

**(CERN) Panel: A Restorative Approach as a Culture Shift in Schools**

**Kathy Bickmore (University of Toronto)**

**Omoregie Edokpayi (University of Alberta)**

**Kristina Llewellyn (University of Waterloo)**

**Jennifer Llewellyn (Dalhousie University)**

**Christina Parker (University of Waterloo)**

**Kristin Reimer (Monash University)**

**Dorothy Vaandering (Memorial University of Newfoundland)**

In this panel session, we conceptualize how a restorative approach to education can enable schools to facilitate social and civic engagement, increase inclusion of marginalized students, and equip key stakeholders with tools and strategies to promote student success. Restorative justice in schools focuses on shifting the language and culture of classrooms and communities, including how people communicate and relate to one another (Evans and Vaandering, 2016; Reimer, 2011). The integration of such restorative principles in schools has the potential to increase the opportunity for student engagement and inclusion, while also promoting peace and democratic social change (Bickmore, 2013; Bloom & Reichert, 2014; Johnson & Johnson, 1995; Morrison, 2002). Our panel offers four perspectives on how a restorative approach to education supports a culture shift in schools in international, national, and provincial contexts. We will generate dialogue across the emergent themes in the papers focused on: educators' experiences with restorative justice, various approaches to prescribed and implemented curricula, and students' perspectives on how they experience restorative justice in schools. We will close our

panel by inviting reflection on pathways forward for future research on restorative justice in schools in diverse school contexts.

**(1) Across the Nations: What cross-nation scans of Restorative Justice Education can tell us about school culture change**

**Kristin Reimer (Monash University) & Dorothy Vaandering (Memorial University of Newfoundland)**

Australia and Canada are currently engaging in cross-nation scans that explore the perceptions of educators of their schools' engagement with Restorative Justice Education (RJE). The first official record of any school in the world using RJ is in Australia, 25 years ago; Canada followed soon after. Pausing now to take stock is important. The scans, conducted through national surveys, national symposia, and case studies, seek to answer the following questions about RJE and school culture change within their own contexts: Where have we been, where are we now and where to from here? In this early stage of the research, we are seeking to understand patterns and points of disconnection between the two studies. Is there merit in comparing the results of two nations? When two national studies are held in conversation, do we learn more about our specific contexts? Do we learn something meaningful about culture change more generally?

**(2) Restorative Spaces in Education: Finding Potential for Relationality in Nova Scotia and Ontario Schools**

**Kristina Llewellyn (University of Waterloo) Jennifer Llewellyn (Dalhousie University)**

This paper examines the spaces, or lack thereof, available within schools for a restorative approach to education through a comparative examination of prescribed and enacted curricula in Nova Scotia and Ontario schools. A restorative approach to learning is often associated with the

redress of negative behaviour. Disciplinary issues are not however the core of this approach. A restorative approach is attentive to the promotion and protection of positive relationships within schools. The core of this approach is relationality. Relational theory challenges the inadequacies of neoliberal social theory that characterizes (Downie and Llewellyn 2011) much of education today. It is an approach that makes principles such as democratic deliberation and active citizenship central to learning (e.g. Giroux 2005). We argue through a discourse analysis (Fairclough & Wodak 1997) of curricula that ‘official’ spaces for relationality are limited. We also explore teachers’ narratives to demonstrate ways educators have created space for restorative principles. We conclude by offering ways to reimagine how schools can shift the pedagogical and curricular emphasis away from the individual learner towards relational education communities (Llewellyn 2011).

### **(3) The Phenomenology of a Restorative Graduate Classroom**

**Omorieg Edokpayi (University of Alberta)**

This presentation seeks to reflect on my phenomenological experience of Restorative Justice (RJ) as an international student in Canada. As one of its core objectives, RJ invites us to a paradigm shift in our worldview. Therefore, researchers continue to show interest in how RJ impacts the lives of those who respond to this call. I experienced a change in my worldview after taking a 3-credit course in Restorative Justice in Education (RJE). My lived experience in doing RJ in the classroom triggered a shift in both ways of my epistemology and ontology. Evidence from my previous study reveals a similar impact on my course mates. This presentation will describe how RJE *gives itself to me* and how I make meaning out of its *showing and appearances*. This phenomenological and meaning-making experience will provide evidence to the potential impact of RJE in culture change when we implement it in our educational institutions and personal life.

#### **(4) Facilitating Restorative Classroom Dialogue through Peace Circles**

**Christina Parker (University of Waterloo) & Kathy Bickmore (University of Toronto)**

Inclusive dialogue about conflicts is a core element of democracy and peacebuilding, yet quite rare and challenging for teachers in public classrooms. Our paper explores how some urban Ontario teachers who had participated in professional development on restorative practices actually enacted such practices in their classrooms—specifically, how teachers engaged diverse students in restorative justice education. Equally important, the study examines how diverse students responded to the various conflict dialogue learning opportunities as enacted—who was included and how. Our classroom observations, teacher interviews, and student group interviews in diverse classrooms show how selected teachers and students addressed conflicts as a learning opportunity and experienced a restorative culture shift in their classrooms. Thus, we examine how teachers’ practices, beliefs, and needs in handling conflict can be influenced by a restorative culture shift to learning through constructive opportunities for dialogue and community building.

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