

Reflective Practice: A Critical Element of a Proposed New Legal Wellbeing Pedagogy

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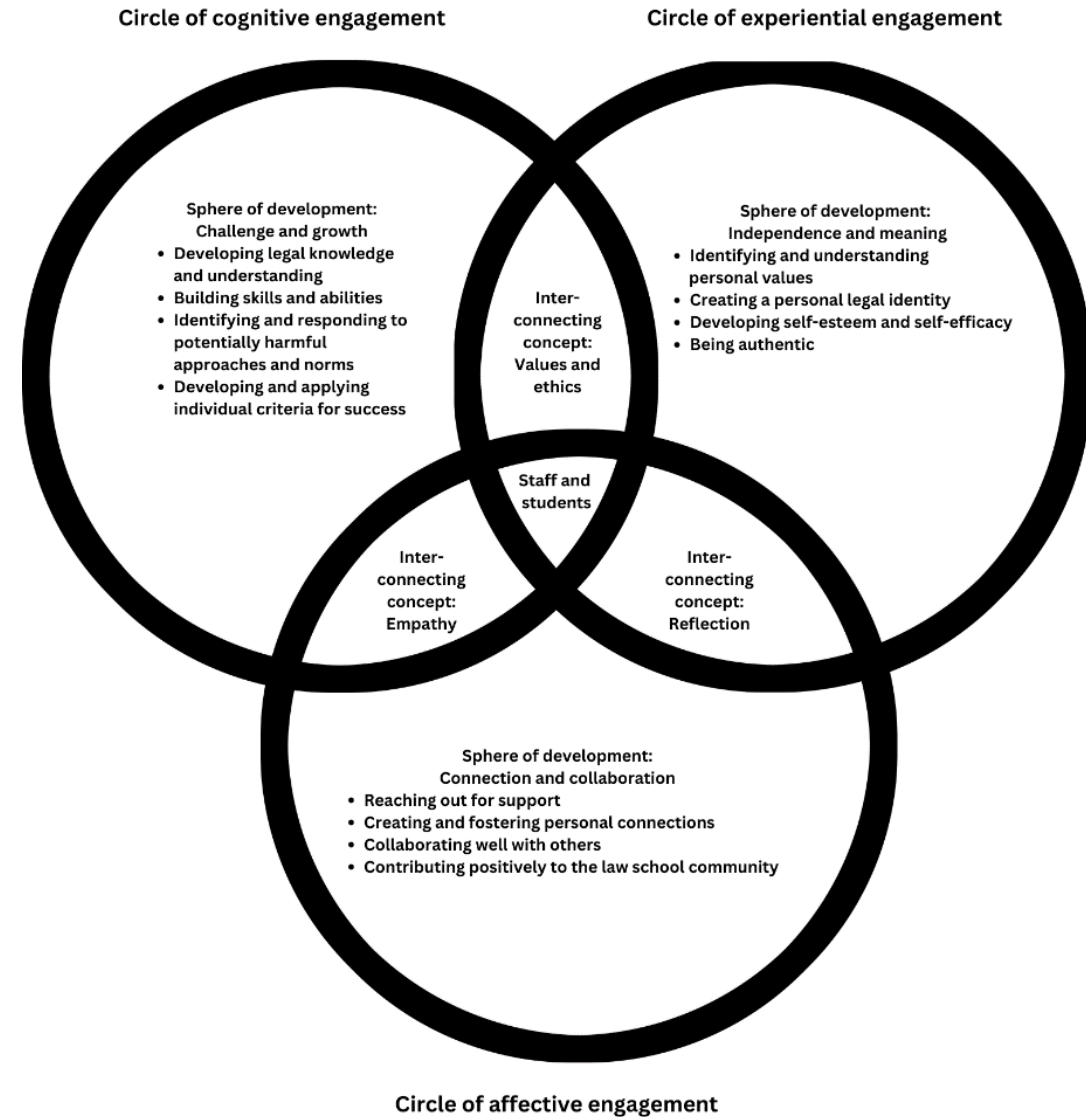
Wellbeing is a core issue in legal education

- The importance of wellbeing for Higher Education students across all disciplines is now well acknowledged.
- It has been established through many empirical and theoretical studies and scholarly works internationally.
- Law, as a discipline, has been particularly active in exploring this issue.
- See, in particular, the Professional Wellbeing Commission of the International Bar Association's *International Guidelines for Wellbeing in Legal Education* (2024).

Legal Wellbeing Pedagogy (LWP)

- The LWP draws upon the theoretical basis of positive psychology, particularly Self-Determination Theory and its Basic Psychological Needs sub-theory.
- It aims to create a learning and teaching framework specifically focused on promoting positive wellbeing for both academic law staff and law students.
- The LWP reimagines the legal curriculum as a vehicle to facilitate thriving and flourishing in an evidence-based and sustainable manner.

Introduction: Legal Wellbeing Pedagogy



LWP and reflection

- Reflective practice is a critical component of a proposed new Legal Wellbeing Pedagogy (LWP) (Jones, Strevens & Field, 2025).
- The LWP conceptualises the teaching of reflective practice as a metacognitive skill supporting students to make sense of the challenging, complicated content of the law curriculum, and promoting their personal and professional awareness, as well as their engagement.
- The LWP places reflection between ‘independence and meaning’ and ‘connection and collaboration’ to reflect its individual and communal aspects.
- The LWP offers practical ways for legal academics to incorporate and promote reflection throughout the legal curriculum.

International Bar Association's *International Guidelines for Wellbeing in Legal Education* (2024).

- **Guideline 4** Law schools will demonstrate commitment to evidence-based, long-lasting change by taking the following steps to ensure:
- (e) that reflective practice, explicitly referring to wellbeing, is promoted, supported and integrated across the law school at both individual and collective levels.
- There is an increasing recognition that a range of skills relating to wellbeing, including reflective practice, can be explicitly taught and developed, resulting in enhanced self-care strategies, emotional literacy and empathy.

The inter-relationship of reflective practice and wellbeing

- - General links
 - Gilani, David. "Encouraging self-reflective practices to improve student mental health outcomes: a case study." *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 49.9 (2025): 1275-1295.

Reflection as a metacognitive skill in legal education

- Reflective practice can enhance the quality of the student learning experience at law school by:
 - Increasing students' capacity for autonomous learning.
 - Supporting deep (as opposed to superficial) learning of the law and legal concepts and approaches.
 - Supporting the development of communication, collaboration, critical thinking and legal analysis skills.
 - Supporting higher levels of understanding, competence and capacity.
 - Supporting students with the management of stress, difficulties and uncertainties.
 - Promoting positive approaches and strategies for learning success.
 - Supporting positive engagement with critical feedback.
 - Helping students to make connections with their own lived experience, values and beliefs.