Guiding Principles and Efficacy of Restorative Practices in Schools

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The urgency
Racial Disparities in Secondary School Suspension Rates*

Source: Data from the U.S. Department of Education’s 2009-10 Civil Rights Data Collection
Figure from Losen, D. & Martinez, T. (2013) Out of School & Off Track: The overuse of Suspensions in American Middle and High Schools.

* Based on non-duplicated student counts.
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Alternative explanations

- Really about lags in achievement?
- Disproportionate representation in special education?
- Higher poverty rates?
A statewide longitudinal study

- Rigorously examined the link between race and discipline.

- Isolate the effects of race controlling for 83 risk factors.

- (Multivariate methodologies make it possible to isolate the effect of a single factor, while holding the remainder of the factors statistically constant.)
Accounting for 83 different variables and compared to otherwise identical White and Latino students
African American students had a 31 percent higher likelihood of a school discretionary discipline action.
Other groups to be concerned about...

**Male students**

Across a K-12 sample, males received 3 times more referrals for behavior and 22% more referrals for attendance than females (Kaufman et al., 2010).

**Latino students**

Latino 10th graders were twice as likely as White students to be issued an out-of-school suspension. Findings accounted for student- and teacher-reported misbehavior (Finn & Servoss, 2013).

**Black females**

In 2009, the average national suspension rate for Black females was 13%; 5% higher than the national average for all students and comparable to the suspension rate of Latino males (Losen & Martinez, 2013).

**Gender non-conforming and LGBT youth**

LGB girls experienced about twice as many arrests and convictions as other girls who had engaged in similar transgressions. They also were expelled at higher rates (Himmelstein & Bruckner, 2011).
The urgency
Suspension and college coursework

Statewide sample of Floridian 9th graders followed over time:

Each additional suspension further decreased a student’s odds of graduating high school by 20% (Balfanz, Byrnes, & Fox, 2015).
School to prison pipeline

• To what extent is school discipline an indicator of risk for juvenile justice involvement, particularly for students who cycle through the disciplinary system?
Accounting for 83 different risk variables...

Justice Contact

- No prior discipline
- Frequent discipline (11+ times)

Breaking School Rules, Texas report
Frequently disciplined students and juvenile justice contact

“A student who had been disciplined more than 11 times faced a nearly one in five chance (17.3%) of a juvenile justice contact” p. 71.
Suspension and confinement in correctional facilities

From “deporting and disciplining” to “resolving and educating”

- **Preventing** discipline disparities:
  - Offer supportive relationships,
  - Academic rigor,
  - Culturally relevant and responsive teaching,
  - Bias-free classrooms and respectful school environments

- **Intervening** when conflict occurs:
  - Problem-solve,
  - Engage youth and families,
  - Reintegrate students after conflict.

Gregory, Bell, Pollock, (2014)
Intervention Brief at
http://rtpcollaborative.indiana.edu/briefing-papers/
Beyond “gap gazing:”
The promise of restorative approaches to discipline
RESTORATIVE APPROACHES to discipline

Summary:
- Focuses on relationships
- Gives voice to the person harmed and the person who caused the harm
- Engages collaborative problem-solving
- Dialogue-based decision-making process
- An agreed upon plan leads to actions aimed at repairing the harm done.

RESTORATIVE APPROACHES - DEFINITIONS

**Restorative Justice** – A theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm.

**Restorative practices** – A framework for a broad range of restorative justice approaches that proactively build a school community based on cooperation, mutual understanding, trust and respect.

From: DIGNITY IN SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN
MODEL CODEWEBINAR V: RESTORATIVE JUSTICE,
Fairfax County Public Schools

**Continuum of restorative practices (RP) and restorative justice (RJ) applications in FCPS**

- **RP Prevention**
  - Restorative Practices in the Classroom:
    - RJ philosophy and language for classroom management
    - Available to all schools
  - Circles, Preventative:
    - Attendance groups, minor disputes, escalating conflicts, bullying education, teaching conflict resolution skills
    - Available to all schools
  - Restorative Behavior Intervention (MS focus):
    - RP questions, deeper reflection activities and engagement, circles and RJ discipline conferences
    - Available to middle schools ONLY
- **RJ Intervention**
  - Restorative Justice Conference:
    - SR&R violations, student/staff conflicts, parent/staff, etc...
    - Available to all schools
- **Seriousness of Harm**
- Requires training & certification to facilitate

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SFUSD Restorative Practices
Multiple Tiered System of Supports

Intensive Interventions
Tier 3 RP Practices:
- Formal Restorative Conferencing, Re-entry

Targeted Interventions
Tier 2 RP Practices:
- Affective Statements, Restorative Dialogue,
  Responsive Circles (problem solving and repairing
  harm), Peer Mediation

Universal/Prevention Focus
Developing Social/Emotional Capacity
Building Relationships and Community

Tier 1 RP Practices:
- Affective language, Restorative dialogue (impromptu conferences),
  Community building circles, Responsive classroom and school-wide circles

- Restorative Practices Principles
- Fair Process: inclusive decision making practices
- Fundamental Hypothesis of RP: people will most likely make positive change with
  those in positions of authority doing things WITH them rather than TO them
  or FOR them (High Control + High Support = WITH)
- Shared ownership of classroom
Brief comments about how others were impacted by the person’s behavior.

Affective Questions

Occur when a few people meet briefly to address and resolve a problem.

Small Impromptu Conference

More formal RP that allows everyone to have some say in what should happen as a result of the wrongdoing.

Circles

Brings together offenders, victims and communities of support to repair harm and promote healing.

Formal Conference

Restorative Practices Continuum from the *International Institute of Restorative Practices* (IIRP)

- **Affective statements**: Brief comments about how others were impacted by the person’s behavior.

- **Affective Questions**: Ask who was affected, how they were affected, etc.

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- **Responsive Circles**: More formal RP that allows everyone to have some say in what should happen as a result of the wrongdoing.

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- **Formal Conference**
  - Brings together offenders, victims and communities of support to repair harm and promote healing.

Foster reflection through a series of “restorative questions”

• Questions to ask the disputant:
  • What happened? What were you thinking about at the time? What have your thoughts been since?
  • Who has been affected by what you did? In what way have they been affected?
  • What do you think you need to do to make things right?

• Questions to ask those harmed or affected by the incident:
  • What did you think when you realized what had happened?
  • How has this affected you and others? What has been the hardest thing for you?
  • What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Experiencing Restorative Practices in the classroom

My teacher is respectful when talking about feelings. (Affective Statements)

When someone misbehaves, my teacher responds to negative behaviors by asking students questions about what happened, who has been harmed and how the harm can be repaired. (Restorative Questions)

My teacher uses circles to provide opportunities for students to share feelings, ideas and experiences. (Proactive Circles)

(IIRP, 2009)
What the students might experience through the RP Elements

My teacher asks students for their thoughts and ideas when decisions need to be made that affect the class (Fair Process)

My teacher uses circles to respond to behavior problems and repair harm caused by misbehavior (Responsive Circles)

My teacher acknowledges the feelings of students when they have misbehaved (Management of Shame)

(IIRP, 2009)
Teachers above \((n = 16)\) and below \((n = 13)\) the mean on student-perceived RP implementation and their misconduct/defiance referrals

![Graph showing comparison between High RP Classrooms and Low RP Classrooms for African American/Latino and White/Asian students.](image)

From anecdote to evidence
International Research

- Scotland
- England
- Wales
- Canada
- Hong Kong
- Australia
- New Zealand
- Brazil

For more details see: Schiff, M. (2013). *Dignity, disparity, and desistance: Effective restorative justice strategies to plug the “school to prison pipeline.”*
Single case studies reducing discipline incidents


![Graph showing serious behavioral incidents by type in 2 school years.](image)

Source: Russell A. Gallagher, assistant principal, West Philadelphia High School, February 2009

Oakland Unified School District

Suspension rates by student race/ethnicity

Recent findings from the Denver Public Schools

Rigorous statistical analyses accounted for: race, gender, income, ELL status, disability status, severity and frequency of referral.

Conference students had a significantly lower odds of receiving office discipline referrals (OR = .22, \( p < .001 \)) and suspensions (OR = .57, \( p < .001 \)) in the second semester.

From: Gregory, A., Anyon, Y., Farrar, J., Jenson, J. M., McQueen, J., Downing, B., Greer, E. & Simmons, J. (manuscript under review). Implementing restorative interventions and reducing future discipline sanctions in a large urban school district.
Denver Public Schools

Suspension rates by student race/ethnicity

On-going federally-supported randomized controlled trials

- **North Carolina:**
  - A Group Randomized Trial of Restorative Justice Programming to Address the School to Prison Pipeline, Columbus County Schools, NC

- **Pennsylvania:**
  - Pursuing Equitable Restorative Communities, Pittsburgh, PA

- **Maine:**
  - Randomized Controlled Trial of Restorative Practices in Maine
Research needs to go beyond discipline records...

• Attendance
• Achievement
• Engagement
• Sense of community
• Positive interactions amongst students and staff
Fidelity of implementation matters!
A teacher recently explained:

“...So many initiatives came our way. So it’s hard to know what to prioritize...once you leave a training you get in your classroom and there’s so much that they expect from you.

So it kind of lost a lot of its impact...We have a training and maybe that next week teachers will go in and use those circles. Then it gets lost...”

(Korth, 2015)
How restorative practices are implemented matters!

- Restorative Approaches
- Fidelity of Implementation
- Outcomes
A multi-faceted model of fidelity

Three domains:

• DELIVERY- How well is the program delivered?

• RECEIPT- How well is the program received?

• ENACTMENT- To what extent do participants enact what was learned?

  • Draws from Dane & Schneider (2008)
First domain of fidelity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DELIVERY</th>
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| Dosage/exposure: | How many teachers facilitating circles and how often?  
|            | How many conferences offered?  
| Quality:    | To what degree are the restorative practices implemented in a high quality manner? |
Second domain of fidelity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECEIPT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participant responsiveness:</td>
<td>To what extent are participants authentically engaged during implementation?</td>
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The Queensland Education Department (1996) followed 300 participants through 31 formal restorative conferences.

- 90% had a chance to "have their say" (voice)
- 80% of "wrongdoers" were affected by the emotions of those who had been hurt and this made them feel bad." (perspective-taking)
- Reports of behavioral improvement. Low re-referral.
### Third domain of fidelity: Enactment

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ENACTMENT</th>
<th>Participant generalization:</th>
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<td>To what extent are participants able to apply skills to new contexts?</td>
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Participant generalization:

• Through the Minneapolis Public Schools, students at risk for expulsion participated in family group conferences ($N = 83$).

• Because of their participation in conferences:
  
  • 75% of students reported that they understand the impact of their behavior on people around them.

  • 61% said they learned how to solve problems non-violently.

Participant generalization

- Describing his use of the restorative questions outside of school, a Latino male student said,

  “…even outside of here - you have it in your head, I’ve done that like 5 times already. I got into trouble and I did the questions right there in my head. They look at me like ‘What?’ but I’m like ‘Aw nothing, I’m just doing the (restorative) questions.’”

  (Clawson, K., 2015).
Participant generalization

• A White male high school student explained,

“(I learned) like how to handle a situation if it comes up next time, like taking action steps for how to fix a problem... Like cause and effect... Now I generally handle them in a more respectful way, just talking to the person...” (Clawson, K., 2015)
Participant generalization

• An African American female high school student noted:

“I actually learned how to listen and after having a few one-on-ones with the same person it just clicks in my head...I learned how to express myself and tell how I really feel before I get mad...”

(Clawson, K., 2015)
Online Resources for Restorative Practices

Introducing Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZtdoWo1D3sY

Restorative Justice Student Facilitators: Tier One. Community Building Circle: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdKhcQrLD1w

Restorative Justice Helps At Risk Kids in West Oakland NBC Bay Area: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSObF8hW5DY

Restorative Welcome and Re-entry Circle: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSJ2GPiptvc

Restorative Justice Circle: http://vimeo.com/37746907

From Hostility to Harmony: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQWNyS4QSao

International Institute of Restorative Practices http://www.safersanerschools.org/