



Setting the Stage & Seeding the Ground: Reflective Practice in Law in All Its Complexity & as a Catalyst for Change

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Overview...

What is reflective practice?

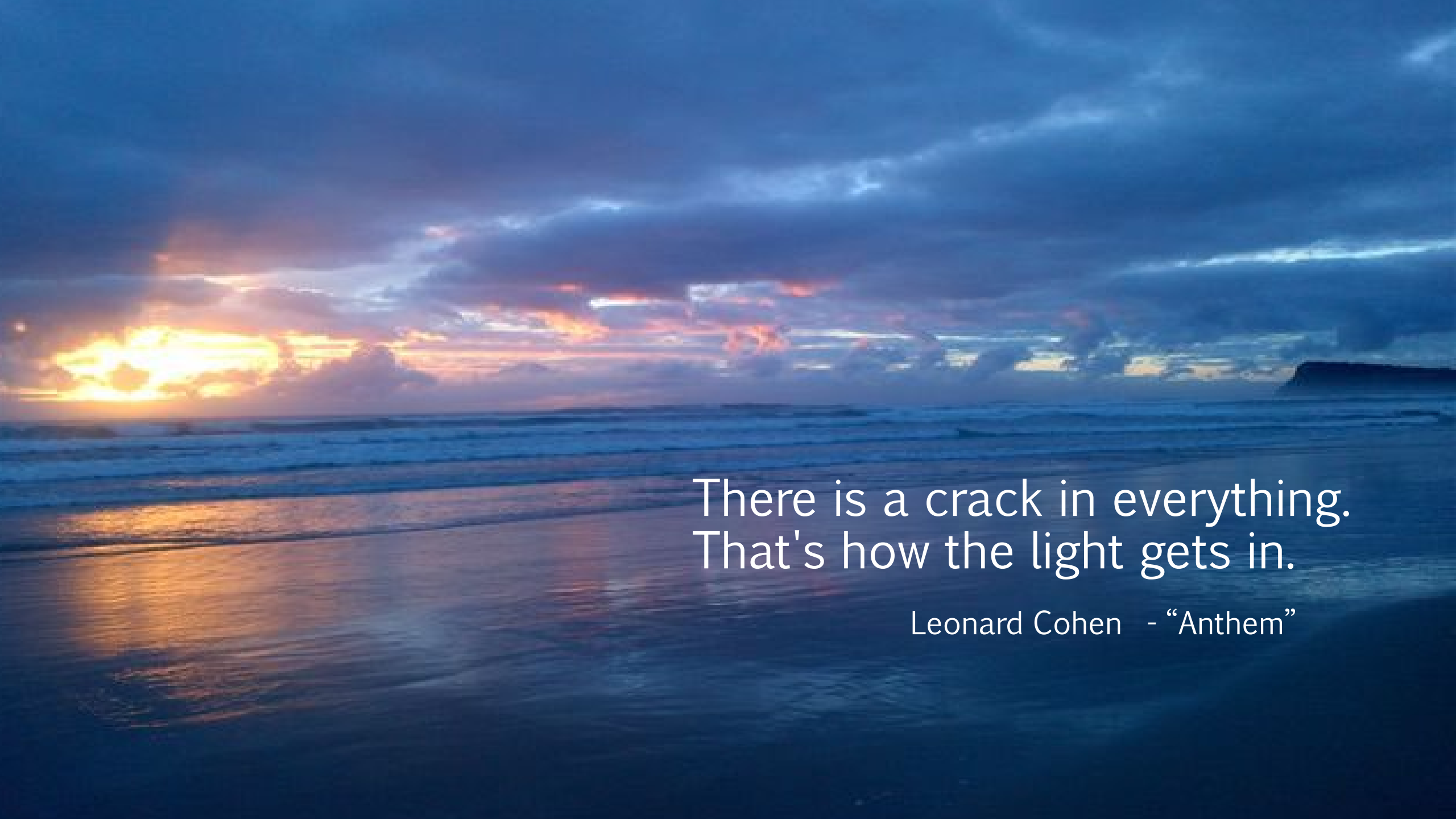
Tracing its emergence in theories of learning and professional education theory...

Overview of themes emerging from the Series... and this virtual symposium

Preview of post-symposium plans...

Posing a few reflective questions...



A wide-angle photograph of a beach at sunset. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, but a bright, glowing crack in the clouds on the left side allows a powerful burst of golden light to shine through. This light reflects on the wet sand in the foreground and creates a shimmering path across the water. The ocean waves are visible in the distance, 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 practice as a very big tent...

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





**Operationalizing and
conceptualizing the concept for
law...**

**Naming & claiming five domains
of reflection**

**What is the change we seek
through reflection?**

**Suggests a road map for
implementation ... (Leering, 2023)**

**On
practice**

**Self-
reflection**

**Critical
reflection**

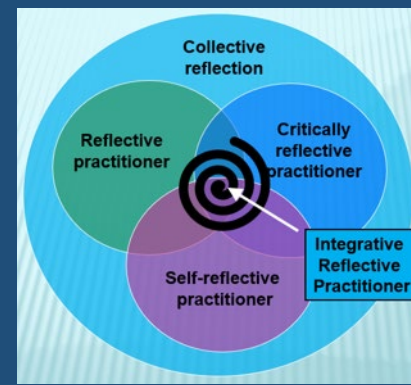
**Collective
reflection**

**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.

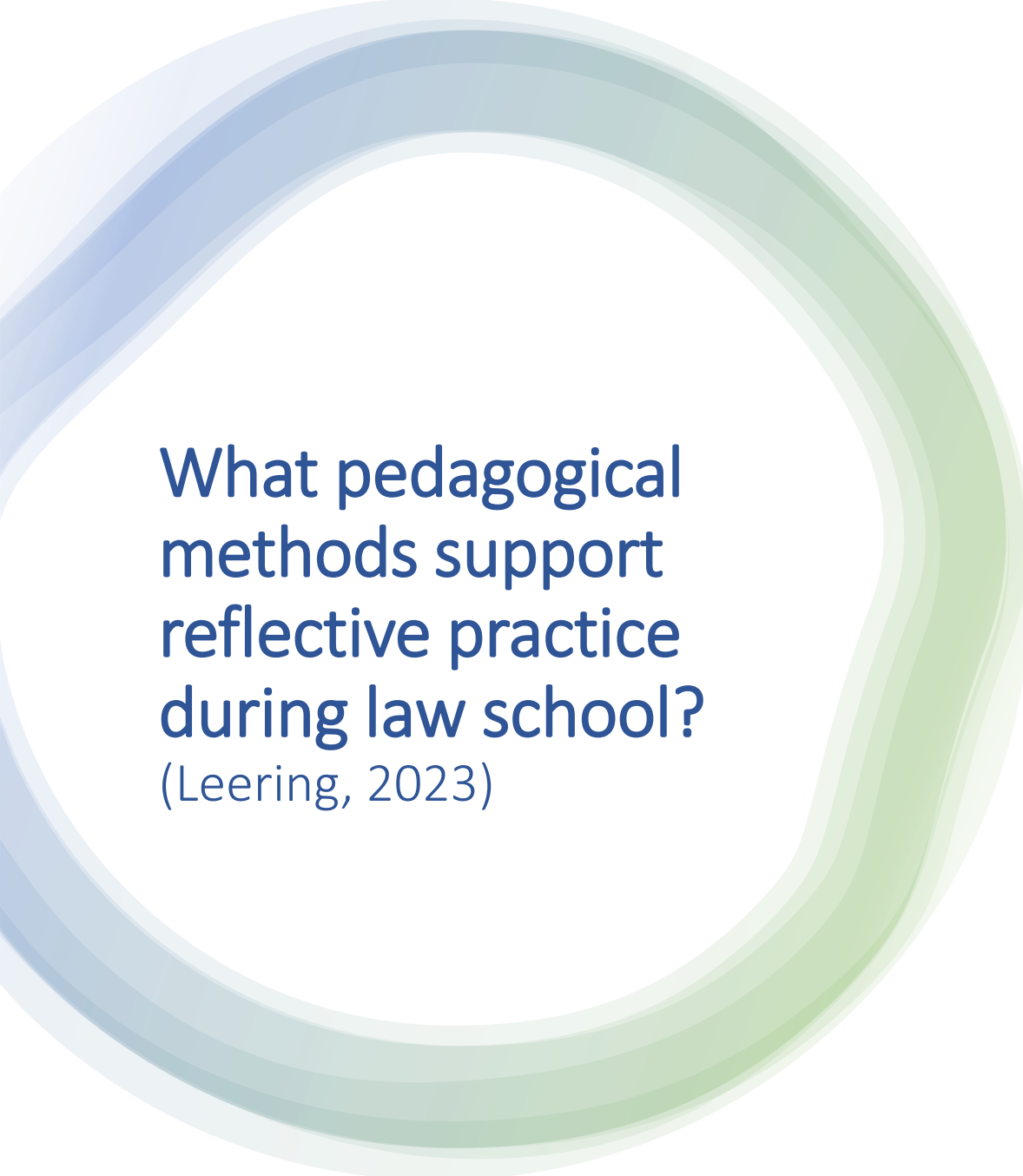
Integrative reflection

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**

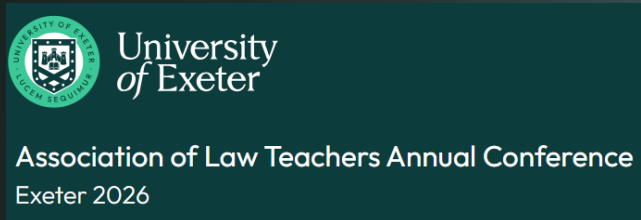
Portfolios

**Aesthetic
practices**

**Contemplative
practices**

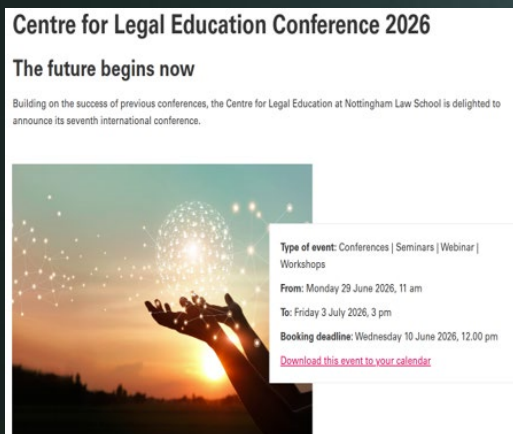
**Feedback &
supervision
practices**

**Assessment
practices**



Themes emerging across other events in the series...

Rich, powerful, insightful, catalytic, transformative



Previewing themes emerging from this 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



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

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, curated resources, and 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?



REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER...

- *How do I understand reflective practice and its benefits?*
- *What reflective practices do I find most meaningful at this stage of my professional life?*
- *How can we individually and/or collectively advance reflective practice in law and professional practice?*
- *How will we know if we are successful?*

