Northern Ireland
Legal Quarterly
Vol 76 RST (2025) 15–28
Reflections on Teaching DOI: 10.53386/nilq.v76iRST.1287

Teaching law inside complexity: immanent pedagogy and the possibility of becoming

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Keywords: legal education; pedagogy; inequality; digital transformation; professional identity; critical theory; higher education.

INTRODUCTION: TEACHING LAW INSIDE COMPLEXITY

To teach law is to inhabit a terrain shaped as much by its histories as by its accelerating transformations. Over the course of my academic career, I have come to understand legal education not simply as the transmission of disciplinary knowledge, but as a site where power, identity, and institutional imagination are constantly negotiated. The classroom is never only pedagogical: it is political, relational, and affective, a space where broader structures of inequality are reproduced yet sometimes gently reconfigured. What follows is a reflection on that trajectory, an attempt to trace how practice, theory, and institutional life have shaped my becoming as a legal educator.

Three threads in particular have guided that journey: the critical pedagogies that first gave language to my commitments; the widening-participation realities that revealed the depth of inequality carried into our classrooms; and the sociotechnical currents that are reconfiguring what it means to learn, practise, and inhabit law. Together, they frame the questions that have animated my work: how we might teach law in ways attentive to justice, to possibility, and to the fragile, ongoing work of becoming otherwise.

PEDAGOGICAL BECOMING

Teaching was never, for me, a neutral act. My introduction to critical pedagogy came through Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.[1] It predated my entry into full-time academia, introduced to me through training for Economic Social and Cultural Rights capacity-building projects. Freire's insistence that education must honour the lived knowledge of learners resonated with intuitions formed long

1 Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* rev edn (Continuum 1996) 357.

before I entered legal academia. As a first-generation scholar from the Western Isles of Scotland, geographically marginalised yet culturally and linguistically rich, I recognised in his work a conceptual vocabulary for experiences I had long carried: that knowledge is situated, that voice is political, and that education can be a site for dignity as much as for learning. Freire's critique of the 'banking model' helped me to clarify an early belief that teaching might cultivate political and ethical agency; that students should encounter law as a contested, power-saturated field rather than a depoliticised body of rules; and that classrooms might function as spaces of collective inquiry capable of unsettling dominant assumptions about justice and authority. These ideas shaped not only my aspirations but the questions I brought with me into legal education: whose knowledge is legitimised, and to what end? What forms of agency does legal education cultivate or foreclose?

These commitments met immediate friction when I entered full-time academia in 2011. In my Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice, I found no trace of critical pedagogy; no conceptual space in which it could be meaningfully situated, and no acknowledgment of the ethical and ideological commitments embedded in teaching. I do not cite this as criticism of colleagues but as evidence of a broader institutional logic shaped by employability imperatives, regulatory demands, and performance metrics. It became clear early on that critical pedagogy is not something institutions make room for; it is something educators must actively carve out, often against the grain of prevailing norms.

This dissonance intensified in law. As a young academic tasked with developing a Public Law curriculum, I felt the weight of the then-governing Joint Statement,[2] whose prescriptive model of legal knowledge aligned closely with the very 'banking' assumptions Freire cautioned against. As a Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body-regulated context, legal education appeared to be uncomfortably close to a transmission regime, a delivery mechanism for doctrinal content, justified through employability narratives promising transformation through accumulation. As a first-generation graduate, and single parent who had experienced financial and job precarity, I understood deeply why such narratives held appeal, for my students and for myself. Yet I also recognised from my knowledge of Freire's work that, in this approach, something vital was missing: that transformation could not be reduced to the acquisition of prescribed knowledge, and that

2 Solicitors Regulation Authority, 'Joint statement on the academic stage of training' *Common Professional Examination Rules (CPE Rules)* (Solicitors Regulation Authority 2012).

law's power required deeper, more critical engagement.

My early years teaching in widening-participation settings, first at Salford University, then at Manchester Metropolitan University, made this tension impossible to ignore. Large cohorts, heterogeneous educational histories, and the cumulative pressures of socio-economic constraint, racialisation, disability, caring responsibilities, and precarious employment revealed how profoundly students' learning is shaped by the conditions of their lives. My early attempts at analysing module outcomes showed that students from widening-participation backgrounds disproportionately underperformed in assessments that relied on tacit academic codes,[3] particularly those requiring unfamiliar rhetorical forms or unspoken assumptions about legal reasoning. This made visible how assessment conventions themselves operate as sorting mechanisms, rather than as the neutral evaluative tools they are often assumed to be. These experiences dismantled any lingering notion of learning as disembodied or linear. They also made visible how the normative frameworks of legal education, its canons, genres, and ideals of 'professionalism', operate as technologies of social reproduction.

It was here that Shor's foreword to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* regained urgency, particularly his reminder that education always intervenes in the world rather than standing apart from it. Writing on Freire, Henry A Giroux sharpened this further, observing that pedagogy actively shapes the forms of agency students learn to inhabit.[4] I recognised this acutely in legal education: constructing not only what students must know but who they imagine they can become. Intersectionality sharpened this further, revealing how race, class, gender, disability, and migration status co-structure students' experiences of legitimacy and belonging,[5] within the classroom and within the imagined profession.

My colleague and friend, Kay Lalor, introduced me to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, which opened conceptual horizons I had

3 John Wesley White and Patrick R Lowenthal, 'Minority college students and tacit "codes of power": developing academic discourses and identities' (2011) 34(2) Review of Higher Education 283–218.

4 Henry A Giroux, 'Rethinking education as the practice of freedom: Paulo Freire and the promise of critical pedagogy' (2010) 8 Policy Futures in Education 715–721, 718.

5 Kimberlé W Crenshaw, 'Toward a race-conscious pedagogy in legal education' (1988) 11 National Black Law Journal 1–14; David Gillborn, 'Intersectionality, critical race theory, and the primacy of racism' (2015) 21 Qualitative Inquiry 277–287; L Bowman, T Rocco and E Peterson, 'The exclusion of race from mandated continuing legal education requirements: a critical race theory analysis' (2009) 21 Journal of Continuing Legal Education 1.

not previously had the tools to name. In this sense, my orientation toward immanent pedagogy was not solely the product of reading Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*;[6] it emerged through relation, through the cumulative, and sustaining work of intellectual companionship. Friendship provided both the conceptual vocabulary and the ethical disposition necessary to inhabit institutions critically without surrendering to cynicism. It reminded me that becoming is always relational, always in motion, and that pedagogical imagination is nurtured not only through theory but also through the people who accompany us as we learn to see differently.

These theoretical tools compelled me to interrogate not simply what I was teaching, but what teaching was doing: how curriculum, assessment, and professional discourse participate in the reproduction or disruption of inequality. This became central to my own pedagogical becoming: learning to hold my critical commitments alongside regulatory and institutional constraints, to navigate tension rather than resolve it, and to work within structures while also troubling their assumptions.

In this process, critical pedagogy ceased to function as an ideal and became a pragmatic orientation as a module leader: a way of working and making space for others, within increasingly metricised and depersonalised institutional structures. Freire's insistence on the political and ethical dimensions of education, and Giroux's reminder that agency is shaped through pedagogy, became less abstract propositions and more everyday navigational tools. They enabled me to hold open small but vital spaces, conceptual, relational, and pedagogical, where students' lived realities could matter, and where my own practice could remain tethered to the values that drew me into this work.

In my early years of teaching, these openings were rarely dramatic. They took the form of micro-practices: reframing an assessment to reward judgement rather than recall; using problem-based learning to build confidence in students' analytical instincts; explicitly authorising students to speak from their lived contexts; encouraging collaboration and creativity in responses. Small gestures, but cumulatively significant. Legal education can be approached through *situated, inside-the-strata experimentation* rather than overt opposition. It can be immanent; sustained, careful, attentive to possibility, pushing at the edges of regulatory frameworks and cultivating cracks in which more equitable and humane forms of legal learning might take root.

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6 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Bloomsbury 1988).

WORKING CAREFULLY WITHIN AND AGAINST: IMMANENT PEDAGOGY IN NEOLIBERAL LEGAL EDUCATION

My pedagogical becoming reached a new inflection point when I assumed responsibility for the LLB in 2015 and led its periodic review in 2018–2019. Moving from module leadership to programme design altered the scale and texture of my ethical responsibilities: questions I had previously navigated at the level of classroom practice – how students encounter law, how assessment shapes agency, how widening-participation realities intersect with disciplinary norms – now had to be addressed at the level of institutional architecture. Programme leadership required a different mode of attentiveness, one in which pedagogical commitments were refracted through questions of coherence, progression, and the collective conditions under which students might sustain their trajectories through legal education.

Stepping into this role also exposed, with greater clarity, the dense regulatory and managerial terrain that structures contemporary legal education. Neoliberal metrics, Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body expectations, employability logics, institutional redesign imperatives, and the looming audit pressures of the Teaching Excellence Framework did not simply surround the programme; they constituted the very environment within which it had to be imagined and delivered. It was here that the double bind became fully legible: the need to meet externally imposed requirements while resisting the narrowing of educational purpose they can produce. Programme leadership thus became a site where the ethical, political, and institutional dimensions of legal education converged, demanding a pedagogy capable of working carefully within and against these intersecting constraints.

One metric weighed especially heavily: the persistent pattern of poor progression from Level 4 to Level 5 across the institution. Although framed institutionally as a performance problem, I understood it as a moral one. Students arrived with ambition and hope, many the first in their families to enter higher education, and far too many did not make it through their first year. The question, then, was not merely how to satisfy external metrics, but how to design a programme that could sustain students' capacity to remain, persist, and flourish. Addressing progression thus became the ethical pivot of the redesign, the point at which pedagogical conviction and institutional responsibility could no longer be separated.

This work unfolded within a regulatory moment marked by both opening and closure. The Solicitors Regulation Authority's

removal of Qualifying Law Degree (QLD) requirements appeared to expand curricular possibility, even as the Solicitors Qualifying Examination introduced a reductive, competency-driven assessment regime that risked narrowing educational imagination by reorienting attention toward testable competencies and away from judgement, contextual reasoning, ethical reflection, and the slower forms of intellectual formation through which students learn to situate law within social, political, and technological worlds. At the same time, the Bar's retreat from the QLD designation left intact the tacit expectation that foundational subjects remain central. These contradictory pressures made the double bind of contemporary legal education unmistakable: institutionally constrained yet ethically charged, structurally conservative yet rhetorically future-facing. Within this shifting terrain, I came to understand the task as not to surrender to the narrowed regulator educational horizons, nor to transmit those limits to our students, but to design a programme that prepared them to navigate regulatory expectations while remaining attentive to the barriers they faced, and to ensure they had the conditions and support necessary to develop, persist, and transform.

John Benedicto Krejsler's[7] Deleuzo-Guattarian reading of the *school machine* sharpened my awareness of the institutional terrain I was attempting to navigate. The identities we inhabit – *tutor*, *student*, *professional* – are not natural givens but institutional productions, stabilised through what Deleuze and Guattari would call *order-words*,[8] the normative utterances that circulate through managerial logics, audit cycles, learning outcomes, doctrinal canons, and employability framings. Legal education carries its own machinic qualities: prescribed core subjects, doctrinal hierarchies, assessment conventions, and symbolic expectations inherited from the profession. These structures offer stability. Yet they also delimit what can be thought, said, or imagined, creating a grammar of possibility that quietly regulates pedagogical labour. One particular comment during the review sessions stays with me still: that 'professionalism' required discouraging students from using first-person voice in coursework, as though reflexivity were a threat to rigour. I remember feeling, quite viscerally, the narrowness of that order-word: a small but consequential attempt to stabilise who counts as a legitimate knower in law. That moment crystallised for me why

7 John Benedicto Krejsler, 'Seize the opportunity to think differently! A Deleuzian approach to unleashing becomings in education' (2016) 48 Educational Philosophy and Theory 1475–1485.

8 Deleuze and Guattari (n 6 above) 76.

the programme needed to create conceptual and curricular spaces in which students could situate themselves in relation to the texts, traditions, and power structures they were learning to navigate. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari, I came to understand institutions not as totalising structures but as stratified terrains containing fissures, alcoves, and points of potential divergence. Immanence does not seek transcendence, rupture, or escape. It works *within* the strata, feeling for what Deleuze and Guattari call *lines of flight*:[9] movements of new possibilities that can soften, redirect, or reorient a system within established systems. In this sense, immanent pedagogy differs from resistance or subversion. Its aim is not to oppose the institution from the outside, nor merely to survive it, but to cultivate possibilities *inside* its constraints; small openings through which different forms of legal learning and being might emerge.

This approach positioned me *within the machine's operations*, attentive to moments where its routines could shift, lodging oneself within its strata to sense where things might be softened, bent, or repurposed. Deleuze and Guattari describe this as the continuous finding of 'small plots of new land'[10] within existing formations, until you find a plateau worth maintaining. Immanent practice does not seek transcendence, rupture, or heroic opposition; rather, it asks how one might create openings within constraint, moments where the inherited arrangements of legal education can be reconfigured toward more critical, ethical, and emancipatory ends.

Programme redesign became one such opening. We could not abandon doctrinal architecture, but we could reconfigure its logics. We embedded criticality not as optional supplement but as structural pillar. Krejsler's emphasis on how we perform terms is crucial here:[11] terms such as *skills*, *professionalism*, *competence*, or *core knowledge* are not neutral descriptors but productive forces that configure the conceptual terrain of legal education. By re-narrating these terms, infusing them with relational, ethical, and critical meaning, we could subtly shift students' sense of themselves and their place within the legal field. We reframed digital skills and professionalism not as behavioural compliance but as relational and ethical practice. We introduced modular spaces, Critical Approaches to Foundation Subjects and Legal Professionalism and Ethics, through which students could encounter law's entanglements with power, inequality, and social change. They were cultivated deliberately within institutional and regulatory limits.

9 Ibid

10 Ibid 161.

11 Krejsler (n 7 above) 1477.

These small shifts subtly altered the programme's *pedagogical configuration*: possibilities that remain legible to regulators while gently expanding the imaginative horizons of what legal education might become.

Yet curriculum design alone is insufficient. What became increasingly evident was that the challenge was not only *what* we taught, but *how students came to see themselves as capable of learning it*. This recognition coincided with a longer-term interest of mine with Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory, which initially arose out of a desire to support staff development early on in my tenure as LLB programme director. Though emerging from a different intellectual tradition than critical pedagogy, Bandura's account of self-efficacy and human agency[12] offered a powerful complement to Freire and Giroux. His insistence that individuals exercise 'emergent interactive agency' within systems of constraint provided a psychological grounding for the political commitments of critical pedagogy. If Freire taught me that conscientisation matters, Bandura helped me understand the mechanisms through which it becomes actionable.

Self-efficacy, in this frame, is not a neoliberal injunction to self-optimise. It is the precondition for students' ability to engage critically, withstand challenge, imagine alternatives, and act within structures that often work to diminish them. Bandura's insight that self-efficacy shapes aspiration, resilience, analytic capacity, and collective action broadened my understanding of why so many widening-participation students struggled with early progression: they were navigating not only doctrinal difficulty but the cumulative weight of structural inequality, internalised deficit, and institutional alienation. Critical pedagogy and social cognitive theory thus converged in my programme leadership and design. Freire named the political demands of teaching; Bandura illuminated the psychological conditions under which those demands could be met. Together they provided a framework for designing interventions that addressed both the structural forces that shape students' trajectories and the self-beliefs through which students navigate them.

This orientation also influenced assessment design. Assessment became not merely evaluative, but formative of agency. I began to see assessment as a message: a declaration of what the institution values, whom it recognises, and what futures it imagines for its students. I continued to work within the regulatory strata, adjusting forms where the system proved most pliable. Incremental assessment structures provided

12 Albert Bandura, 'Human agency in social cognitive theory' (1989) 44 American Psychologist 1175–1184.

scaffolding for perseverance and confidence, supporting students least familiar with tacit academic codes. Digital transformation assessments invited students to position themselves within emerging sociotechnical landscapes, exercising ethical judgement, contextual analysis, and metacognition. These designs can quietly disrupt the normalising force of high-stakes, decontextualised assessment regimes, fostering instead the forms of agency, reflexivity, and collective efficacy that critical pedagogy demands.

Across this work, we can see programme design not as administrative procedure but as ethical and political practice. Pierre Bourdieu illuminated how curricular structures reproduce symbolic power;[13] Penny Burke et al's account of educators as relational navigators[14] resonates with the daily uncertainties of teaching within structural inequality. This approach sustains conditions for different becomings, our own, as well as our students, even within the institution. To work carefully within and against is to cultivate a double awareness: of the weight of institutional realities and of the possibilities that precise, deliberate interventions can create. Change unfolded through *incremental adjustments* rather than grand institutional breaks: reframing, redesigning, and reorienting the structures we inhabit so that more humane and equitable legal futures might take root. Even within tightly regulated strata, pedagogy can remain a practice of freedom: not as escape from constraint, but as the ongoing, situated work of creating the conditions under which students, and educators, can become otherwise.

CRISIS, COMPLEXITY, AND POSSIBILITY: DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN LEGAL EDUCATION

My engagement with digital transformation did not emerge from technological enthusiasm, nor from any belief in the inevitability of digital futures. It arose from seeing how digitalisation was quietly but fundamentally redrawing the epistemic, ethical, and political terrain of legal education. As sectoral narratives framed a 'digital skills gap' and called for 'future-ready' graduates, it became clear that technology was being positioned as an unquestioned good and that the perceived shortcomings of legal education were cast as obstacles to a technologically preordained future. I recognised this as echoing what Rebecca Boden and Maria Nedeva

13 Pierre Bourdieu, 'Cultural reproduction and social reproduction' in Richard Brown (ed), *Knowledge, Education, and Cultural Change* (Routledge 1973).

14 Penny Jane Burke et al, 'The relational navigator: a pedagogical reframing of widening educational participation for care-experienced young people' (2020) 10(1) International Journal of Social Pedagogy 1–14.

term 'hegemonic' employability discourses: frameworks that privilege narrow, job-targeted skills over broader, capacity-building education characterised by Freire's vision of humanisation and critical consciousness.[15]

One of my early concerns was the tension between prevailing techno-deterministic and techno-solutionist narratives and the values central to critical pedagogy. The institutional and sectoral language of digital readiness, efficiency, productivity and upskilling risked narrowing the purpose of legal education to technical conformity. What concerned me was not technology itself, but the possibility that digitalisation, if adopted uncritically, could accelerate managerialism, displace critical inquiry, and erode the intellectual, ethical, and relational depth of legal study. This apprehension prompted a more fundamental question: *what kind of technological future are we training students to inhabit, and on whose terms?*

Discovering Rosi Braidotti's work on posthumanism during this time was pivotal for me: providing a basis for an affirmative ethical stance, to prepare students to shape, rather than merely comply with, the digital future.[16] Science and Technology Studies literature deepened this orientation further. Critiques of technological determinism,[17] work on agency of nonhuman actors,[18] and accounts of sociomaterial entanglement[19] reminded me that technologies are not neutral tools but actors in legal assemblages, reshaping identity, labour, and ethics. Technologies are not tools awaiting human mastery but actors in assemblages that redistribute legal labour, shape professional identity, and produce ecological and affective consequences. The pedagogical question becomes: what forms of legal consciousness, ethical discernment, and relational imagination do students need in order to think and act with and through technology?

These commitments shaped my work in developing and then rolling out our digitalisation strategy across the school as Education lead. Securing structural change to embed digitalisation and LawTech at the core of the LLB was curricular development, but, moreover, it was an act of conceptual

15 Rebecca Boden and Maria Nedeva, 'Employing discourse: universities and graduate "employability"' (2010) 25(1) Journal of Education Policy 37–54.

16 Rosi Braidotti, 'Posthuman critical theory' in Rosi Braidotti and Simone Bignall (eds), *Critical Posthumanism and Planetary Futures* (Springer 2016) 117; Rosi Braidotti, 'Posthuman humanities' (2013) 12(1) European Educational Research Journal 1–19; Rosi Braidotti, *Posthuman Knowledge* (Polity Press 2019).

17 Eg Andrew Feenberg, 'Alternative modernity: the technical turn in philosophy and social theory' (1996) 102 American Journal of Sociology 258–259.

18 Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Harvard University Press 2012).

19 Wanda J Orlikowski, 'Sociomaterial practices: exploring technology at work' (2007) 28(9) Organization Studies 1435–1448.

reframing. Immanent work, in the Deleuzo-Guattarian sense, is about inhabiting institutional structures while tracing openings for more critical, equitable practice. Resisting the 'skills-gap' narrative requires more than inserting digital content, it requires reconceptualising digitalisation itself as a site of ethical and political struggle. Freire and Giroux helped me understand that technologies can either reinforce or unsettle the hierarchies through which legal authority is reproduced, and that any pedagogical engagement must therefore begin with questions of justice, responsibility, and agency. Digitalisation is not simply a technical domain; it is a sociotechnical field saturated with power. Students were framed as needing to become 'fit' for market demands while, as Noah De Lissovoy argues, technology correspondingly reduces students' agency by integrating them into a system where their energy is devoted to managing fractured, anxious, market-optimised present selves, rather than engaging in the sustained, collective, critical action necessary to fundamentally redesign their future reality.[20] As Braidotti[21] observes, technological platforms open new avenues for dialogue and organising, yet their deployment also functions as a mechanism of domination and social reproduction.[22] Navigating this contradiction, cultivating critical digital capacity while resisting technological inevitability became central to my pedagogical practice.

Students' encounters with digitalisation made these concerns more urgent and more immediate. Their starting points were, and are, profoundly uneven. Some arrived with fluency in digital platforms and data practices; others, shaped by socioeconomic precarity, caring responsibilities, or limited prior exposure, approached the digital with apprehension, and the free university sponsored Microsoft suite was the first time they had access to it, beyond school devices. Introducing technology without attending to these disparities risked reproducing the very inequities critical pedagogy seeks to challenge. It became clear that digitalisation could not be treated as a neutral domain of skill acquisition, but as a sociotechnical field saturated with power. The central question was not how to teach digital tools, but how to cultivate the ethical, critical, and relational sensibilities necessary to inhabit technological worlds responsibly.

Across undergraduate and professional contexts alike, digital

20 Noah De Lissovoy, 'Pedagogy of the anxious: rethinking critical pedagogy in the context of neoliberal autonomy and responsibilization' (2018) 33 Journal of Education Policy 291–296.

21 Rosi Braidotti, 'Critical posthuman knowledges' (2017) 116 South Atlantic Quarterly 83–296.

22 Giroux (n 4 above).

transformation revealed itself as both crisis and possibility. It exposed anxieties about competence, identity, equity, and the future of legal work, while also offering space for conceptual and ethical renewal. The crisis is not technological alone; it is epistemological, ethical, institutional, and relational. This orientation reconfigures the purpose of pedagogical design. Technology becomes not a domain to be mastered but a terrain in which students learn to *judge*, *situate*, and *critique*. Assessment therefore becomes a space for cultivating forms of reasoning attuned to sociotechnical complexity: the ability to justify decisions, contextualise digital practices within broader legal and political structures, and recognise the contingencies through which technologies acquire authority. In this frame, students learn to interrogate not only *how* a tool works but *when* and *whether* it should be used. They examine the conditions under which digitalisation might widen access to justice and the conditions under which it might reproduce bias, foreclose accountability, or erode the normative commitments of the profession. The emphasis shifts from mastery to discernment; from competence to consciousness.

Within this landscape, how we teach becomes inseparable from why we teach, demanding a careful, theoretically informed navigation of digital transformation. What this demanded, in practice, was resisting reductive narratives of innovation and efficiency, challenging the instrumentalisation of legal education, and insisting that questions of justice, care, and equity remain central to our pedagogical choices. Above all, it asks us to cultivate in our students the capacities they will need to inhabit uncertain sociotechnical futures with integrity: the ability to judge, to discern, and to act responsibly within assemblages in which human and technological agencies are deeply entangled.

Digitalisation, in this sense, is neither a trend to be adopted nor a problem to be managed. It is a reconfiguration of legal epistemology, ontology, and ethics: a transformation that demands a sociotechnical, critical, immanent pedagogy rooted in ethical discernment rather than mere skill acquisition. When approached with theoretical depth and pedagogical care, digital transformation becomes a site for imagining, and enacting, more humane, equitable, and imaginative techno-legal futures.

HOLDING OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF BECOMING

Looking back across these intersecting trajectories, critical pedagogy, widening-participation realities, digital transformation, and the immanent work of navigating the law school machine, I am struck by how much of becoming a legal educator has involved learning

to live with contradiction. The double bind with which I began is not something to be resolved; it is a condition to be navigated, held open long enough for teaching to do its slow, careful work.

A second thread is the recognition that institutions shape practice in ways that reach far beyond curriculum or assessment. Legal education is a social practice that signals who belongs, what counts as knowledge, and what forms of becoming are available. To recognise this is to acknowledge the responsibility we bear: not to usher students into a preformed order, but to help them interrogate and, where possible, subtly reconfigure it.

Digital transformation has intensified these questions. It exposes new vulnerabilities even as it is framed as progress, and treating it as inevitable or apolitical obscures the ways technologies redistribute power and reconfigure legal practice. In this context, the role of the legal educator is to cultivate technological attentiveness and ethical discernment, nurturing practitioners capable not only of using tools, but of questioning and redesigning the sociotechnical systems in which they are embedded.

What has sustained this work, and given it clarity, has been theory. For me, a kaleidoscopic lens: with each turn it refracts practice differently, revealing patterns, structures, and possibilities that remain invisible when viewed from a single, fixed vantage. Critical pedagogy, learning theory, posthuman and sociotechnical perspectives, and Deleuzian thought have each offered conceptual resources for navigating institutional pressures and imagining otherwise. They have also attuned me to the subtleties of academic labour: the quiet satisfactions when a workshop task lands with unexpected clarity, when scaffolding supports a student's confidence, when feedback opens a new line of inquiry, or when a carefully framed question allows a room to think differently. These moments are not incidental; they are the cumulative craft of educational practice.

Teaching law today requires a double fidelity: to our students and their lived realities, and to the possibility of legal education as a space of critique and imagination. Holding that fidelity within neoliberal and regulatory constraint is demanding, but not impossible. It calls for deliberate action; through design, assessment, and the everyday encounters in which students learn what law is and whom it might yet be for. My own becoming as a legal educator continues to unfold in these conversations, shaped by theory, practice, and the relational textures of teaching.

To teach law inside a double bind is to accept that resolution may never come, yet to keep working in the openings that remain: to sense where structures are rigid and where they are unexpectedly

flexible; to trace lines of flight without losing sight of those who will live with the consequences of our decisions; and to hold open, however tentatively, the spaces in which more just and generous futures for legal education can be imagined and enacted. Even within the most settled institutional machines, there are always small plots of new land. In those small, deliberate, cumulative spaces, we cultivate the possibility that legal education might become otherwise.