

Queen's Law Virtual Symposium:
Welcome, Acknowledgement of Territory & Opening Address (June 22, 2:00 pm)

(Sharry Aiken) Welcome, everyone. We'll get started in a minute or two. It's wonderful to see everyone coming in. Welcome again. I think we'll get started in another minute. All right, we have almost 60 people with us in the Zoom room. Good morning, good afternoon and good evening to all of you joining us from across so many time zones. I'm Sharry Aiken, one of the co-organisers of the symposium. And it's an absolute pleasure to welcome you to the Queen's Law Symposium on Reflective Practice for Legal Professionals. Before beginning we would like to start with a land acknowledgement. So just give me one minute. I will share my screen to get started with that. Just a minute. Okay. Hopefully you can see my screen there.

So, as we gather today, I'd like to begin by acknowledging that Queen's University is situated on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territory, land that is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis from across Turtle Island. This territory is included in the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Confederacy of the Ojibwe and Allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. As settlers, newcomers, and Indigenous peoples, we have all been invited into this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship and respect. We are endeavouring to ensure that the spirit of reconciliation is honoured and respected through our work. We are also mindful of broken treaties, as well as the global structures and systems that have continued to oppress, dispossess and displace peoples across Turtle Island today. We are grateful for being able to organise the Reflective Practice Symposium Series from this territory, and through our work on this initiative, we hope to contribute meaningfully towards truth, reconciliation and reparation with Indigenous peoples on these lands. We aim to do so by building the capacity of legal professionals to reflect effectively, deeply and critically, and to take authentic, meaningful and constructive action on historic and continuing injustices. We recognise our responsibilities as treaty people to speak the truth, search for peace and demand justice, and engage in a meaningful, continuous process of truth and reconciliation with all our relations.

Now, before saying a few words about the image we are all looking at, and as we advised you during the registration process, we're asking that everyone take a minute or two to post in the Zoom chat, which you can find at the bottom of your Zoom screen, the name of the nations who are the traditional stewards of the lands where they live and are calling in from. So, when I've finished telling you about the image we're looking at, I'm going to take a minute to read some of your posts out loud as they come in, as a way to recognise the Indigenous lands we're situated on globally. Okay, so hopefully you've found the Zoom chat, now is the time.

But let me tell you a little bit about the image we're looking at. It's titled *Reviving Everything Anishinaabe*, and it's a painting by Christi Belcourt, who is a Métis visual artist and social justice advocate. In Christi Belcourt's own words, the image highlights the intergenerational effects of residential schools, something that so many of us live with. But this is a painting about hope and revival. The bowl depicted represents the bowl of our individual lives. It's our spiritual bowl. We fill it with the good things we do in our life. The strawberries that you see in the bowl represent the coming-of-age ceremonies, such as the Strawberry Feast, young women go through. The young woman holding the pipe and the young man holding the smudge bowl, along with the strawberries, represent the return of ceremonies and the revival of everything we once had. The richness of our ways of life, our languages and our connections to the land. The butterflies that you see in the middle represent metamorphosis, change and freedom from the heaviness of the residential schools, and the hope for the future. The flowers and plants always bring us back to our connection to the land, the medicines, the teachings they give us and how to live on Mother Earth. So that's in Christi Belcourt's own words, and that's the image we're looking at.

I'm actually going to stop sharing now and go to the Zoom chat, and I hope I'll have a chance to see where at least some of you are coming from. So: Mississauga, Seneca, Haudenosaunee and the Wendat. Hamilton, Ontario, on the traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron, Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Mississaugas. Abuja, Nigeria. And the Piscataway peoples, to name a few. So, thank you for those. Oh, I'm getting more coming in, in the UK, "I hail from the Boon Wurrung people of the Kulin Nations in Melbourne, Victoria, and acknowledge land and elders past, present and emerging." "And that land was never ceded." Thank you. "Gabrielino and Tongva peoples were the original caretakers of the land where our university now stands." I think that's from California, if I understand correctly. Hyderabad, Sindh, in Pakistan. "In the heart of Treaty Six territory, within the province of Alberta." To name a few, so thank you, everyone.

That is indeed a very powerful way to recognise, globally, the Indigenous lands that we're situated on. And we're so pleased to be here with all of you virtually.

8:12 So it's my pleasure, on that note, to hand things over to Dean Colleen Flood from the Faculty of Law here at Queen's University, who will add her own warm words of welcome. And let me just say, before passing on to Dean Flood, how grateful we are to you personally, Colleen, for the immense support you have given this conference, and to both Michele and me, to make this dream we had a reality. So over to you.

8:40

(Dean Colleen Flood) Thanks so much, Sharry. Hello, everybody, whether it's morning, afternoon or evening, wherever you are in the world, a big hello to you, and welcome, bienvenue, to the Queen's Law virtual symposium on reflective practices for legal professionals. As you've heard, my name is Colleen Flood, and I have the privilege of being the Dean of Law at Queen's University. It's my great privilege and pleasure to give this welcome to you for this three-day event, which lies at the heart of an international series dedicated to advancing reflective practices across the legal profession and legal education.

I'm so proud of Queen's Law for hosting more than 75 presenters from ten countries, joining with approximately 300 participants from more than 20 different countries, over the course of the next three days. And as you know, this symposium is part of a broader series encompassing five events with 150 presenters worldwide. So, what a rich diversity of voices, disciplines and cultures will be represented, representing the growing global recognition of the importance of reflective practice.

So, what is this thing, reflective practice?

I had to admit I didn't know, and had to ask Michele, vaguely worried that it had something to do with yoga. I was quickly told that I was wrong, as I often am. Luckily, I take it well.

It is, in fact, a disciplined and critical process of examining the assumptions, values and biases that shape how law is understood, taught, practised and researched. Within legal education, reflective practice encourages students to engage meaningfully with their own place in the world, and to understand how that influences their understanding of law and justice, fostering ethical awareness and a commitment to professional responsibility. In legal teaching, reflexivity challenges teachers to thoughtfully consider their methods and the institutional context in which learning occurs, fostering inclusive and critical learning environments where diverse perspectives can flourish. Meanwhile, in legal research, reflexive inquiry prompts scholars to interrogate their methodologies, question the framing of research questions, and reflect on whose voices are elevated or marginalised, advancing scholarship that is ethically grounded and socially responsive. Crucially, reflective practice in teaching and research directly informs and strengthens legal practice itself by instilling the habit of critical reflection and ethical vigilance.

This approach helps legal professionals continually assess how their actions impact clients, communities and justice systems. It nurtures lawyers who are more attuned to systemic inequalities and better equipped to navigate complex ethical dilemmas, fostering a just profession. Integrating reflection across education, research, and practice will empower the next generation of legal professionals to not only interpret the law, but to do so with insight, integrity and a commitment to social justice.

We are also fortunate to be here, and I want to give my profound thanks to the organisers, Dr. Michele Leering and Professor Sharry Aiken. This really is an incredible symposium and series of events that they have put together from very little. They have created this amazing thing, and I'm so grateful to you both, and also to the team behind the scenes, the incredible IT team, small but mighty, supporting this event and coordinating everyone, and the many supporters and partners whose generosity and encouragement have been instrumental in helping Sharry and Michele bring this ambition to life.

Finally, I just want to encourage all of us here, scholars, educators, practitioners, regulators and/or members of professional associations, as well as all of our students from around the world, to engage deeply, to reflect critically, and to collaborate openly throughout the next three days. Together, we have the opportunity to shape the future of legal education and practice in profound ways. Thank you very much for joining us. Welcome to Queen's Law, and welcome to the symposium. Thanks, Sharry.

13:58 (Sharry Aiken) Thank you so much, Colleen. We are indeed so grateful. So let me add just a few further words of welcome before passing things off to Michele.

So, we're gathering in a moment that our call for papers aptly describes as a poly-crisis: persistent justice gaps, eroding international legal orders, flagrant disregard for human rights, and the accelerating impacts of climate change. These forces are not abstract backdrops. They are reshaping the everyday context in which lawyers, paralegals, immigration consultants, community advocates, and legal educators do their work. They show up in our clients' lives, in our classrooms, in our courts and tribunals, and in the institutions we rely on to safeguard the rule of law. At the same time, many communities are losing confidence that legal systems will actually deliver justice for them.

Access-to-justice gaps remain stubbornly wide. Regulatory failures have been highly public and often painful, especially for those who are already marginalised. Yet we want to frame this not as a crisis of blame, but rather as an opportunity for renewed trust. Trust that is earned through higher service standards, deeper accountability and more transparent, reflective professional practice.

Before saying more about the themes of our symposium, I want to acknowledge the people who have brought us to this moment. First and foremost, my co-organiser, Dr. Michele Leering. Michele's longstanding dedication to reflective practice, access to justice, and community-engaged lawyering was the catalyst for this Symposium Series, drawing from decades of practice and her excellent, award-winning dissertation research. Michele's vision and tenacity have been the primary driver for this symposium. It's been an incredible privilege to work alongside Michele in shaping the full Symposium Series, and I see the hearts coming up.

I also want to thank our Advisory Committee members: Lisa Bliss, Christa Bracci, Lindsay Borrows, Jane Chiang, Jeff Giddings, Audrey Fried, Odi Lagi, Annie Rochette and Gemma Smyth, all of whom gave insight and encouragement and have guided this series from the outset.

We are also deeply grateful to our lead sponsors: Queen's University, the Faculty of Law, the Centre for Teaching and Learning, and the Office of the Provost here at Queen's, as well as the Canadian Association of Professional Immigration Consultants, the Canadian Law and Society Association, and the Legal Education Associate Deans Network, the LEAD network, in Australia, for their generous support and shared commitment to advancing reflective practice.

We acknowledge as well, and thank, the contributions of supporting organisations, too many to itemise now, but listed in full detail on the programme website, so we encourage you to look there.

This symposium takes as its starting point a simple but demanding premise: that reflective practice is no longer a nice-to-have skill for legal professionals. It is a core professional competency.

As our call for papers highlights, reflective practice involves learning from experience, integrating theory and practice, and developing critically reflective perspectives on law, justice, and institutional function. It requires us to engage in honest self-reflection about the limits of our own knowledge, our values and identities, to participate in collective reflection with colleagues and communities, and then to live integrative reflection as praxis, ensuring that insight leads to action, ethical conduct, and institutional change. Over the next three days, we will explore reflective practice in all of these dimensions. We'll consider how emerging legal professionals can cultivate habits of self-reflection that support resilience and integrity in a profession that faces significant mental health challenges and growing pressures on the rule of law and human rights. We will ask how collective and critically reflective practices can help us respond more effectively to systemic injustices, including those experienced by Indigenous peoples, and how they can support truth, reconciliation, and reparation rather than simply reproducing the status quo. We will also learn from disciplines that have been working with reflective traditions for much longer than law, particularly health care, and from diverse cultural approaches, including Indigenous epistemologies and practices of reflection. These perspectives invite us all to think about justice not only as people-centred, but also as responsive to more-than-human worlds and responsibilities. They challenge us to reimagine what good practice looks like when we're accountable not only to clients and regulators, but to communities, future generations, and the planet.

Crucially, this series is not just about sharpening our analysis of the problems. It's about translating what we know into concrete strategies that change how we teach, how we supervise, how we regulate, and how we serve. Many of you are experimenting with pedagogies of reflection, whether in clinical and experiential courses, in traditional substantive law classes, in ethics and professionalism teaching, or in workplace training. Others are piloting new supervision models, feedback practices, and assessment approaches designed to build reflective capacity rather than mere compliance. Some are exploring how generative artificial intelligence can both challenge and support reflective inquiry in the classroom and in practice settings.

Across all this work lies a shared concern: how do we ensure that reflection doesn't stop at private insight, but leads to improved service standards, real accountability, and improved access to justice? That's a question that matters whether you're designing an immigration intake process, supervising students, revising a code of professional conduct, leading a legal clinic, or teaching a first-year torts class.

Reflective practice becomes transformative when it influences justice-seeking behaviour, law reform, and the design of people-centred justice systems. So, this symposium is intentionally designed to be collaborative and generative.

Our virtual panels will hopefully cross-pollinate ideas, case studies and pedagogical strategies across jurisdictions, strengthening our collective relationships and deepening our understanding of effective reflective practice.

We're also part of a broader international conversation, with in-person events at conferences organised by collaborating law teacher associations in Australia, Canada and the UK, and special issues of *The Law Teacher* and the *Legal Education Review* that will follow, offering a pathway to consolidate and share the insights that emerge here more widely.

Most importantly, I want to thank each of you for choosing to spend your time with us. You bring with you a wealth of practical wisdom and lived experience from courts and tribunals, community organisations and professional bodies, classrooms and clinics, regulatory agencies and research projects. Over the next few days, I invite you to be both generous and candid, to share what has worked, what hasn't, and where you still have questions. If we can combine that honesty with disciplined reflection, we can leave the symposium with concrete ideas, big ones and small ones, that help rebuild trust in legal services and move us closer to equal access to justice and the rule of law.

Pivoting now, a few words about how we'll be using the online tools in Zoom over the course of the symposium. First, everyone has already figured out the chat box, at least most of you, from the looks of it. The chat box is there for informal interaction, sharing, greetings, brief reactions, or links you want to share that others might find useful. It's not going to be actively monitored by session moderators for questions, so please don't rely on it if you want your question put to a speaker. The chat is for chat, in other words, but not for questions. We'll be using the Q&A function in Zoom, available by clicking on those three dots at the bottom of your screen, you'll see "Q&A." That's where you put questions directed to the presenters. If you have a question or comment for the panel, please put it in the Q&A box and not the chat, and indicate clearly which speaker or speakers you hope to address, that will help the session moderator direct the questions so we can make the best use of our time together. Subject to timing and availability, the moderator may ask an individual with a question to unmute themselves and pose their question verbally, but that may vary from session to session. So, follow the instructions of your session moderators, I'd suggest it's always safe to use the Q&A function. Put your question there, and, time permitting, you may be invited to put the question verbally. Finally, throughout the symposium we're also inviting you to our shared Padlet board. Yashika, our wonderful research assistant, has put a link to the shared Padlet board in the chat, so you should all be able to see that link now. The Padlet is our collective reflection space, a place to share insights, ideas, resources, questions you want to sit with a bit longer, or suggestions for future collaboration. Unlike the Q&A, which is focused on specific sessions and speakers and will effectively disappear after your session, the Padlet is intended to capture the evolving, cross-cutting reflections of the whole symposium community, and we will retain it after the symposium as a record of that shared reflection. So, we invite you, and indeed encourage you, to visit the Padlet often, read the posts of your colleagues, and respond.

And with that bit of housekeeping out of the way, it is my absolute pleasure to pass the baton to my colleague, friend, co-conspirator and reflective practice guru, Dr. Michele Leering. Over to you, Michele.

(Michele Leering) Thank you so much, Sharry, for that introduction, and Dean Flood, for your welcoming remarks, I'm very moved by both of these. I'm deeply appreciative of the opportunity to work with Sharry on developing this series over the last year. Sharry was my PhD co-supervisor, and she has been so supportive of my work. Every person who does a PhD wants someone like Sharry to work with, who is so supportive and encouraging. And really, the idea for this symposium was hers. Those of you who've heard me speak elsewhere before this know we were talking about maybe co-constructing some kind of a book together with people, which I hope we still will do, by the way. But this idea of a symposium was hers, and I don't think either of us could ever have expected the response we've had to this.

When we started out, we thought maybe we'd have 40 or 45 presenters across the series we were planning, and to end up reviewing 150 abstracts from all the different conferences, I'll say more about that in a minute, as it has been completely unexpected.

I'm looking forward so much to hearing from those of you who are presenting over the next three days, and to seeing everyone's reflections in the various places that's possible.

I'm truly delighted to be welcoming you all to this event, and we're so pleased to be joined today by people across all stages of legal professional life, as Sharry has said, and with differing levels of knowledge about what reflective practice is. So, we thought it might be useful in these opening remarks for me to help build a bit of a common understanding around reflective practice, recognising that the concept is still quite nascent in law. I'll be followed by a panel of people expanding it even further, which I'm quite excited to hear, the theories of reflective practice that are emerging. So, the intention behind these opening remarks is really to reach a common understanding and to ground us as we move through the rich content of the next couple of days.

What I'm intending to speak about: a little bit about what reflective practice is.

I'm going to first then trace the way it's emerged in theories of learning and professional education theory. That's one thing I discovered in my own research had not been much done in law, and reflective practice really is an evolution from reflection and reflective learning in the literature and in academic educational theory. I'm also going to do a brief overview of the themes emerging from the Series and this virtual symposium, some of which has been covered by Sharry, so I might not spend too much time on that, but it's so rich, I'm just so excited summarising it all. And I'll give a brief preview of our post-symposium plans.

And then, in the spirit of reflective practice, and reflective questions being one of the 15 methods for encouraging reflective practice as a professional competency, I will be posing a few reflective questions for us to sit with. And then we're hoping to move right into Session 1 after this. Our Session 1 speakers have already joined us and tested their PowerPoints, so we hope to segue right to them, but we'll see how the timing goes.

I wanted to start with this photograph, which I took myself on an Australian beach. Those of you who know of my research know I did a comparative case study between Canada and Australia of how reflective practice was being introduced in law and legal education at university, in particular. And then I thought – I have to bring in the Canadian piece, a quote from Leonard Cohen with which you're probably quite familiar: "There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in." It very much reflects how I think about reflective practice and its power within our discipline, within law, at this particular, historically challenging moment, where there's a need for moral courage, moral imagination and leadership from the legal profession, as Sharry has so adequately described. It captures my hope for reflective practice as a professional meta-competency to support the development of people-centred justice systems, aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goal 16.3, on equal access to justice and the rule of law.

My professional career has been devoted to those issues, as have the professional careers of many people watching this, and I just think reflective practice will go a long way to getting us to the new place we need to get to, to serve the world differently through our profession. I was recalling, when I was preparing my remarks, an Australian law professor I'd interviewed, one of the 53 Canadian and Australian law professors I interviewed, who said, "I think of reflective practice as a much stronger and more powerful life-force sort of agenda: how can this lawyer not just practise fruitfully for themselves and for their clients, but how can they change the world?" And that had me

reflecting again on why so many of us went to law school, which was to contribute to justice in our world. And then we, of course, over the last few decades, have just discovered more and more layers of injustice as time goes on. It's unending, and particularly crucial at this moment.

So reflective practice is a very big tent, as we'll be hearing more about over the next couple of days, and in particular in the next session after this one, on domains of reflection, which I'll speak about in a moment. I'm going to go through all of these, but first I'm going to talk a little bit about reflective practice in learning theory. As I've mentioned, it's very much emerged from learning and professional education theories. It's a more vibrant, holistic and rigorous approach to thinking about how we educate professionals and how we nurture professionalism, and it is big in pretty well every other profession, and just slowly emerging in ours. Although I do believe that there are many reflective practices that are tacit in law, it's just that we haven't had the language to name them, and it's so important to actually name what it is so that we can see ourselves in these practices.

Reflection in learning theory has been very important all the way through, beginning with John Dewey more than 100 years ago, with experience being central to learning and to problem solving. It has since been adopted in many fields of higher education, adult education, professional education, work-based learning, and organisational learning. All of these fields have focused on the importance of reflection, which is why I'm such a big advocate of strengthening the reflective muscle. It's critical to what's called deeper learning, more than strategic or surface learning, and to transformative learning, which I'll say more about, and to how we respond to what's called disorienting dilemmas. It's been described as a form of meta-thinking, a dialectical process of looking inward at thoughts and thought processes and outward at the situation we find ourselves in, and also as a form of mental processing, by Jenny Moon, where material is uncertain or ill-structured, which we know is very much the case in legal education. Experiential learning itself is very much a recursive process. Active learning and developing metacognition are all part of using reflection.

The taxonomies of learning objectives, like Bloom's and the SOLO taxonomy, all refer to reflection as higher-order thinking, as does King and Kitchener's reflective judgement model. Jenny Moon has also said that professional reflection is distinguished by its emphasis on learning, and that is so true.

Critical reflection, on the other hand, is essential for justice seekers, it goes far beyond generic reflection. Ideas of conscientisation, transformative learning, critical reflexivity, and criticality are all part of that.

This is why I've been so interested in the work-based learning field, because I was the executive director of a legal clinic for a number of years. It's really how we unearth tacit knowledge and make explicit what we know to others, which can be a challenge for lawyers. So, developing the reflective muscle is very important. It's essential to systems thinking and solving wicked problems, which are the kind of problems we're faced with now, and a reflective mentality is an important enabler of organisational learning and innovation.

The research I did with the 53 legal educators made clear that renewal and reimagining is predicated on law faculties, legal regulators and professional associations being willing to interrogate their assumptions about how learning happens. And I think reflective practice is very supportive in that domain.

Now I'm going to say a little bit about the different ways people have thought about reflective practice. I'll mention domains of reflection last - that's the theory I've developed about reflection and law. But when I look to the other professions, there was a concern about the temporal aspects, reflection in and on action. Donald Schön is credited with that. In the 40 years since Donald Schön wrote his seminal piece in the early '80s, we've gone on to think about anticipatory reflection, before action, and after action, for action, to create new knowledge, and now, even more frequently in these desperate times, future-forming reflection, with its creative and transformative potential.

It was interesting that Donald Schön was writing 40 years ago about a crisis of professionalism, because here we are, 40 years later, with a new version of a crisis of professionalism. He was concerned then that the technical knowledge we learned in professional schools needed to become professional knowledge, and that's where he came up with his reflective practice theory about how we need to wed theory and practice together, and that technical rationality was an insufficient basis for educating professionals.

Other ideas include depth of reflection and different foci. Depth of reflection captures a non-reflection level, a reflection level, and a critical reflection level, for example, different levels.

There are also ideas of moving from inward to outward. I think of theorists like Tim Casey, who we'll be hearing from today, and also Susan Brooks in law, who have talked about that.

Critical reflection is so important, quoting an educator, in its highest form it is to eliminate misery and create conditions for human freedom and happiness.

There are different dimensions of it, more holistic understandings of what reflective practice is, embodying aesthetic meaning-making, seeing reflective practice as a dynamic developmental process, a reflexive spiral of being and becoming.

And there are also structured reflective cycles we're probably all quite familiar with, names like, just to name-drop, Kolb, and Gibbs, and Moon, and Johns (in nursing), Rodgers, and, for the Australians among us, Ryan, who has been very influential; Boud, as well, has a reflective cycle; and then Rolfe's very simple "What, so what, and now what" structured learning cycle.

Philosophical orientations also influence how you think about reflective practice, just to give an example from some of the authors, whether you have a conservative, progressive, social-justice, or radical orientation, or a spiritual and contemplative orientation, also influences how you think about reflective practice.

So, what reflective practice is not - is rumination, regurgitation or rationalisation. I always like to say that, because people can find themselves in a negative cycle of rumination, and that is not what the discipline of reflection and reflective practice is about.

The other thing it can be is reflective practices, right, the methods used to build that reflective practice as a meta-competency, the practices themselves, of which we're going to learn a lot.

So, the way I conceptualised it for law, I'll say a little bit about that now. I've named and claimed five domains of reflection, centred around the question I'm trying to answer with the domains: what is the change we're seeking when we're encouraging students or colleagues to reflect? What is it we're trying to achieve? Because it suggests different methods, and it looks different, and it happens at different stages of your professional life and your own personal development too.

I would suggest it could provide a roadmap for the implementation of reflective practice, by breaking it down into different types, because there's a lot of confusion about it.

I'm not going to get into all the critiques of reflective practice. We don't need to do that today, but I am going to cover this off a little bit.

I've identified five domains. The first is reflection on practice, the traditional, as I'd call it, Schön-ian way of thinking about practice: how we relate the theory we learn in professional school to our practice, how we learn from experience, how we become better at what we do. That is also a continual process, and from my perspective, we can't have anything less than that. If we are training as professionals, and calling ourselves professionals, that needs to be a commitment we've made to continually improve our practice and become more effective, and to know how to evaluate the effectiveness of our own practice. Self-reflection deals more with the self, with our values, biases, assumptions that we make, our positionality, our emotional reaction to things, our morality. It's also an important domain of reflection, and one, certainly in the interviews I've done with law professors, there was a concern that not enough of that is encouraged within the law school environment. And I want to say, as I move through these, it's a bit difficult sometimes to distinguish between them, but I think there's enough of a difference that it's a framework worth using.

Critical reflection is interesting. When I have spoken to people outside of law about critical reflection in law, there isn't always a sense that we're strong critical reflectors. And of course, those of us within a law school environment will remember our law school environment and know that's actually not true, that there's a huge amount of critique

and critical reflection that happens about what law is, about law as lived, how it affects people on the ground, oppressive legal structures, critical race theory, feminist theory, and so many other theories that impact how we think about law.

Another important domain, and more so all the time, is collective reflection, our capacity to reflect with one another, to develop new knowledge, to increase the rigour of our thinking and our work, to accept constructive feedback, and to develop new knowledge together. This is particularly important for future-forming types of reflection, which I've found quite fascinating to be participating in and reading about. It's also about our capacity to engage in generative dialogue. There are ways this applies to legal practice, in terms of how we work with our clients, and whether we can reflect collectively with them, or during ADR or mediation work. That capacity to work with others to reflect is incredibly important.

And integrative reflection came from the idea that a disconnect between these different types of reflection is not a good thing either, our goal needs to be to integrate, for example, our critical race theory with our practice, our feminist theory with our own self-reflection about who we are and how we practise, and so on. There needs to be a level of integration to lead to authenticity and whole, full-person professionals.

The next slide I'm going to show you is a bit overwhelming, so I apologise for that. It's here because these PowerPoint slides, like the other presentations in this virtual symposium and the other series events, will actually appear in PDF form connected to our names on the symposium series website. So, I thought this would be helpful for future reference, about how I had defined things. Basically, the things I've just explained to you are covered off in there, the five domains of reflection, and the idea that this is a very inclusive definition of reflective practice. There are different places and times and people who might be encouraging different aspects of this.

I've curated some tables that connect other ways people talk about reflection on practice with the literature in other professions, on how to encourage it, and also how people in law have written about each of them. So, it's a very complex definition, but I think it captures a fair bit around what's the change we seek through each of these domains. It's developmental, it's evolving, and I think it moves from the more instrumental forms of reflective practice, which we can't do less than, as I've said, becoming better at what we do, through to the ways we transform our perspectives through critical theories and collective reflection with others, and try to create a better world, all leading to *praxis*, which is reflection in action.

That little symbol you'll see at the top is just something that came to me when I first started thinking about reflective practice, many years ago now, and how the different domains need to intersect.

I want to say a few words now from my own research, because it ties into how we organised the symposium and also, as it turns out, into the things we're hearing from everyone. Just give me a minute to catch up with my notes.

So, law professors in Australia and Canada identified what I decided were ten benefits of reflective practice, and there were some differences between the two countries. We don't need to get into that here, because the most important thing is what people identified. My interviews started in 2017 and went through to about 2020, and we can see, by what's happened with the symposium, how much thinking has happened in the last decade about reflective practice.

So, I'll just get them down here. Ideas about deeper and more transformative learning, which I've mentioned in the context of reflection theory, very much about lifelong learning, a shift in meaning, perspective, values and understanding. Very important to law professors. Also, very important for our cognitive development, developing metacognition, strengthening our capacity to think and to engage in critical and creative thinking. Another aspect was self-directedness and self-determination theory, the idea of agency and resilience, people's capacity to self-assess and self-manage as they move through their professional life. Then there's the impact of emotions, which ties in with the self-reflective domain in particular, but also to realising the impact on students of challenging material and circumstances, and of the emotions of distressed clients, being prepared for that is another reason law professors are encouraging reflective practice. And then, improving mental health and wellbeing, both personal and professional, we're going to hear later this evening, our time, about reflective practice and wellbeing, in our third session. A sixth reason is to develop a stronger sense of ethics and to be able to unpack ethical issues, very much ties in with learning the skills of appropriate dispute resolution, also mediation, and our capacity to deal with uncertainty

and messy, conflictual situations. Other aspects are professional identity formation, which we're hearing more about all the time. It's very big in all the countries I looked at, especially in the last decade, and supporting legal professionalism, positive professional identity, authentic professionalism and leadership. Preparing for successful practice was definitely part of it, and there are different aspects to that. And then supporting broader justice goals and access to justice, which, as you'll know from what I've said, has been one of my primary motivations.

So, I was so pleased to hear that this is a reason people are encouraging reflective practice, as essential to systems change, and to actually being a person who uses their legal skills to advance broader justice goals, especially in the face of so many challenges and resistance of the system to change. And then, preparing for an uncertain future. I was already hearing about this in 2017, and now we are very much in that uncertain future. Even then, people were talking about disruption and AI, and now it's quite an obsession. The idea of a future-focused mindset, and being able to create that, has been important.

I'm just going to say briefly a bit about the different pedagogical methods that support reflective practice during law school, because they actually apply all the way through, I'm not going to go through them all, but I want you to see just how diverse they are. I'll give you one example here. People, when first introduced to reflective practice, often think it's about reflective journaling: I want to distinguish reflective journaling from reflective practice for a moment. Reflective journaling is a form of reflective writing, you'll see that's one of the 15 categories I've put up in this slide, and it's a way of becoming more reflective. It is a reflective practice, but it helps develop reflective practice more generally, which you'll know from what I've been talking about and what our next presenters are going to talk about, is a much bigger idea, about reflective practice as a way of being.

I did want to comment, too, that when I looked at other professions, especially the medical profession, within my research, I could see that these ten different benefits that law professors understood about reflective practice are definitely covered off in all those professions too. I did want to point out that in those professions, medicine in particular, but also all the health care professions, and we will hear from a health care panel as part of our session tomorrow, there are many more empirical studies about the effectiveness of pedagogy. And much greater awareness about how reflection supports better diagnosis in complex cases. And that there's a positive relationship between reflective ability and communication skills, and even performance. And that a lack of reflective capacity has been linked to professionalism lapses, which I think holds important lessons for law. And when we think about it intuitively, that just makes sense. It's also been essential in medical education, in moving to competency-based medical education, to be able to move in that direction with reflective practice as a meta-competency.

I'm just going to say a few minutes about the themes coming in from the other conferences.

There was one at the University of Exeter in April. We've just come from the Canadian Association of Law Teachers conference, we had panels, and lovely speakers, wonderful speakers, I'll say more in a moment. And after ours comes the Nottingham Trent Centre for Legal Education conference that we're looking forward to. And also, the Australasian Law Academics Association conference, where what was to be a stream at their conference became the main focus, *Educating the Reflective Lawyer*. Because of that conference, we've had to redesign the abstracts tab on our website to hold all the abstracts that have come in from 40 or 50 presenters at their conference on reflective practice! Both those conferences are next week, and there's more information on our website.

So, themes from other events, overall, in the series: definitely, as Sharry said, the impact of generative AI, and how reflective practice provides an essential strategy, a competency, to tackle the challenges that arise. It also applies across civil and common law systems; we'll have speakers from both types of systems during this symposium. It's also embedded across the professional life cycle in other professions, and I think slowly it's becoming that way in ours. And it applies to all legal professionals, students in law school, law professors, practising lawyers, paralegals, immigration and citizenship consultants, judges, I know there are a few judges attending, really anyone with legal training who's using their law degree and considers themselves a legal professional.

We can definitely see, in the themes of the conference, the benefits of cross-disciplinary looks at what reflective practice means to others, cross-cultural approaches, and I'm sure we'll be hearing some of that today. And I know they will be in the Australian conference too, and cross-jurisdictional approaches. I learned so much by studying different countries; if I had only studied my own, I never could have come up with the analysis I was able to by also looking at the UK, the United States, Australia, and our own country, that really made a big difference. Other

countries are also thinking about reflective practice now. And there are just so many methods that came through, the 15 categories I described to you are pretty well all covered off in somebody's presentation.

Let me tell you a little more in depth about what's happened at some of the other conferences, just to give you a smattering, because it's so rich. As I said, people's presentations from other conferences, if they've sent them to us, will show up on our website linked to their name. And people presenting at this particular symposium, you'll see that we're recording, the recordings will be available on the website, and transcripts of presentations will also be available for people participating in this virtual symposium. Not the others, unfortunately, but we will have their PDFs, which is wonderful.

We had someone present on how to encourage critically reflective practice using Lego, which I found fascinating. I'm a great fan of aesthetic methods, different ways to have students reflect, and that's just one example of things we've heard. We've heard about different legal regulators and their reflective practice requirements, Scotland in particular. We heard a bit more about empirical research, and also the micro and macro factors that have influenced the acceptance of reflective practice, which I think is important to look at. We also heard about reflective practice itself as a meta-competency, and about how it's been systemically introduced in the Graduate Diploma in Immigration Law and Practice.

We've heard about reflective practice and transformative learning using different methods, like process recording and critical case comments, even in substantive law courses, and about how it supports cultural shift and transformation. At the upcoming Nottingham Trent conference, we're going to hear more about generative AI and reflective practice, critical reflexivity, how it supports emotional intelligence, executive functioning, and different aesthetic methods to encourage reflection, resilience and integration. We'll also hear about the risks of disclosure and potential unintended consequences of that, which I think will be interesting, how it's been introduced in a compulsory third-year course, and an empirical study that looked at the increase in student confidence, criticality, metacognition and support for lifelong learning.

At the ALAA conference there are more than 50 presenters, and I can't summarise it all. You'll have to wait for our final report, but I'm going to try, because again, it's so rich: reflective practice and decolonisation; the discomfort and transformation that's required; reflective practice as a core pedagogical framework and how it's used in substantive law courses, many examples of that; how we can humanise legal education through reflective practice, cultivating human capacities that generative AI cannot replace; lots more on the scholarship of teaching and learning, which is the theme of this conference, including empirical studies; reflective practice as a generative response to the challenges we face with curriculum and the poly-crisis; reflective practice as a way of being, of meaning-making; collective reflective practice as a way to support law school redesign and human-centred legal education; reflective practice and metacognition, and the development of agency in problem-based learning; trauma-informed lawyering; evaluative judgement forming as a capacity supporting creativity.

I also want to say that the efforts being made in Australia to promote climate-conscious lawyering are, to me, a really important example of how legal educators' reflective practice has moved them to create whole new ways of thinking about the responsibility of law students and law schools in advancing climate-conscious lawyering, including pulling together a crowdsourced book on climate-conscious lawyering. Very inspiring to see.

That just shows you what's possible when people are acting from their deepest selves as reflective practitioners about what's possible.

And again, many, many different methods being discussed there, including looking at assessment practices.

We never could have expected this. I'm looking at Sharry when I say this. I just never expected that was possible. So, that's a little bit about the themes from this conference, this symposium, if you've read through the detailed programme, which has everyone's abstracts, and Sharry has already spoken to a number of those. I've just listed some of them here. Again, a very rich agenda that we have over these next few days.

I wanted to tell you a little bit about where we're hoping to go from here. Our Series website, as you know, hopefully you've had a chance to check it, has abstracts for all the presenters except the Australian ones, which are still coming in, the 40 of them. Yashika is madly working on getting all that together in the next couple of weeks,

and then eventually we'll be posting the presentations. As I've mentioned, we've also curated some resources that will include the ten PhD dissertations on reflective practice since 2007, a curated collection of articles that I've done, ten useful books annotated on reflective practice, one being Michael Lang's. And I see Michael's here, so that's wonderful! And then also what the law societies have been doing, and some other work, including podcasts. We've mentioned the Series report, the Symposium Series report, and the special academic law journal issues.

I just want to finish by saying, "if it's not impossible, it's not worth doing," to quote Rod Macdonald, a famous Canadian law professor.

I am also passionate about reflective practice for the questions it poses. So here are a few, which I'm barely going to have time to give, because we need to let people in for the next session, we don't need to, we're just segueing over. All right, well, I am going to give those questions, and then I'm going to segue in, because I'm moderating the next panel.

So, just some thoughts to leave you with: 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 do we, individually and collectively, advance reflective practice in law and professional practice, and how will we know if we're successful?

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to set the stage and seed the ground.

(Sharry Aiken) We're now going to move into our next presenters, please join me in thanking Michele for a wonderful way to get us started.

(Applause.)

(Sharry Aiken) And let me just take one moment to mention something I put in the chat and forgot to say in my opening remarks, about AI-enabled transcription. We noticed some of you had it engaged; we have disabled it for those we've seen, and we just ask that you make a point of not engaging it during the three days we have together, because, as Michele mentioned, you will have full access to both the links to the recordings and the transcripts of all the sessions. We prefer to make the symposium accessible that way, not only to all of you, but to members of the public. So, thanks for your cooperation. Passing it back to Michele.

(Michele Leering) Thanks so much.