

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE FOR LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

Refined Reflection: Connecting Theoretical Frameworks

Four Converging Frameworks to Promote Reflective Practice



Kolb



Ericsson



Hlass & Harris



Casey

Casey – Theoretical Frameworks

OVERVIEW

Four Theories, One Integrated Design

Four overlapping theories emphasize the importance of structured reflection in the development of competence and professional identity.

1



Experiential Learning

David Kolb

Learning emerges from a cycle of concrete experience and reflective observation.

2



Deliberate Practice

Anders Ericsson, et al.

Structured, repeated rehearsal with immediate feedback builds expert skill.

3



Critical Lawyering

Laila Hlass & Lindsey Harris

Intersectional, anti-racist principles ground reflection in power and identity.

4



Stages of Reflection

Timothy Casey

A six-stage developmental model of how novices develop reflective capacity.

FRAMEWORK ONE

Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

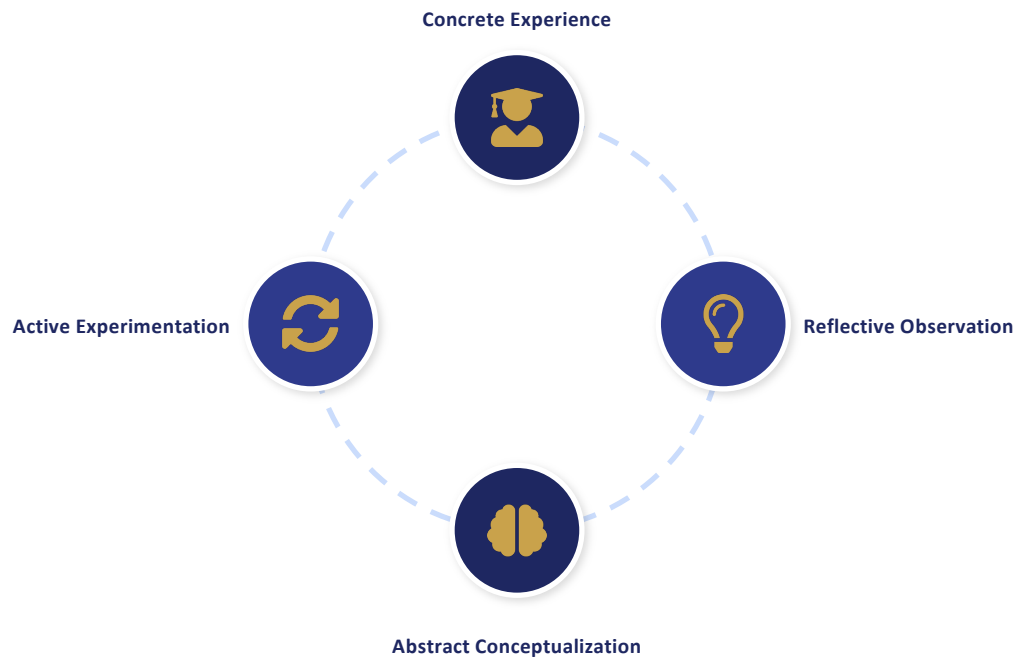
The foundational framework for understanding experiential learning.

Learning follows a cycle: Students engage in a concrete experience; Structured feedback enables reflective observation; Reflective observation leads to abstract conceptualization; New insights can be developed through active experimentation in subsequent experiences.

Reflective observation is not optional — it is the necessary mechanism through which experience becomes learning.

Example

Structured post-experience reflection ask students not only *what* they did, but *why* — and what assumptions, identity dynamics, and power relations shaped their decisions.



FRAMEWORK TWO

Ericsson's Theory of Deliberate Practice

Novices develop expertise through structured, repetitive rehearsal of skills with immediate feedback. Ericsson, et al. (1993).



Consistent Repetition

Students confront similar challenges across multiple encounters.
(Example – simulated client programs)



Structured Feedback

Experts (teachers or practitioners) organize feedback around specific, named competencies.



Calibrated Difficulty

Students confront increasing levels of complexity .

Experience must be combined with reflection (students) and feedback (teachers).

FRAMEWORK THREE

Critical Lawyering Pedagogy

Hlass & Harris (2021)

Critical lawyering incorporates intersectional and anti-racist principles into reflective practice to address issues of power and structural inequality.

How This Integrates with Reflective Practice

- Students assess not only their technical performance, but the assumptions and power dynamics that shaped their approach to each client encounter.
- Reflective capacity is not treated as a value-neutral skill, but as a practice rooted in relational accountability.



FRAMEWORK FOUR

Casey's Stages of Reflection

A six-stage developmental model of how novice practitioners learn to reflect on their own performance (Casey, 2014).



Drawing on cognitive development, reflective judgment, and moral reasoning, the model moves from foundational technical questions toward deep, self-correcting metacognitive reflection.

Earlier Stages

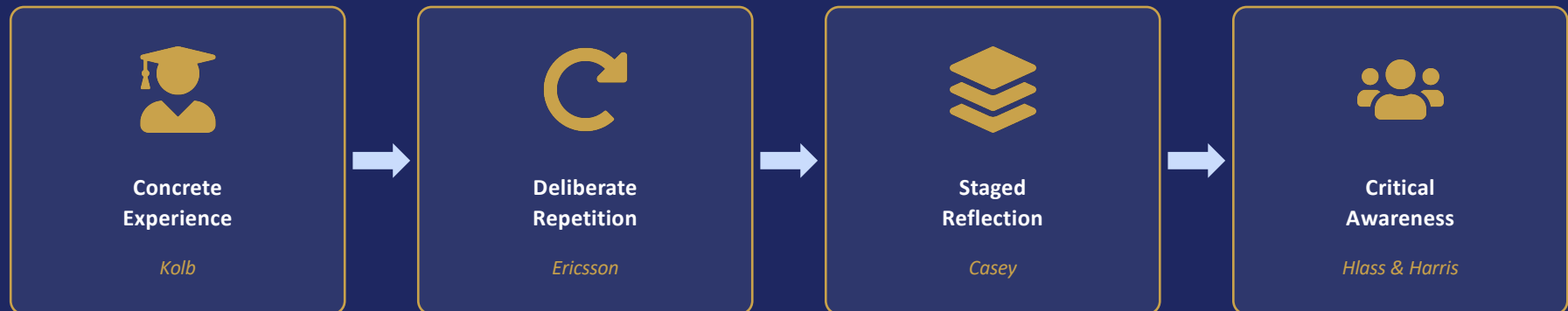
Focused on technical competence and internal decision-making —
“What would a competent lawyer do?”
“Are there different ways to meet the goal?”
“Why did I make the choices I made – either consciously or subconsciously?”

Later Stages

Focused on externalities and critical examination of the assumptions and values shaping practice.
“How might the preferences and biases of others affect the outcome?”
“What structural impediments exist?”
“How has my thinking developed?”

SYNTHESIS

How the Four Pillars Work Together



Each framework integrates a cycle: Kolb moves from concrete experience to reflective observation, to abstract conceptualization, to active experimentation; Ericsson describes the feedback loop between student and teacher; Casey's stages provide a pathway to development; Hlass & Harris describe critical awareness.

Together, these four frameworks position reflective capacity — not just technical skill — as a central outcome of legal education.

NEXT STEPS

Measurable Outcomes

Can we integrate the theoretical frameworks of Kolb, Ericsson, Hlass & Harris and Casey into experiences or exercises that can measure the development of reflective capacity?

- ✓ Skill acquisition, measured behaviorally (Kolb & Ericsson)
- ✓ Reflective development, measured developmentally (Casey)
- ✓ Professional identity, measured longitudinally (Hlass & Harris)