of the course—provides a strategy for students of curriculum to study relations between academic knowledge and life history in the interests of self-understanding and social reconstruction. (p. 44)

To practice currere, there are four moments to consider “the regressive, the progressive, the analytical, and the synthetical” (Pinar, 2012, p. 45). Together, they frame opportunities to reflect and wonder about one’s autobiographical presence in the experience of education. As well, it is a time to heed the interrelationships of our practice and life events (Pinar, 1978). An individual can quietly move in and about the four moments of currere with the goal of growing self-knowledge and gaining insight into issues. One can pause longer in some moments, reflecting deeply.

Keywords: Gratitude, journaling, currere, reflexivity, arts-based

Short Report

Gratitude is generally understood as a broad, complex concept (Bono et al., 2012). It is considered a positive universal human attribute debated for centuries by philosophers, religious leaders, and theologians (S. Allen, 2018). Emmons and McCullough (2003) describe gratitude as

derived from the Latin root *gratia*, meaning grace, graciousness, or gratefulness. All derivatives from this Latin root “have to do with kindness, generousness, gifts, the beauty of giving and receiving, or getting something for nothing” (Pruyser, 1976, p. 69). The object of gratitude is other-directed—persons, as well as to impersonal (nature) or nonhuman sources (e.g., God, animals, the cosmos). (p. 377)

Howells (2004) argues that learner and teacher gratitude enhances learning, especially when students learn to apply the concept. Ramzan and Rama (2014) reported a relationship between gratitude and wellbeing in public university professors. Grag et al. (2022) sought to understand the gratitude effects in the workplace of university teachers with resulting suggestions of how to embed gratitude throughout the work setting.

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