What is Reflective Thinking? (according to John Dewey)

"Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends, constitutes reflective thought" (6).

Key Term: Inference--What is an "inference?"
Definition: An inference is a belief (or statement) about something unknown, made on the basis of something known.

I feel a cool breeze and think, "Is it going to rain?" Maybe. To test this theory, I look up at the sky and see a dark cloud (a known fact). Based upon the dark cloud, I INFER that it will rain. I see the cloud; I infer the rain. “We stop and think, we de-fer conclusions in order to in-fer more thoroughly” (108).

The sequence (or consequence) of reflective thinking:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(i) a felt difficulty</th>
<th>What does this mean?</th>
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<tr>
<td>(ii) its location and definition</td>
<td>What is this “problem” (question) really about? What's its special character?</td>
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<tr>
<td>(iii) suggestions of possible solutions</td>
<td>It could be this? It could be that?</td>
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<td>(iv) development by reasoning of the bearings of the suggestion</td>
<td>Let me see if it is this? Does this make sense? Let me see if it is that? Does that make sense?</td>
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<tr>
<td>(v) further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection; that is, the conclusion of belief or disbelief [confirmation or negation of the suggestion]</td>
<td>Let me double-check this. Let me verify it.</td>
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Solidifying Reflective Thinking Based Upon Dewey's Example of the Mysterious Flagpole

i. a felt surprise/difficulty: notices flagpole-looking object but it is horizontal and in a bad place for a flag pole.

ii. location and definition [of the difficulty]
What is this object? What is it for? It doesn't fit as a flag pole, so what is it?

iii. suggestions of possible solutions/answers
1. could be an ornament
2. a terminal of a wireless (radio) telegraph
3. might be to point out direction boat is moving

iv. develop reasoning on the bearings of the suggestion (what reasoning and evidence/grounds is there for this interpretation?)
1. hypothesis rejected because all ferryboats and tugboats carry them
2. more natural place for a pole for the wireless (radio) would be higher; rejected also on previous grouds from #1.
3. discovers pole lower than pilot house so steersman could easily see it

v. further observation and experiment leading to acceptance or rejection
--makes further observations and found the steering pole hypothesis to be "more probable than the others" and ends with conclusion that the pole was set up for the purpose of showing the pilot the boat's direction