

Mooting, Reflective Practice, and Professional Formation in an Age of Automation

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Scope

- How it is embedded
- Theoretical grounding
- Outcomes- beyond skills
- Connection between mooting and professional identity formation and wellbeing
- Integration of Leering's five-domain reflective practice model within mooting assessment design
- Institutional factors
- Conclusion



Where is it utilised?

- Embedded
 - Stand-alone unit (usually students obtain credit for external competitions)
 - Graded assessments (within core or elective units)
- Extra-curricular
 - Intra-university (various legal topics, national & international)
 - Internally run by LSS



Theoretical grounding



Cognitive

Knows the law
Builds arguments
Researches authorities



Psychomotor

Stands and performs
Voice, gesture, presence
Adapts in real time



Affective

Manages anxiety
Builds resilience
Forms professional identity

*AI operates primarily in the cognitive domain
Mooting engages all three simultaneously
Learning as a cyclical process grounded in experience and reflection*



What mooting develops



Oral advocacy

Argument under pressure; adapting in real time to the bench



Legal reasoning

Constructing and defending complex arguments from primary sources



Collaboration

Peer learning; team dynamics; shared preparation under stress



Resilience

Parsons (2018): mooting builds growth mindset through supported adversity



Professional identity

Bess (2024): experiential role-playing is most formative for identity



Emotional intelligence

Jones (2018): mooting sustains experiential thinking; protects wellbeing



Professional formation and wellbeing

Prior mootting scholarship focuses on skills. This paper argues the formative and wellbeing dimensions are equally central.

Wellbeing



Jones (2018) / Townes O'Brien: experiential thinking protects against depressive symptoms. Mooting sustains it. AI-assisted study does not.

Identity Formation



Hamilton (2022): major student-to-lawyer transitions need structured experiential learning + facilitated reflection. Mooting provides both.

Professional Becoming



Bess (2024): students identify activities involving standing in the role of lawyer as most formative for professional identity.

What AI Cannot Give



AI-assisted learning is solitary and cognitive. It cannot produce the relational, emotional, and formative experience of standing before a bench.



Professional formation and wellbeing

- Mooting places students in the role of a lawyer, not merely reading about what lawyers do but performing it, with all the attendant pressure, responsibility, and satisfaction that entails
- The deepest professional learning happens not in the abstract but at the intersection of experience, relationship, and reflection



Reflective pedagogy: the strengthening framework

Leering's Five Domains of Reflective Practice, integrated within mooting assessment

1

Self-reflection

Who am I as a lawyer?

2

Reflection-on-practice

What did I do, and how?

3

Critical reflection

What does this reveal about law and justice?

4

Collective reflection

What did we learn together as a team?

5

Integrative reflection

How does this change my practice going forward?

Mooting provides the concrete experience. Reflection makes that experience educative rather than merely performative.

Well-designed reflection tasks anchored to lived mooting experience are themselves AI-resistant.



Practical recommendations

1

Pre-moot informal reflection: What do I hope to learn? What am I anxious about? Activates Kolb's abstract conceptualisation before the experience.

2

Post-moot assessed reflection: Journal entry, short essay, or portfolio component. Reward criticality, not just description.

3

Peer and collective debrief: Small group discussion of each other's performance. Models the feedback culture of legal practice.

4

AI as a reflective prompt: What did AI provide? What did you have to supply yourself? Deepens AI-critical awareness.

5

Connect reflection to identity and wellbeing: What did this experience reveal about the kind of lawyer you want to become?

Far from moot

- Mooting grows in significance, not diminishes, as generative AI reshapes legal education
- Its value lies in developing the embodied, relational, and reflective capabilities that make a lawyer
- Well-designed reflective pedagogy does not compete with AI – it centers what AI cannot replicate: lived experience, human judgment, and professional formation