

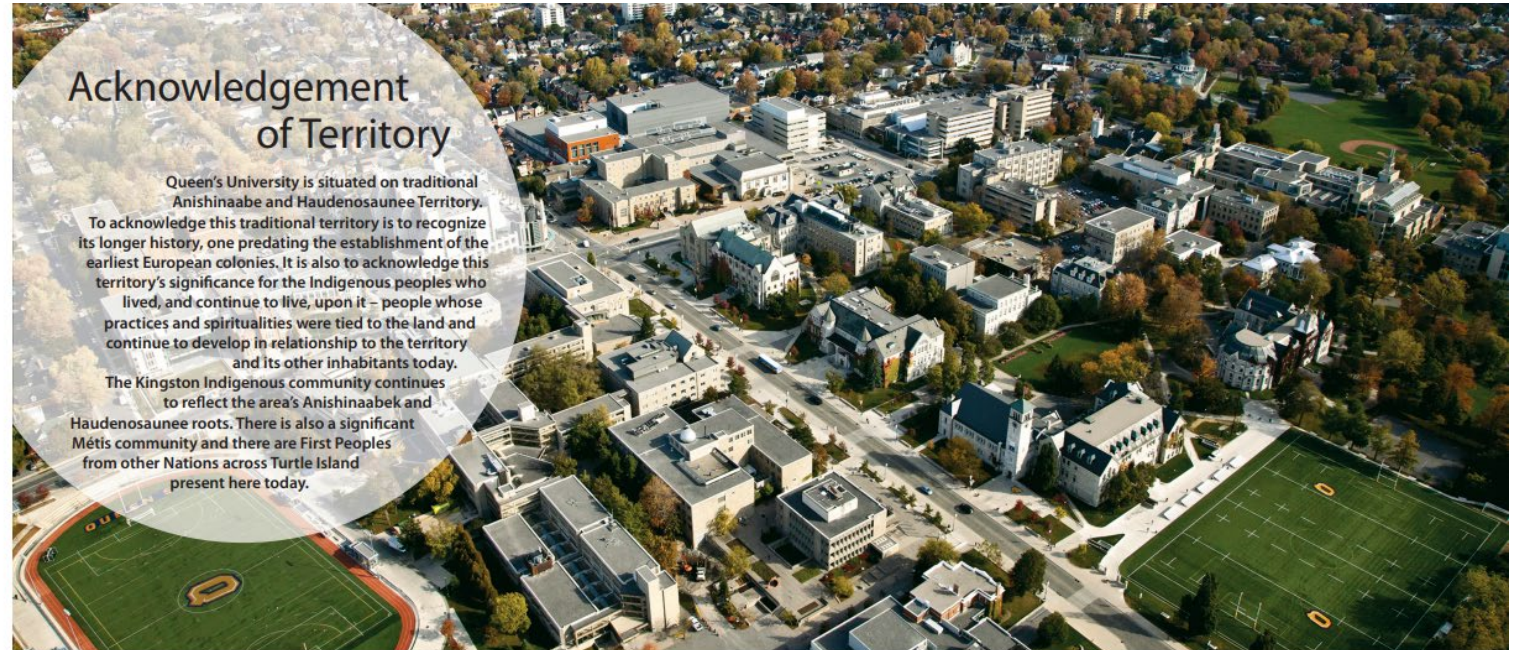


Reflective Practice as Instrumental and Transformative: Seeding the Ground for Enhanced Professional Competence, Reflective Professionalism, Lifelong Learning, and a Cultural Shift in the Legal Profession

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Nottingham Trent Centre for Legal Education
"The Future Begins Now" - 29 June 2026



Acknowledging Territory: Resolve to “learn, understand & act”



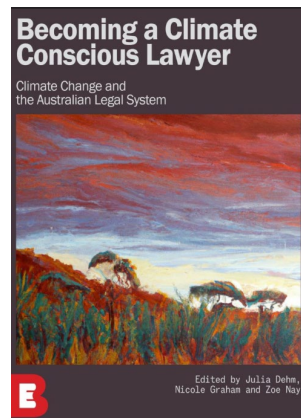
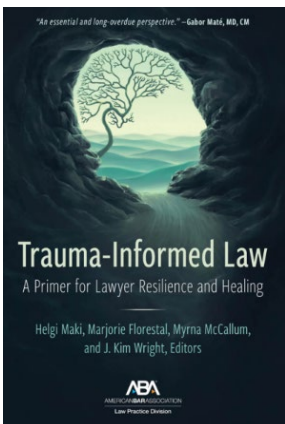
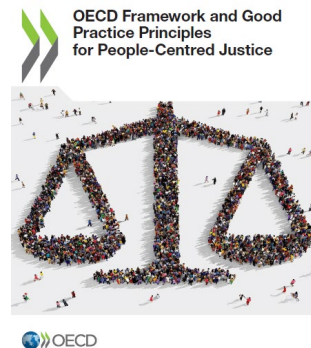
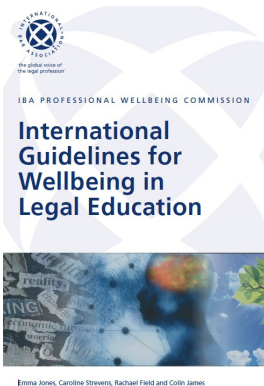
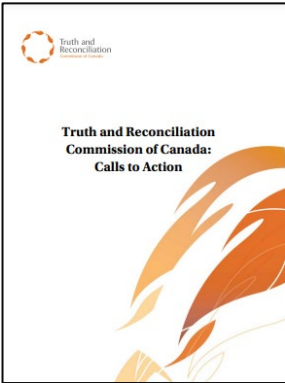
Land Acknowledgement

Photo credits: Queen's University; Anishnaabe flag (Maurice Switzer, Anishinabek News.ca, 15 February 2015; Haudenashonee (<https://www.onondaganation.org/government/sovereignty/>); Indigenous Art installation (Queen's University Faculty of Law)

Quote: Jody Wilson-Raybould (2022, p. 26) *True Reconciliation: How to be a Force for Change*. McClelland-Stewart.

So many imperatives for increased and deepened reflective capacity – a *pedagogy of reflection*...

There is a need to reimagine legal education as more vibrant, engaging & rigorous professional learning experience to better equip us to provide responsive, visionary, and ethical leadership on ... human rights, access to justice, people-centred justice systems, climate justice, and in the face of unrelenting and disorienting change...



Finding hope ...



Hoping to support new legal professionals competent in the discipline of law but also who also have what Parker Palmer (2007) described as the “the skill and the will to deal with the institutional pathologies that threaten the profession’s highest standards.”

Seeing reflective practice as a discipline and enabling a capacity to take action to help narrow what Parker Palmer called the tragic gap: “the gap between the way things are and the way we know they might be.”

Overview...

What is reflective practice?

Tracing its emergence in theories of learning and professional education

Thinking about factors that have been influencing its emergence in law...

Overview of themes emerging from the Series... and this conference

Preview of post-Series knowledge mobilization plans...

Posing a few reflective questions...

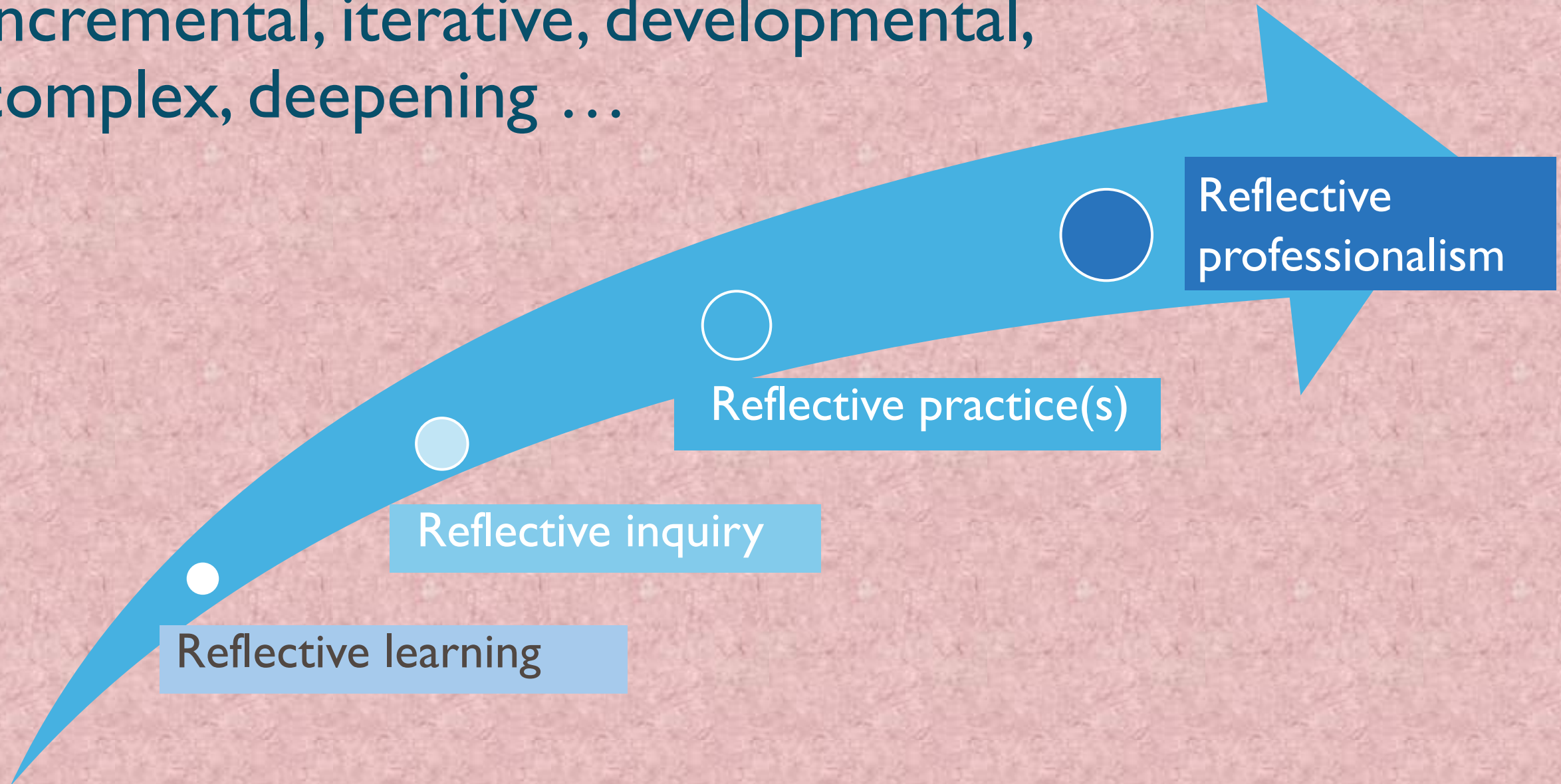


Reflective practice as a very big tent... and a lifelong journey... grounded in theories of learning and education....

- Domains of reflection
- Temporal aspects
- Depth and/or foci of reflection
- Different dimensions
- Structured reflective cycles
- Philosophical orientations
- What it is not...
- Reflective *practices*



The professional learning journey and continuum...
Incremental, iterative, developmental,
complex, deepening ...



Operationalizing & conceptualizing the concept for law...

Naming & claiming five domains of reflection

What is the change we seek through reflection?

As a road map for implementation ... (Leering, 2023)

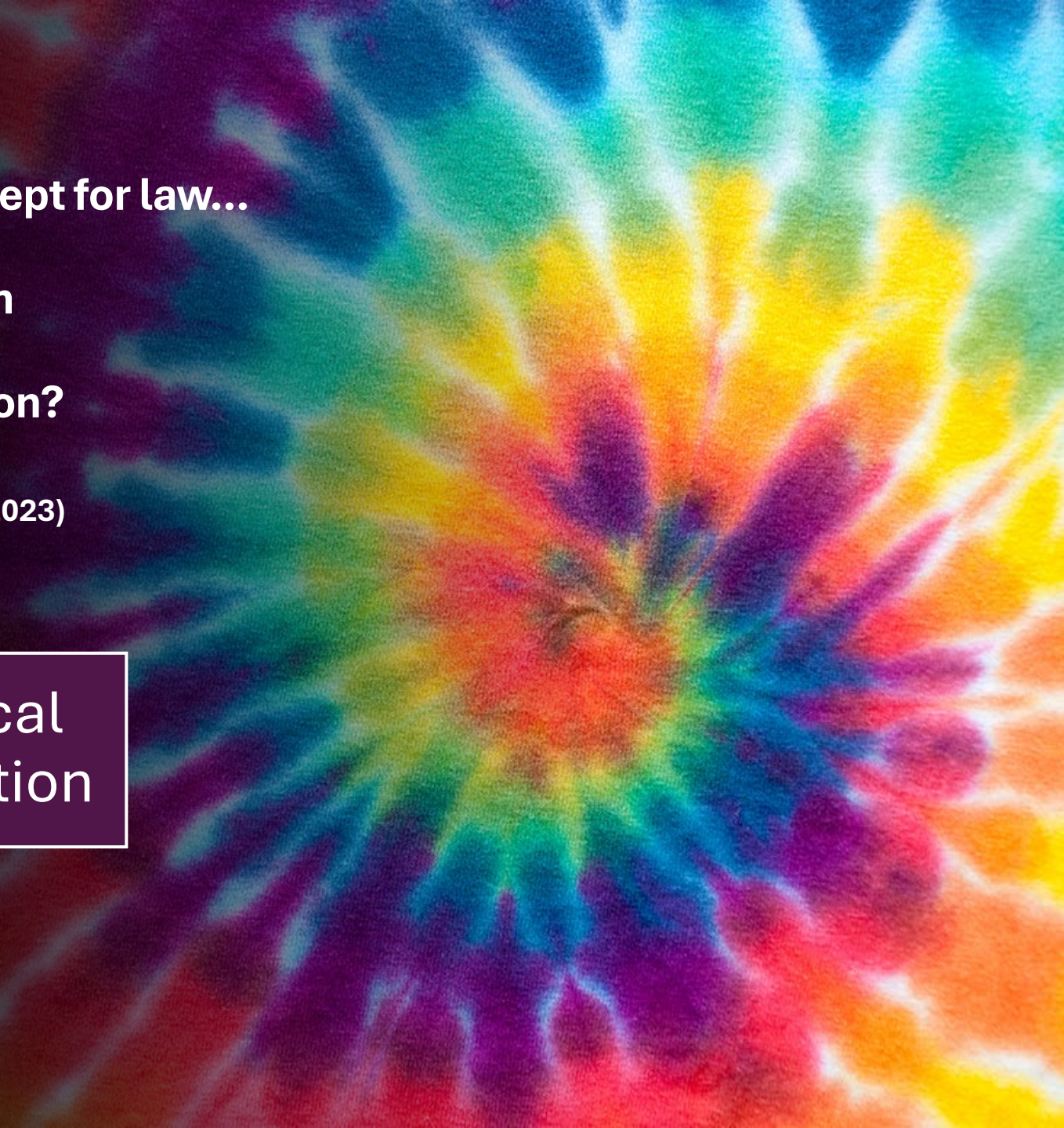
On
practice

Self-
reflection

Critical
reflection

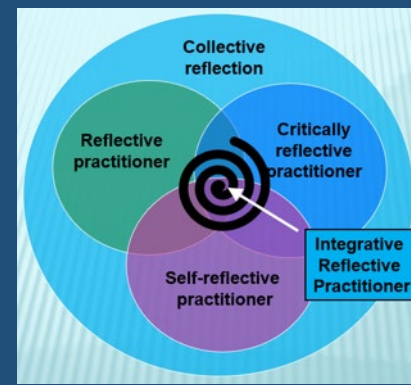
Collective
reflection

Integrative
reflection



Getting more systematic about it: Developing reflective professionalism

Inclusive, complex, iterative, developmental, evolving,
instrumental to transformative... leading to praxis...



Reflection on practice

Improves technical proficiency through reflection, including capacity to learn, learning from experience, to integrate theoretical or technical knowledge with problems/practice, to develop skills; and professional judgement.

Self-reflection

Reflects on self and values; fosters self-awareness including world view, biases and assumptions, ideas about professionalism, cultural competence, ethical judgement, resilience and responsiveness to clients and colleagues.

Critical reflection

Uses reflection to develop critical perspectives on law, legal institutions, “law as lived,” justice, access to justice, “rule of law,” equality, human rights, paradigms and philosophies of practice and conflict resolution, etc.

Collective reflection

Reflects with others to develop new knowledge, increase rigour, accept constructive feedback to develop new knowledge and understanding, engage in generative dialogue to discover better approaches, new possibilities and more effective strategies and solutions.

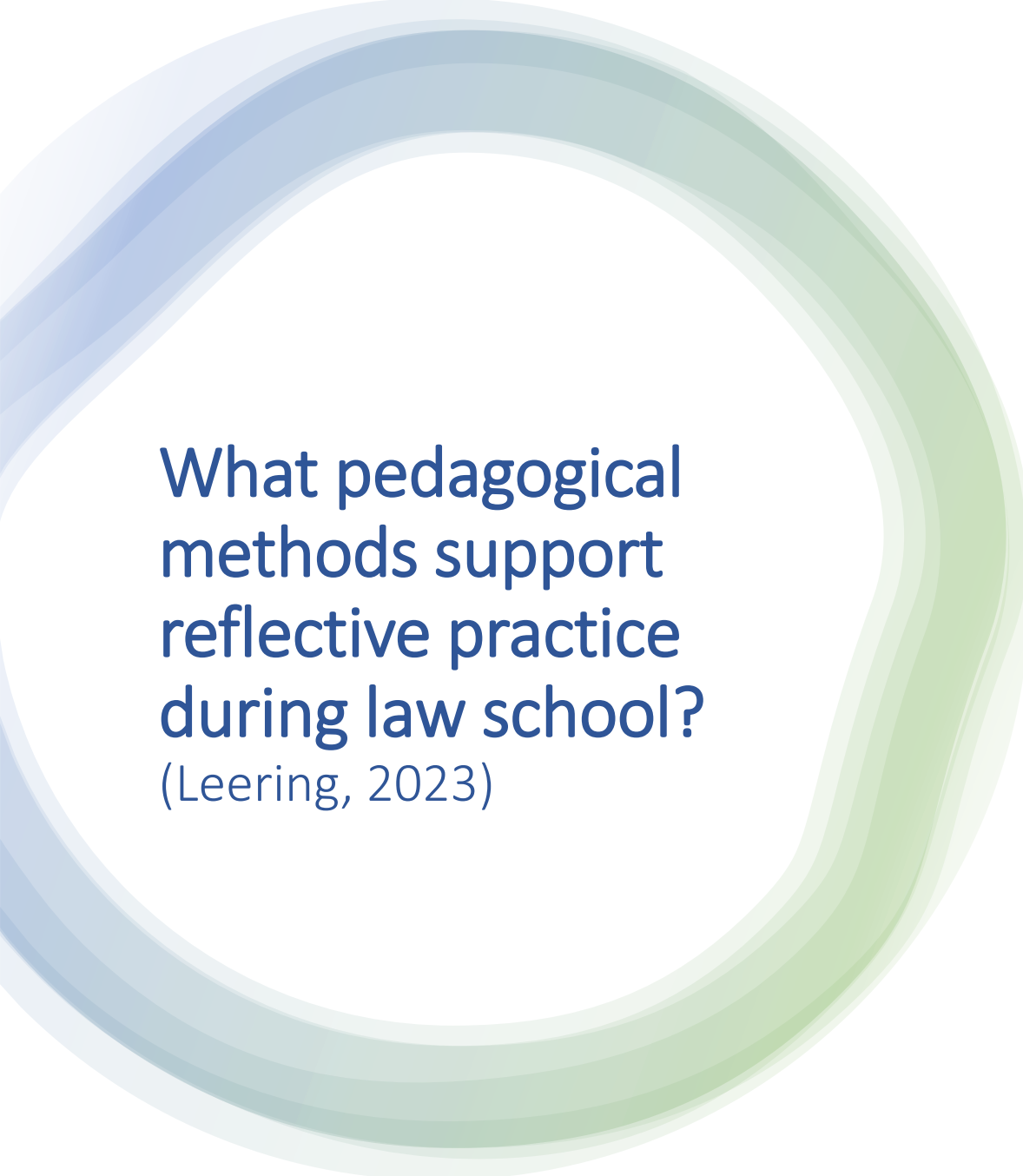
Integrative reflection

Integrates the domains of reflection to deepen insights, create new professional knowledge, build expertise and ethical judgement, expand notions of professionalism, act with integrity and authenticity.



How did law professors in
Australia and Canada
understand the benefits of
reflective practice?
(Leering, 2023)

1. Deeper and transformative learning
2. Cognitive development & thinking capacity
3. Self-directedness & self-determination theory
4. Impact of emotions
5. Mental health & wellbeing
6. Ethics, skills, judgment, professional knowledge
7. Professional identity formation & professionalism
8. Prepare for successful practice
9. Support broader justice goals, and access to justice
10. Prepare for uncertain future



What pedagogical methods support reflective practice during law school?

(Leering, 2023)

**Introductory
sessions or
guides**

**Role
modelling**

**Reflective
writing**

**Reflective
questioning**

**Structured
reflective
learning cycles**

**Self-
assessment
exercises**

**Planning
exercises**

**Self-awareness
exercises**

**Debriefing
exercises**

**Reflective
assignments**

Portfolios

**Aesthetic
practices**

**Contemplative
practices**

**Feedback &
supervision
practices**

**Assessment
practices**

A country example - tracking its evolution in England & Wales in the scholarly literature – 1st two decades: Influencing factors...

Importance
of critical
reflection

(Beck, 1985)

Vocational &
apprentice-
ship literature

(e.g. Sprack, 1998)

Reflective
practice of
educators

(Webb, 1996;
Varnava & BurrIDGE,
2002)

Skills training
& legal
problem-
solving

(Boon, 1998;
Macfarlane, 1992;
Maughan & Webb,
1996; Webb, 1995)

Experiential
learning
(Kibble, 1998) &
clinical legal
education

(Grimes, 1996)

Schön & new
epistemology of
professional
knowledge

(Webb, 1995)
& model equated
with Arthurs
(1983) *humane
professionalism*
(Webb, 2006)

Professional
learning theory
& developing
professional
competency

(Winter, 1996) &
critique of
Schön arises
(Jones, 2000)

Bar
vocational &
clinical
courses++
learning from
experience

(Duncan,
2005)

UK Centre for Legal Education (UKCLE) as a catalyst for change (2000 – 2011) & so much more since!



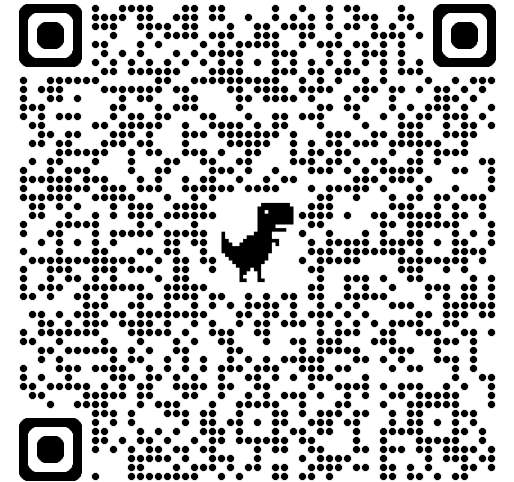
annual report
2009-10



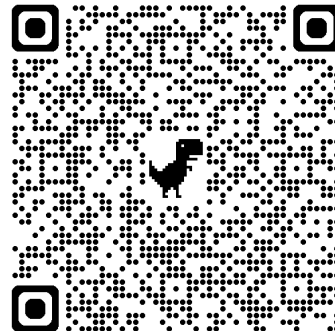
Developing Reflective Practice in Legal Education

Karen Hinett

Edited by Tracey Varnava (2002)



Locate work on
reflective practice
within Personal
Development Planning
project



Archives: <https://resources.ials.sas.ac.uk/ukcle/78.158.56.101/archive/law/about/index.html> (Thank you Prof. Jane Ching)

Empirical research studies examples

Hinett et al. (1999) study piloting self and peer assessment tools for law students & teachers – change management issues

UKCLE studies (multiple)

Ledvinka (2006) case study on marking consistency of reflective work

Barton & Westwood (2006) phenomenographic study of student law firms – role of reflection in learning and team functioning

Nicholson (2011) student journal reflections & ethical capacity

Brooman & Darwent (2012, 2014) Impact on self-awareness & self-efficacy in first year student journals

Gibbons (2017) How assessors evaluate reflection at a law school

Gibbons (2018) How students build conceptual knowledge by analysing reflective reports “powerful knowledge”

Brooman & Stirk (2020) benefits of student reflecting on work experience

Firth & Newbery-Jones (2019) ADR course encouraging reflection in a digital learning environment

Balan (2020) Reflective journals as a research method to understand ethical competence development

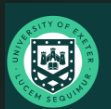
PhD research & dissertations

- Ching (2009)*
- Gibbons (2018)
- Brooman (2019)
- Madhlom (2019)
- Drake (2020)
- McDonald (2024)

* “professional adolescence,” “competence for development,” “engagement with experience,” & “vector of development”

Factors favouring or influencing reflective practice in England & Wales ...

- UK CLE (2000 - 2011)
- Increased understanding of educational theory
- Parallel developments in HE sector i.e. PDP
- ACLEC (1996) & LETR (2013) reports
- QAA National Benchmark Statements for Law
- Regulator buy in & evolving competency statements
- Diversifying and more sophisticated understanding of RP (also cross-disciplinary)
- Clinical legal education
- Experiential learning
- PhD research
- Empirical research
- Law teacher associations & related initiatives (grants)
- Law teachers as reflective practitioners
- Legal Ed journals! (TLT, IJLP, IJCLE...)
- Entrepreneurial and social justice buy in (LawCare, Balint Groups, family law supervisors, IBA, Let's Think, etc.)



University
of Exeter

Association of Law Teachers Annual Conference
Exeter 2026

Themes emerging across events in the Symposium Series... more than 150 speakers... five events

Rich, powerful, insightful, catalytic,
transformative




Creativity, Collaboration & Care

Western University, London Ontario
June 3-5 2026

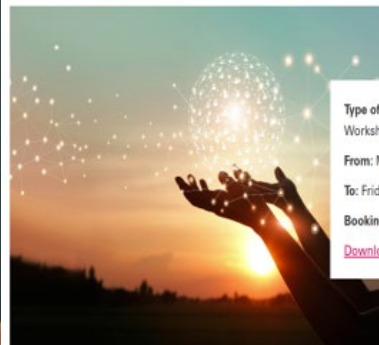



Virtual Symposium 22-24 June 2026
Queen's University Faculty of Law, Canada
Join legal scholars, educators, regulators, and practitioners advancing reflective
practice as a core professional competency

Centre for Legal Education Conference 2026

The future begins now

Building on the success of previous conferences, the Centre for Legal Education at Nottingham Law School is delighted to announce its seventh international conference.



Type of event: Conferences | Seminars | Webinar |
Workshops

From: Monday 29 June 2026, 11 am

To: Friday 3 July 2026, 3 pm

Booking deadline: Wednesday 10 June 2026, 12.00 pm

[Download this event to your calendar](#)



Educating the Reflective Lawyer:
Human Wisdom in an Automated Age

2026 Australasian Law
Academics Association
(ALAA) Conference

Reviewing themes emerging from the Queen's Law virtual symposium...

- The transformative potential of reflective practice
- Indigenous ways of knowing and pedagogies support and inform reflective practice
- How critical reflection enables social justice work, encourages accountability for justice system, and envisions systemic changes
- Law can learn from healthcare about reflective practice
- Increasingly regulators and professional associations encourage it
- How reflective practice :
 - fosters professionalism
 - applies across the professional life span
 - is needed for all legal professionals
 - connects to and supports wellbeing
- How the reflective educator:
 - enables change within law schools and the curriculum
 - enriches the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning
- Appreciating the huge diversity of ways in which it can be encouraged

International Symposium Series: Reflective Practice for Legal Professionals



For more information about the Symposium Series, visit
<https://www.queensu.ca/reflective-practice-legal-professionals/>

Knowledge sharing & and possible next steps....

Series website houses: abstracts, presentations for all in the Series, & recordings and transcripts for QLVS. Plus, six curated resources, and six+ future podcasts (experts, new initiatives...)

Final Symposium Series Report with recommendations for the future

Two special academic journal issues dedicated to reflective practice in law – approx.

June 2027 – *The Law Teacher* & *Legal Education Review*

And... what else would help?



International Symposium Series on Reflective Practice for Legal Professionals

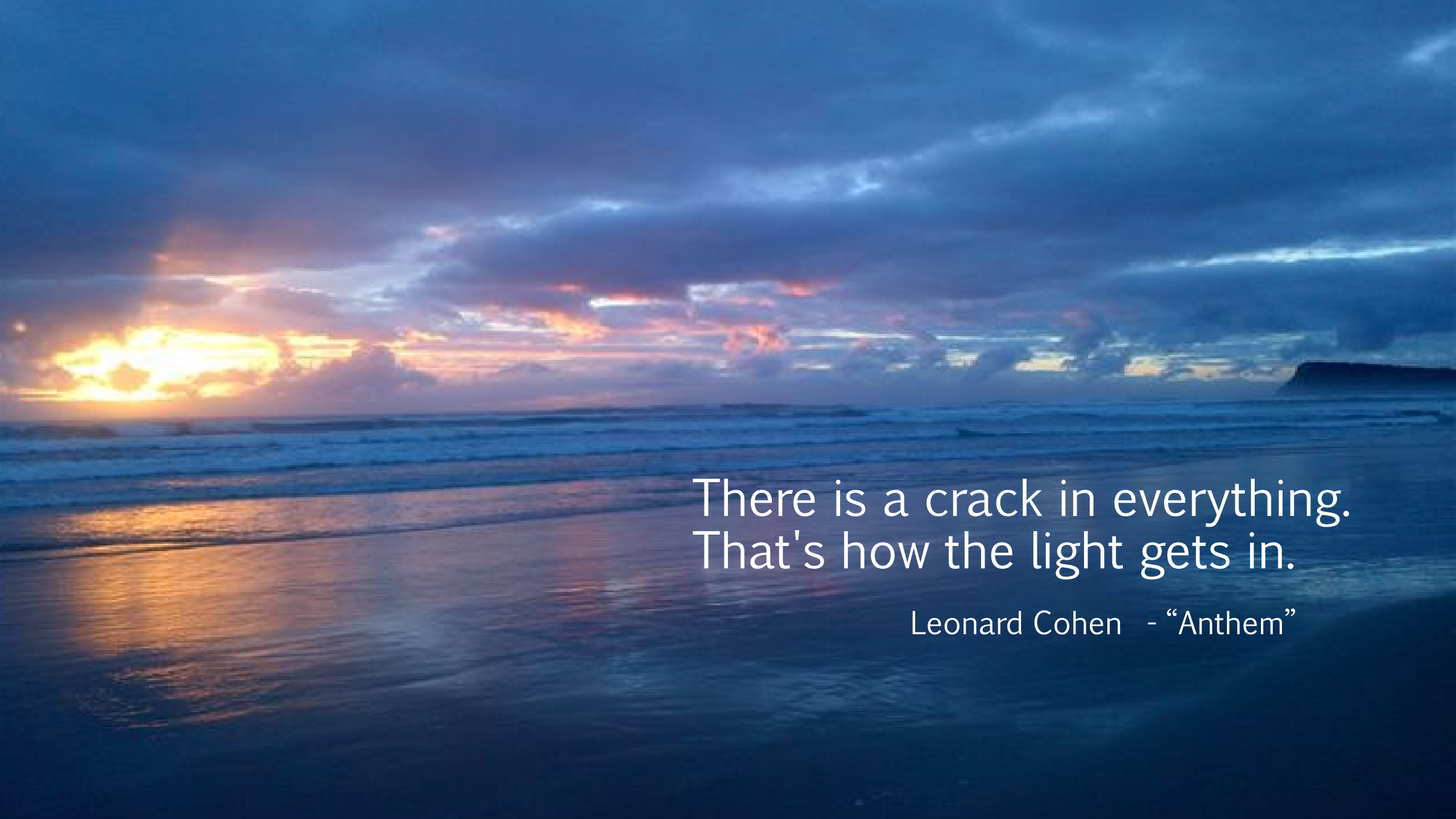
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International Symposium Series: Reflective Practice for
Legal Professionals

Please visit
the Series
website!



A wide-angle photograph of a beach at sunset. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, but a bright, golden light breaks through a gap on the left side, creating a 'crack' in the darkness. This light reflects on the wet sand in the foreground and illuminates the edges of the clouds. The ocean waves are visible in the middle ground, and a dark, silhouetted landmass is on the right horizon.

There is a crack in everything.
That's how the light gets in.

Leonard Cohen - "Anthem"

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER...

- *How do I understand reflective practice and its benefits?*
- *How is reflective practice being advanced as a professional competency in my country? What factors support it ?*
- *How can we individually and/or collectively work across borders to advance reflective practice in law and professional practice?*
- *How will we know if we are successful?*

