

## REFLECTIVE TEACHING ACTIVITIES IN LEGAL EDUCATION – A CASE STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LAW, VNU<sup>1</sup>

### *ATIVIDADES DE ENSINO REFLEXIVO NA EDUCAÇÃO JURÍDICA – UM ESTUDO DE CASO NA UNIVERSIDADE DE DIREITO, VNU*

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#### **Nguyen Le Thu**

Is a lecturer at Vietnam National University, Hanoi, University of Law. She got a doctor degree in law. Ha Noi, Vietnam.

[thunl@vnu.edu.vn](mailto:thunl@vnu.edu.vn)

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Reflection is recognized as one of the most important ways of cognitive processes. In higher education, reflective teaching methodologies and activities are considered as important among students. Theories on reflection learning and teaching have been well developed from educational perspectives, with its effectiveness being confirmed. However, the implementation of these theories in higher education faces challenges due to the gap between theory and practical issues. Law courses have their own characteristics in terms of content, legal approaches and practical income elements, which should be carefully considered. In this context, this study investigates the teaching methodologies applied at the University of Law, Vietnam National University. It aims to answer the research question: which reflective teaching methodology should be implemented in law courses and how should it be implemented? The objective of this paper is to examine the effectiveness of reflective teaching activities in legal education under certain circumstances in Vietnamese universities. It also aims to provide some proposals for improving the implementation of these activities. The methodology of this paper combines traditional social science research methods, including document analysis, surveys and interviews, to investigate the issue at hand. The conclusion of the paper addresses the role of reflection in teaching law and how reflective methodology might contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of teaching law.

**Keywords:** legal education, reflective teaching methodology, cognitive ladder, Vietnam.

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## RESUMO

A reflexão é reconhecida como uma das formas mais importantes de processos cognitivos. No ensino superior, metodologias e atividades de ensino reflexivo são consideradas importantes entre os alunos. Teorias sobre aprendizagem e ensino reflexivo foram bem desenvolvidas a partir de perspectivas educacionais, com sua eficácia sendo confirmada. No entanto, a implementação dessas teorias no ensino superior enfrenta desafios devido à lacuna entre teoria e questões práticas. Os cursos de direito têm suas próprias características em termos de conteúdo, abordagens jurídicas e elementos práticos de renda, que devem ser cuidadosamente considerados. Neste contexto, este estudo investiga as metodologias de ensino aplicadas na Universidade de Direito, Universidade Nacional do Vietnã. Ele visa responder à questão de pesquisa: qual metodologia de ensino reflexivo deve ser implementada em cursos de direito e como deve ser implementada? O objetivo deste artigo é examinar a eficácia das atividades de ensino reflexivo na educação jurídica sob certas circunstâncias em universidades vietnamitas. Ele também visa fornecer algumas propostas para melhorar a implementação dessas atividades. A metodologia deste artigo combina métodos tradicionais de pesquisa em ciências sociais, incluindo análise de documentos, pesquisas e entrevistas, para investigar o problema em questão. A conclusão do artigo aborda o papel da reflexão no ensino de direito e como a metodologia reflexiva pode contribuir para aumentar a eficácia do ensino de direito.

**Palavras-chave:** educação jurídica, metodologia de ensino reflexiva, escada cognitiva, Vietnã.

## **Introduction**

Teaching law is mainly done at the higher education level, which requires specific methodology that can provide not only knowledge but also professional skills. In addition to the general requirements of higher education, teaching law has special challenges. It demands more than just knowing the rules of law; it requires a more durable, versatile and robust approach. It is suggested that the aim of legal education is to foster freedom and promote productive thinking (Lon L. Fuller, 1950, pp. 35-47). The purpose of legal education is to help students understand themselves. Legal educators must have a general knowledge of lawyers' responsibilities and tasks. Legal education should be broadened in several ways, including making the various interrelations between legal and the non-legal disciplines a more central part of the curriculum (Robert S. Summers, 1984, pp. 8-22). This fact raises the question of finding an appropriate methodology for teaching law at the higher level of education.

Reflective teaching methodology is considered as one of the important elements for achieving academic goals in higher education. Academic staff should have substantive knowledge and clear expectations about the aims of reflective

activity, the most effective mode of representation, and the appropriate teaching strategies needed to support students in engaging in deep, critical reflection (Mary Ryan, 2012, pp. 207-223). Legal education is not an exception and it requires appropriate implementation of reflective teaching methodology. To some extent, reflection is closely related to culturally responsive teaching, which involves connecting academic content to students' daily lives, cultural backgrounds, and concerns in ways that support their engagement, achievement, and empowerment. Building on our past work, this resource offers a set of reflection questions designed to promote self-appraisal, goal setting and critical conversations (Jenny Muniz, 2020). Despite the extensive research on reflection activity, materials on reflection in legal education remain limited and general. This paper aims to bridge, to some extent, the gap between theory and practice in applying reflection in legal education. It first examines the theories on reflection, conducts some surveys and interviews to identify challenges in applying reflection in legal education, and then presents some recommendations for addressing these challenges.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Reflection is one of the teaching methodologies commonly used at different levels of education. It is based on the assumption that the learning process of each learner differs and it is dependent on many factors, such as basic knowledge, gender, learning experience, learning environment or even culture of learners. Reflection is also an efficient way for helping teachers to understand their learners, which is a step of empathizing with students and improving the quality of teaching. Legal educators are required to transfer not only legal knowledge, but also common sense of legal practitioners. Therefore, the theoretical basis of this research is predominantly rooted in the scientific theories of law and education. The research topic is shaped by the authors' own observations and evaluation of learning process in law school and the application of reflection methodology in teaching law. It is also shaped by desk research on materials related to legal education in general and reflection in

particular. It is worth noting that this research is focused specifically on Vietnam, but it might also be applied on legal education in other places.

### **Research context**

The authors of the paper are all lecturers of law at the School of Law, Vietnam National University. All of them have ten or more years of experience teaching law to both law and non-law students at public and private universities in Vietnam. Law schools in Vietnam usually require students to complete between 80 and 90 credits in law. Law subjects are also compulsory in many business or economic majors. Also the module principle of law is one of the six compulsory subjects in all universities. While law is widely taught in universities in Vietnam, the target of our research is law students in law schools, who take challenging and difficult legal courses.

In this context, all lecturers at the School of Law hold degree in law and none of them have degrees in pedagogy. Pedagogical courses are provided for law lecturers, but the content is generally designed for all lecturers in higher education. The content is about the general behavior of lecturers toward students, not their teaching skills (Circular 13/2013/TT-BGDĐT on training pedagogy for lecturers in higher education issued by the Department of Education and Training on April 12, 2013). Especially, this content is far from providing information or knowledge in teaching activities at legal classrooms.

With more than ten years of teaching experience, authors of the paper recognize that the teaching outcomes do not meet expectations. Some students even struggle to understand basic knowledge that is presented and revised. The number of students who fully understand the lectures is still limited. While discussing, the authors observed that many lecturers have similar challenges: they know how to improve their professional and academic knowledge through research in law but find it hard to improve their teaching skills. In other words, law lecturers do not have tools or materials to assess and enhance their teaching skills. Almost all recommended law teaching methodologies (Paul F. Teich, 1986, pp. 167-188) are

applied, but their effectiveness remains unclear to lecturers. The application of each methodology or their combinations mainly depends on the context rather than a prepared plan. In almost all legal classrooms, after giving lecture, lecturers ask students some questions related to the content of the lecture, give them some exercise to do or ask them to implement the content taught to a specific caselaw. However, for some years now, lecturers have not been fully satisfied with the outcomes of students, and thus they have been looking for ways to improve their lecture and teaching methods. Unfortunately, many among them do not know how to improve their teaching methods. The authors of this work have found out that there are some practical theories which can be used as an orientation for teaching methods. Among them, reflection learning is a well-known theory. Unfortunately, research on teaching methods is mainly conducted in general, rather than from a specific context, such as legal classroom. This is the gap this research aims to fill. The authors believe it is not practical to ask all law lecturers to learn about reflection learning and apply it in their teaching. Research based on reflection learning and designed specifically for legal classroom is expected to fill this gap. The aim of this paper is to presentsome standards for the application of reflection learning in legal classrooms.

## Literature Review

Reflection has its root in philosophy research. Some studies have pointed out the association between philosophical thinking and reflection (David Denton, 2009). Ideas on reflection can be found in the milestone writings of John Locke (1974, p. 90), Rousseau (2004) and Socrates (Plato, 2006). In particular, John Dewey, the author of the book *How we think*, is considered as the pioneer of reflective thinking for personal and intellectual growth. He defined reflective thought as an “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed forms of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends” (John Dewey, 1997). Many other authors have discussed this topic, such as Friere (1972), Habermas (1974), Mezirow (1990 and Hatton and Smith (1995). All

these works examined the reflection process from different perspectives, but all strengthened the importance and role of reflection in general. Reflection presents the human capacity for higher-order thinking, specifically, our ability to make connections between thoughts and ideas (David Denton, 2009). The process of reflection might be analyzed from various perspectives, but it is widely recognized to be an efficient cognitive process. It focuses not only on current knowledge, but also on the connection between newly-created knowledge and learners' thoughts and thinking. It gives learners a chance to intertwine their new and current ideas for a better understanding. In the context of learner-centered environment, this methodology might be useful to personalize the learning process of learners and enhance their learning ability.

As reflection is absolutely important for the process of thinking, its role in higher education has been widely evaluated. According to some research, students should be taught how to reflect in deep, critical and transformative ways (Mary Ryan, 2019, pp. 144-155). Reflection opens a path way for implementing model student-centered learning, and students who engage in reflection learning can develop a greater awareness of their learning and be more critical and motivated (Turner and Beddoes 2007). This can make them to be positive and improve their own attitudes towards learning and the profession (Langley and Brown 2010, Williams and Wessel 2004, JuditFullana et. al., 2016, pp. 1008-1022). The way that one learns or comes to know is at the core of education, and meaningful learning involves reflection (Jennifer, 2009, p. 10). Reflection in education has attracted many scholars. Dewey mapped out five main phrases of reflective inquiry in teaching: (i) suggestion, (ii) intellectualization, (iii) guiding idea, (iv) reasoning and (v) hypothesis testing (David Denton, 2009, p. 10). He considered reflective practice as intentional, systematic inquiry that is disciplined and that will ultimately lead to change and professional growth for teachers (reflection-on-action) (Thomas S. C. Farrell, 2012, pp. 7-16). Schön developed this idea from the perspective of a practitioner. He suggested that reflective process involves examining one's intuitive knowledge while actively engaged in teaching, known as reflection-in-action or "reflection for action" (Farrell, 2012, p. 13). Among the different approaches to



reflection, academic or professional reflection focuses more on two key elements: (1) making sense of experience and (2) reimagining future experience because there are more steps for achieving a specific standard of knowledge (Mary Ryan, 2012, pp. 207-223). The process of reflection learning is divided into different steps, with each one aiming at a specific level of cognition. Many research works have designed a module with different steps for practicing reflection activities, including content-based reflection, metacognitive reflection, “self-authorship reflection” and transformative and intensive reflection (Robert Grossman, 2009, pp. 13-22). In the practice of reflection, some things are required: antecedent, context, process of reflection, and planned techniques, which require physical activities, use of language, use of observation and recitation (Dewey), principle of andragogy (Mezirow 1991) and developing a habit of reflective practice by establishing a mutual dialogue that involves listening, telling, demonstrating, and imitating (Russell R. Rogers, 2001, pp. 37-58). Bain et al. (2002) used the terminology of 5'R' to describe levels of reflection, which are reporting, responding, relating, reasoning and reconstructing. Another version of this scheme is 4'R' presented in the work of Carrington and Selva (2010), which found it difficult to separate reporting and responding. These steps are further clarified in terms of requirement and expectation by Mary Ryan to become a reflective scale as seen in the table below (Mary Ryan and Michael Ryan, 2013, pp. 244-257).

Table 1 – Reflective scale

Level	Questions to get started
Reporting and Responding	Report what happened or what the issue or incident involved. Why is it relevant. Respond to the incident or issue by making observation, expressing your opinion or asking questions.
Relating	Relate or make a connection between the incident or issue and your own skills, professional experience, or discipline knowledge. Have I seen this before? Were the conditions the same or different? Do I have the skills and knowledge to deal with this? Explain
Reasoning	Highlight in detail significant factors underlying the incident or issue. Explain and show why they are important to the understanding of the incident or issue. Refer to relevant theory and literature to support your reasoning. Consider different perspectives. How would a knowledgeable person perceive/handle this? What are the ethics involved?
Reconstructing	Reframe or reconstruct future practice or professional understanding. How would I deal with this next time? What might work and why? Are there different options? What might happen if....? Are my ideas supported by theory? Can I make changes to benefit others?

Reflection is also recognized in legal higher education. Reflective practice is the integration of intentional thought and specific action within a professional context. It has become a critical learning outcome in many programs of professional education (Chris Argyris and Donal A. Schon, 1989). In one of his speeches, Schön compared legal profession to medicine in terms of uncertainty or “problematic situation” (Dewey, 1938 as cited in Schön, 1995). Also, legal profession requires unique and creative response to the context. Reflective practicum more directly assists students to seek self-learning and to be more adaptive to their professional life (Donald Schon, 1995, pp. 231-255). Reflection is a part of legal education. Unfortunately, while reflective practice is highly recommended, it has received less attention than expected in legal education. There are already some research on the challenges of implementing reflective practice in legal education, but these studies are often too general (Michele Leering, 2014, pp. 83-108). Despite recognizing the impact of reflective practice, it remains unclear how to effectively implement it or maximize its use in every legal module or even in each individual session.



## Methods

The research adopted a qualitative approach to obtain an in-depth understanding of students' perception regarding reflective learning activities in legal classrooms. Our aim was to conduct an in-depth examination of the difficulties students perceive when responding to reflective activities provided by lecturers. This information will help to provide some guidelines for implementing good practices based on reflective strategies.

The focus group technique was used. Focus groups are defined as carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perception on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment (Krueger and Casey 2009). Research based on focus groups has traditionally been understood as a way of collecting qualitative data, involving a small group of people in discussions focused on a subject or series of specific themes (Onwuegbuzie et al. 2009). In our research, focus groups provide the ideal context for obtaining information regarding the interesting and effective reflective activities as well as other aspects students highlight in the narrative of their experience.

## Module

This study aims to provide data that contribute to a more in-depth analysis of the impact of reflective practices on achieving learning outcomes for university students. The research is done in the context, where Bloom's taxonomy is applied for evaluating the achievement of students in each module as well as across the entire program. Thus, the research examines the impact of different reflective practices on students' cognition. The aim of the study is to find out the reflective practice that is effective enough to help students achieve the requirement of the module. It also aims to find the reflective teaching activities that are interesting and effective for students and how these activities could be improved to meet the expectation of students.

To achieve this purpose, the authors firstly observed about 20 law classes at the University of Law, VNU (here and after UoL) to find out the types of teaching methods mainly applied there. The teaching methods used are (1) presentation, (2) questions and discussions in classes and (3) case study. Based on the theory of reflective methodology, we assume that question and discussion in class and case study analysis are both reflective methodology which support the evaluation of students' cognitive procedure. We understand that presentation is still a very common methodology used in teaching law due to the need to explain difficult legal terms. In addition to presentation, lecturers in UoL mainly apply the two above reflective methods, but differently to some extent. Some lecturers mainly use presentation methodology, but others might use half or a third of their classroom time for questions and discussion. The authors designed a list of questionnaires on legal teaching methodologies taken by lecturers and the relation between such methodologies and the cognition process of students. In other words, through the survey, the authors evaluate the effectiveness of some main teaching methodologies on the entire outcome of students and each learning objectives based on Bloom's taxonomy. This question should not overlook the role of presentation, but try to find out the extent to which reflective methods should be applied in legal classroom. Also, the authors interviewed some students and lecturers to understand their opinions regarding the application of different reflective teaching methodologies as well as their expectations. The questionnaires are answered by the law students at UoL. Our research is practical because it provides a practical guide for legal educators in implementing the theory on reflective learning in design case-law analysis exercise. The study is expected to bridge the gap between the theory and action in legal education.

### ***Participants***

The research participants are undergraduate students studying for a law degree. Some students who had detected interesting activities were invited to join the focus group. More than one hundred students who responded to the invitation summarized the composition of the focus groups.

The students received information regarding the aims of the research and signed an informed consent to participate in the research. Their anonymity was guaranteed.

## Results and Discussion

### *a. Survey*

The survey received responses from 109 participants. All of the participants are (former) students of the University of Law, VNU, with nearly half being third-year students. This target group is mainly composed of third-year students who spend most of their time studying law course. In contrast, first- and second-year students might also take common modules and physical course, while final year students spend one semester studying and the last semester writing assignments. The questions are on the reflective methods applied in different law courses and the relation between such methods and the outcome of students.

Table 2 - The percentage of responses for the first question of the survey

	Sole presentation	Presentation and case	Presentation and reflective question and discussion	Others
Which teaching methodology was applied in the law course in which you got the best grade?	2%	24%	70.1%	4%
Which teaching methodology was applied in the law course in which you got the worst grade?	37.6%	32.1%	22%	8.3%

The first question is: which teaching methodology is mainly applied in the law course in which the students get the best grade. Among four options, 70% of the students chose the combination between presentation and question and questionnaire in class. The second popular choice is the combination between presentation and case study analysis (24%). Only 1.9% chose the methodology of presentation only.

On the other hand, the second question is on the teaching methodology applied in the law course in which students get the worst grade. In this case, 37.6% students chose the methodology of sole presentation, while only 32.1% chose the option of combination between presentation and case study and question and discussion in class (22%). The reason for the ineffectiveness of sole presentation, as provided by the respondents, is the inability of students to focus during the second half of the lecture.

Table 3 – The percentage of responses for the question about teaching methodologies of the survey

	Listening to the lecture	Doing case study exercise	Answering questions in class	Others
Which activity helps you to remember and report the lecture content?	82.6%	66.1%	56.9%	3.7%
Which activity helps you to reason the content of lecture	75.2%	56%	45.9%	0
Which activity helps you to reconstruct the content of lecture	51.4%	86.2%	58.7%	1.8%

To understand better the role of different teaching methodologies in achieving different levels of cognitive processes, the following questions address the connection between teaching methodology and the purpose of attaining different cognitive levels according to Bloom’s taxonomy. The survey showed both the reflective and other activities done by the students themselves. However, as the scope of the article is focused on reflective methodology, the authors concentrate only on the relevant responses. A very high percentage of the student chose sole presentation for reporting and responding to the content of the lecture (90% and 82%, respectively). Also, most students think that case study analysis and in-class questions and discussions help them to relate and reason through the content (94% and 64%, respectively).

**b. Discussion**

The first point to be discussed in this paper is the advantage of applying reflective methodology in law teaching in higher education. The advantages of reflection in general teaching have been theoretically confirmed in the numerous studies examined above. This methodology contributes to critical learning by pushing students to learn by themselves and developing their own thinking. It enables them to make connection between newly acquired knowledge with their own thought and examples from real life. The way knowledge is obtained by applying reflective methodology is suitable for the method of legal learning. The fact is that legal knowledge is huge and it has been changed and updated frequently based on the development of social life. The implementation of law also requires both deep understanding of basic principles and a flexible interpretation of these principles in various real life cases, which is similar to the process of reflecting on legal knowledge. Such interpretation of law is an essential skill for the people working in legal fields, but it is not practiced regularly in law schools due to time constraint and the extensive amount of knowledge that must be covered. Also, even when practicing in school, law students must know how to interpret regulations, which is important for their career. In this case, reflective methodology is important for training law students to know how to connect what they are learning with their existing knowledge, experiences and even their work experiences, in order to develop suitable solutions for legal issues. Furthermore, the above survey result affirms the connection between reflective methodology and the effectiveness of learning process. A high percentage of the students express their opinion regarding the role of reflection methodology applied by lecturers in helping them to deeply understand the content of the course. Some of them deeply explained this process. They stated that legal cases are usually abstract, with difficult legal terms which they do not understand. Reflection process gives them the opportunity to clarify these terms or legal issues by answering questions, given by their lecturers. Even when the answers are wrong, they can know what would be wrong by making the connection between legal content and practical issues. What is most important is not which legal terms have been clarified during the process of reflection. The

effectiveness of reflection in teaching law is that students learn legal issues via reflection, and they are expected to create reflection by themselves at school and in their future career. Students must have, in addition to legal knowledge transferred by their teachers, skills of reflecting legal issues. Such reflection helps students to connect what they have learnt at school with their own case. From this point of view, reflection is not only a process of learning; it is also an important skill which should be taught to students. And, they will learn it by doing it.

The theory of reflection mainly focuses on different steps of learning, including reporting, relating, reasoning and reconstructing. The effectiveness of this process is clearly affirmed in general. The advantage of applying this process in teaching law is discussed above. However, to achieve the purpose of this paper, it is also important to discuss some challenges in applying this methodology, to find the extent this methodology should be applied in teaching law, especially in a large class of students. The answer to this question might be based on the opinion of the students because they are the beneficiaries of the process of reflection. The survey outcomes point out that students get higher marks in the module being taught with some reflective activities. There is a strong connection between the marks earned by students and the teaching methodologies applied. Only 2% of the students got their highest marks, while 37,6% got their worst marks in modules that relied solely on presentation. This statistic number clarifies that only presentation is not effective in pushing students to understand well the content of the module. On the other hand, the students seem to get a better understanding in the modules taught with some kinds of reflective activities, such as analyzing case law and answering reflective questions. Especially, reflective question and discussion seem to play an important role in helping students to get high marks. The percentage of students that get their worst mark in modules taught with reflective activities is also lower than the ones taught in class with only presentation.

However, a deeper examination on the effect of different reflective activities in law classroom points out that it is not straightforward to find the role they play in the cognitive process of students. The first step of the cognitive scale, which is to remember and to report the content of the module, is mainly acquired via the



activity of listening lectures (82,6% of students). Although students in the survey also chose other activities (doing case law or answering questions), the above number shows how students start to use their cognitive process. This number is explained by the fact that law content must be firstly transferred from teachers to their learners. This activity is essential for the step of helping students to remember and report information. Interestingly, even this step is mainly taken by listening to the presentation from lecturers. The outcomes of the survey also point out that reflective activities facilitate students at the first step of the cognitive scale. The students stated that they remember legal terms by analyzing case law and answering questions; they mostly remember the context to implement these terms as well as other aspects of these terms. This outcome once again strengthens the role of reflection in law learning, even at the first step. Also, the role of reflection is concentrated on higher levels of cognition, which are relation and reconstruction of the content. Most of the students reported that doing case law and answering questions make them to reason and reconstruct the law content. The percentage is significantly high in the affirmation that doing case law helps students to reconstruct the content. This number might be explained by the fact that case law is a typical example of legal education, which provides learners with legal reasoning directly from legal experts. As a result, by doing case law, students might create their own reasons to implement basic principles and learn legal reason by themselves. In all cases, reflection is affirmed to be an effective way to teach law.

The last but not the least important issue to be discussed in this paper is also the challenges of implementing reflection in teaching law. Reflective methodology concerns the interaction between transferred knowledge and previous thoughts and thinking of learners. Currently, there is a fact that not all legal terms and regulations are presented to law school. Some main legal fields, such as theory of law, constitutional law, criminal law, civil law, business law are chosen to be taught in schools. In Vietnam, and also in many other countries, the legal system is quickly updated to resolve with social conflict. As a result, much legal knowledge is not taught or becomes outdated by the time students start practicing their legal careers. Also, the demand of reflection is finding suitable case with real factors that can be

linked to the content. Furthermore, one of the facts that has not been recognized in this publication and survey is the resource for implementing reflection. It requires teachers to have sufficient time to listen to the opinion/ideas of students and train them to intertwine knowledge and their own thoughts. This process takes time and entails an individual training process, which is extremely difficult to apply in the context of a large number of students.

### **Recommendations**

Reflection is an educational methodology and has been widely developed in teaching at all levels. Even though research on the application of reflection in law teaching is not clearly determined, the examination of reflection points out that it contributes to cognitive scale and satisfies the requirements of legal education. Furthermore, reflection is proven to facilitate students to remember, report, reason and reconstruct the content of module, which is exactly the purpose of law teaching. Also, the survey, even at small scale, is an empathization about the effect of reflection on teaching law and points out the importance of this methodology to some extent. Based on the above analysis, the paper will propose some recommendations for further and better application of reflection to teaching law in law school.

The first recommendation is to confirm the role of reflection in teaching law. Reflection is an effective way in teaching in general and the process of reflection is suitable to achieve legal knowledge. It is not only important for students to remember or report information; they have to reason through the knowledge and be able to reconstruct the content. The requirement of reasoning and reconstructing is an essential part of legal education. With legal terms being abstract, one of the main tasks of legal practitioners is to interpret them in real cases by providing reasoning for such interpretation. As a result, reflection should be recommended to all law teachers in law school.

The second recommendation might be taken from the requirement of providing a huge amount of theoretical legal content to students. Reflection should be combined with the traditional teaching method, which is the presentation of

teachers. Although reflection is confirmed to be an effective way of teaching, there are also some specific requirements for it from legal education. One of such is providing learners with basic principles. It is recognized that presentation is still an effective way to teach law. Also, both presentation and discussion or reflective activities contribute to all the steps of cognitive scale. Personally, the authors suggest that students might have various way to improve their understanding and the combination between these methodologies might facilitate students to build up their knowledge.

The third recommendation is how to get a more effective reflection in teaching law according to law content. Reflection is considered to be one of the modern teaching methods that target learners, rather than teachers. Reflection requires a general enthusiasm from teachers to learners and a strong involvement of learners in the teaching activities. However, in a class of about one hundred students, reflection activities might not work.

## **Conclusion**

Reflection is widely recognized as an effective way to teach in higher education. The purpose of this methodology is to enhance the understanding of students on current knowledge through a process of intertwining it with their previous thought and thinking. By considering the application of this process in legal education, the paper points out that it is suitable for law teaching. This statement is further confirmed by the outcome of the survey taken at the University of Law, VNU, where a high number of students think that reflective activities contribute to their understanding of legal issues. However, it is also clarified that the implementation of reflection is not easy. Some recommendations focus on the way this methodology should be applied for a better legal education in Vietnam and other large legal classes. The paper is limited due to the small scale of survey. It is suggested that further research on detailed steps of the application of reflection to legal education be carried out.

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