

What is expected for a PFF Activity Reflection?

Reflective writing is not often a practice performed by most graduate students. In their first attempts at writing reflective essays, students typically just describe the content or activity in which they participated, instead of considering what was learned or achieved from the activity or how aspects of it might be applied in future experiences. There is a purpose for writing reflections. Reflective writing involves the processing and exploration of new information, skill development, experiential learning, and even personal impact from an experience. It can seem more challenging than other forms of academic writing because it involves thinking and writing about insights, feelings, and anxieties as well as benefits gained from those experiences.

To illustrate this, the following are excerpts from feedback provided by two graduate students in past semesters regarding reflection writing:

"I think that this reflection is an awesome way to look back on the class that I have just taken. It has allowed me to see that I have taken more away from the class than I actually thought I did. Critically thinking about the class and material I have learned, I see so much more the importance and the benefits of why I took the class. Thank you for making this more meaningful, due to the reflection." -- *1. Teaching, B. Instruction in Teaching: Participating in GRAD 701.*

"Just before this activity, I read your note about how to prepare reflections, and started thinking seriously about this. I had hitherto thought that reflection was synonymous to either description or evaluation but in this activity, I learned that this may not necessarily be the case. I now understand that these may be partial aspects of reflection, but critical reflection goes beyond describing or evaluating, to include analyzing, reconsidering and questioning one's experiences within a broader context of issues and knowledge. When some excited students came to me after class to ask further questions concerning the issues discussed in class, I knew I may be on the right path to generating critical reflection in my students." -- *1. Teaching, A. Mentored Teaching: Serve as Graduate Teaching Assistant.*

Thus, in writing the reflection, consider: What aspects of faculty roles and responsibilities did the activity make you consider (or reconsider)? Why is this important for you both now and in your future role as a faculty member? Consider these reflections as a valuable contribution to your professional portfolio and experiences.

~ Dr. Michelle Hardee
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