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EPrint URI: <https://eprints.glos.ac.uk/id/eprint/10403>

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Breaking new ground: Restorative justice in education and training

Dr Jon Hobson, University of
Gloucestershire (Chair)



Preamble:

It was a privilege to introduce this session, particularly as I teach and research in areas of Restorative Justice touched upon in these talks. I'm also on the APPG steering group, and throughout the conference we heard about the work of the APPG particularly in relation to Criminal Justice System. In this session we were seeking to expand this, considering Restorative Work more broadly and the panel of speakers consider ways in which restorative work is increasingly embedded in educational, training, and policy settings. The questions that the speakers received after their presentations, summarised at the end of the slides, are testament to the importance of these issues and the quality and thought of the work presented.

Dr Jonathan Hobson, University of Gloucestershire

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Tom Procter-Legg

Tom is Head Teacher at The Iffley Academy, specialising in education for students with Special Educational, Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs, including Cognition and Learning Needs and profound Behavioural Difficulties. The school is one of the first Special Schools in the UK to be awarded the Restorative Service Quality Mark. Tom is a trained Restorative and Team Teach Practitioner and a specialist Leader in Education working with Iffley Academy Teaching School and Oxfordshire Teaching School Alliance. He is currently working towards a postgraduate qualification in Restorative Justice in education, examining what makes successful restorative schools.

The presentation is titled: **The Lived experience of a restorative community: an inductive evaluative study of conceptual, pedagogical, and routine practice**

Rowan Sweeny

Rowan is a postgraduate researcher and academic in the Social Sciences department at York St John University. Before that, she was at the University of Stirling studying applied research methods and Criminology and Politics. Her main areas of interest include restorative justice, critical theory, critical pedagogy and teaching, community justice and social justice.

The presentation is titled: **Restorative practice in criminology teaching and learning: the potential of restorative pedagogy for criminology.**

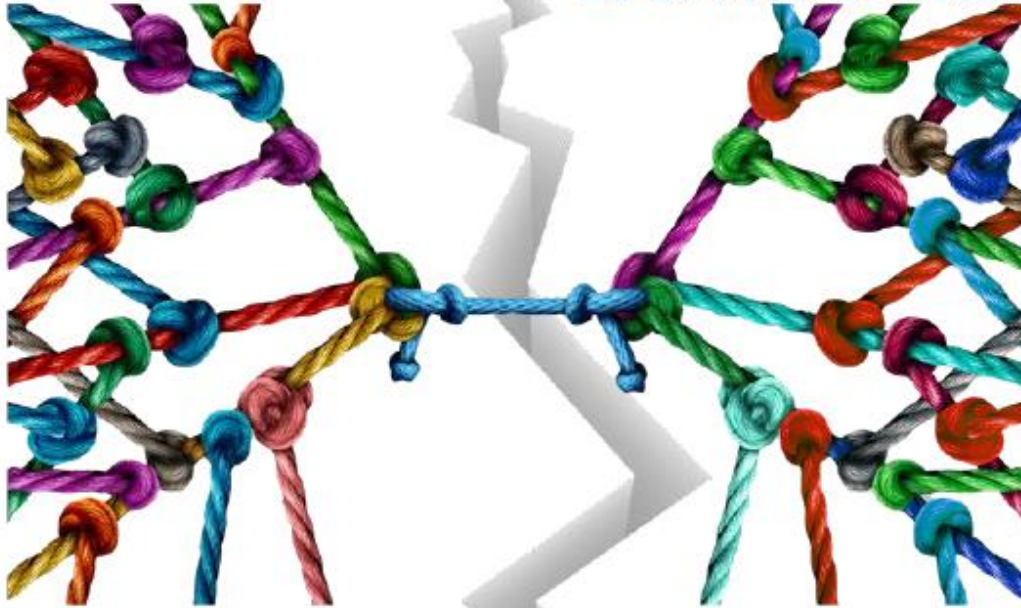
Dr Brian Payne

Dr Brian Payne is the subject lead for Criminology at Ulster University, previously at Queens University and worked with me for some time at Gloucestershire. Brian's primary research interests lie in the areas of restorative justice, transnational organised crime, community policing, and probation. He has conducted research with community restorative justice projects in West Belfast and police agencies in England. Part of Brian's research explored the construction of partnerships between a community-based restorative justice project and the police in Nationalist/Republican communities of West Belfast, Northern Ireland.

The presentation is titled: **Exploring the prospects for an Adult Restorative justice Strategy in Northern Ireland: Defining the roles for State, Community and Civic Society.**



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RESTORATIVE netWORKS
Bridging the divide

Presentation 1:

Tom Procter-Legg - Head Teacher
The Ifley Academy

The lived experience of a restorative community:

an inductive evaluative study of conceptual, pedagogical, and
routine practice.

Tom Procter-Legg - Head Teacher

The Iffley Academy



The **GALLERY TRUST**

A community of special schools



The **GALLERY TRUST**

A community of special schools

Overview

- Procter-Legg (2021) - provides detailed thematic analysis of a restorative school
 - Designed to respond to the 'gap' between research and practice Zakszeski & Rutherford (2021)
 - A model of implementation for other schools
 - Findings include - Whole school restorative practice needs: conceptual; pedagogical and routine practice
 - Builds on work of others (Warin & Hibbin 2020, Fine 2018)
-
- Iffley Academy outcomes include:
 - Nil return on suspensions
 - Positive staff/student relationships
 - Low reports of bullying/racism
 - Reduced restrictive physical interventions (<3 per week)
 - Attendance higher than national average (+3%)
 - High retention of staff (teachers average 7 Years at TIA)



Methodology:

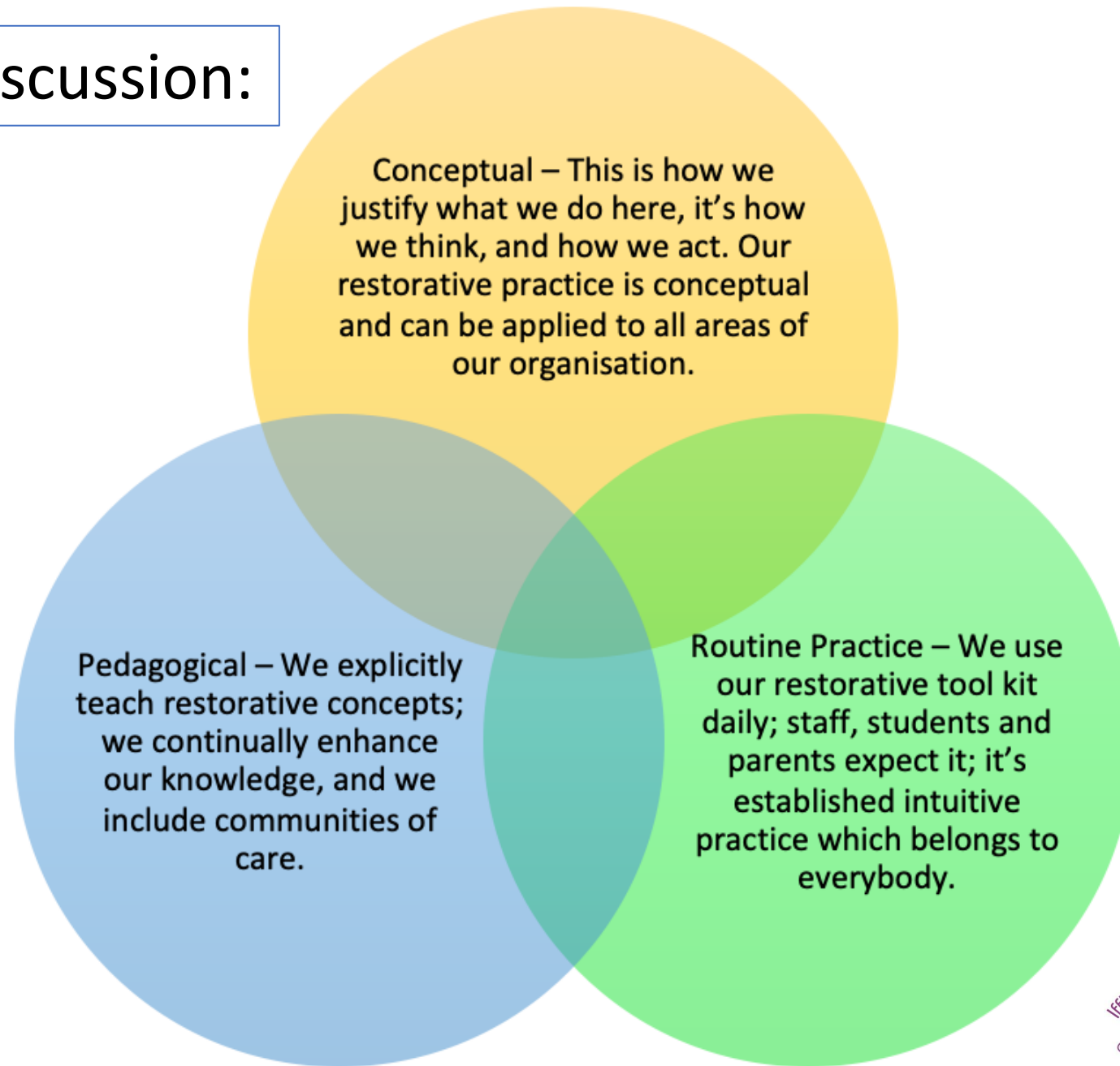
- 11 Employee Practice Statements created for the RJC Restorative Organisation Status
- Inductive Thematic Analysis carried out through insider research
- Evaluation for knowledge and understanding not for accountability
- All data captured through questionnaires and reflexive analysis
- Aims to tell the story of a restorative school
- Considers the implementation staircase (Saunders 2006) and the school hierarchy to explore situated understanding

Table 1. Cross section of participants.

| Senior Leaders | Teachers | Support Staff |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| Head Teacher | Teacher | Therapeutic Support Worker |
| Deputy Head Teacher | Teacher | Therapeutic Support Worker |
| Assistant Head Teacher | Teacher | Pastoral Support Worker |
| Therapeutic Lead | | Administrator |
| 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Data collected | Data collected | Data collected |
| 8055 Words | 7211 Words | 7159 Words |



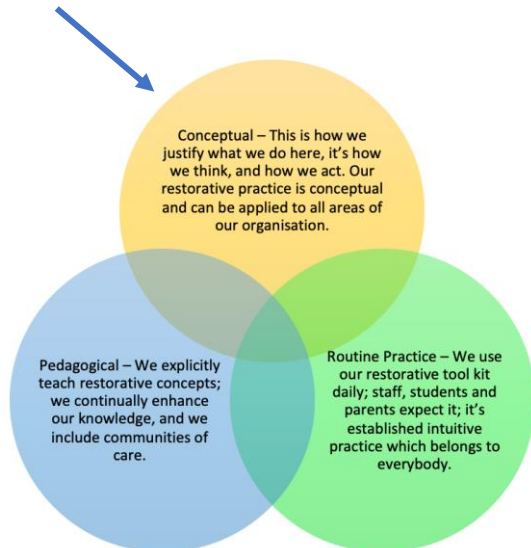
Data and Discussion:



Conceptual:

Everyone involved in the study articulated that there was a conceptual element to what they did, and participants clearly described the concepts behind their work. These are defined and categorised into three sub-headings: approaching tasks with a restorative mindset; the desire to default to dialogue; and working with people in a co-constructed way. In practice they described this as “form[ing] the core of how and what is communicated”.

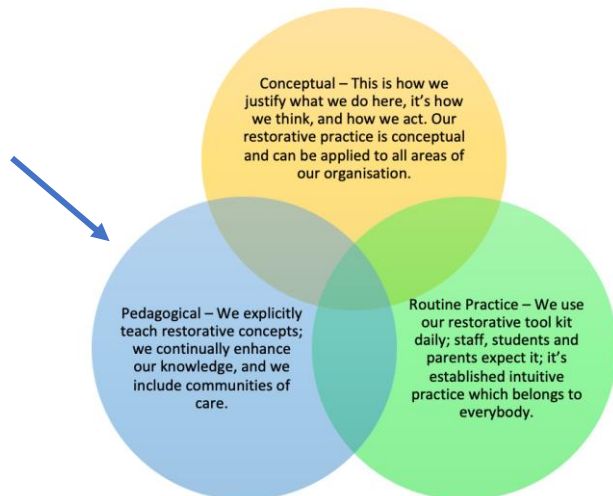
Restorative practice permeating into culture is clearly a deciding factor when considering implementation, the difference here perhaps is that participants spoke about being restorative themselves and it could therefore be considered that the work transcends culture into the conceptual and ideological realms.



Pedagogical:

Data showed that participants explicitly taught restorative concepts; they continually enhanced their knowledge and included communities of care in these learning opportunities. This is restorative pedagogy: the method and practice of teaching the conceptual and theoretical concepts of restorative practice.

Restorative practice was also explicitly taught to students, and participants described how they prioritised emotional literacy as a prerequisite to restorative practice. Others talked about specific resources they had developed and how circle time, daily check-ins and time spent understanding the needs of others, were all built into every-day learning. Restorative practice was also described as being taught as discrete lessons with learning outcomes linked to the core values (Hopkins, 1999) of RP.



Routine Practice:

This is participants using their restorative tool kit daily, and staff, students and parents expecting to see it as established intuitive practice.

“Students are not humiliated or dressed down, they are supported and directed to manage their own behaviour and emotions... if there are any significant incidents or obstacles between students or between a student and a member of staff then, if both parties are willing, it can be resolved through a mend-it meeting where a facilitator supports them to discuss the issue and find a way to move forward.” - Pastoral Support Worker

“It is often the little things we do that matter, such as asking them a question about something they told you they were going to do the day before or laughing at a shared joke... sometimes, it is being willing to be a little vulnerable ourselves and share what we are feeling that then allows students to be open themselves.” - Class Teacher



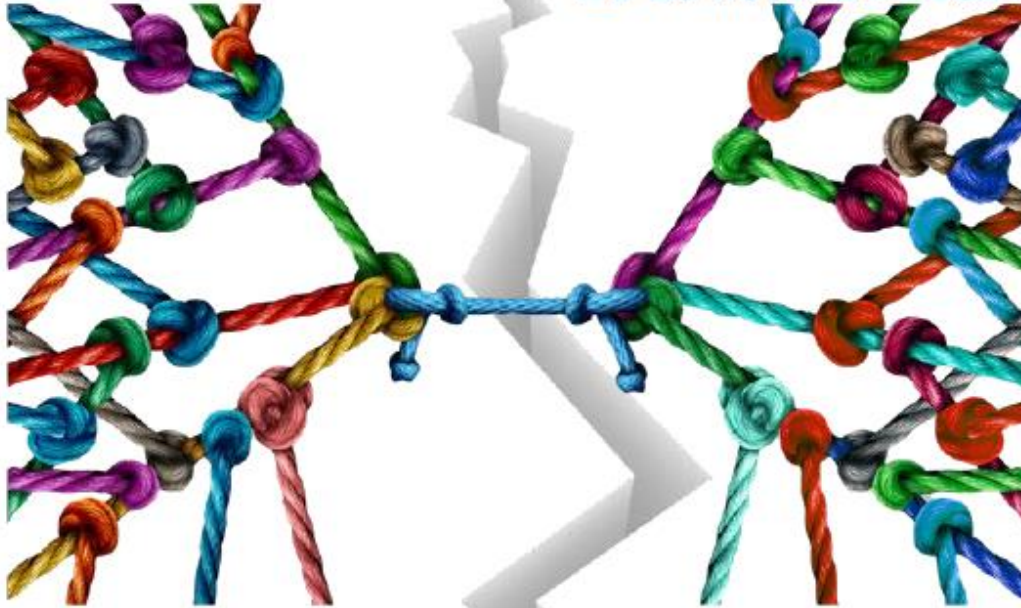
Analysis:

- Participants in this study felt that they were restorative people, and these were values that they attributed to themselves rather than the school
- This study is situated within evaluation for knowledge and provides a deeper understanding of RP in education allowing for a window into the world of a restorative school.
- It highlights what participants wanted to share about their practice and categorises these ideas into themes. These themes could be defined as a restorative paradigm with the diagram acting as a visual metaphor for a restorative school.
- Specific task analysis has not taken place, but the foundations of this have been laid by articulating mend-it-meetings as a key restorative tool in this organisation
- Whilst the research portrays RP as ill-defined, it is not a 'given' in any specific context. In this school for example, this study suggests that RP is clearly defined, well understood by staff and has become routine practice





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Presentation 2:

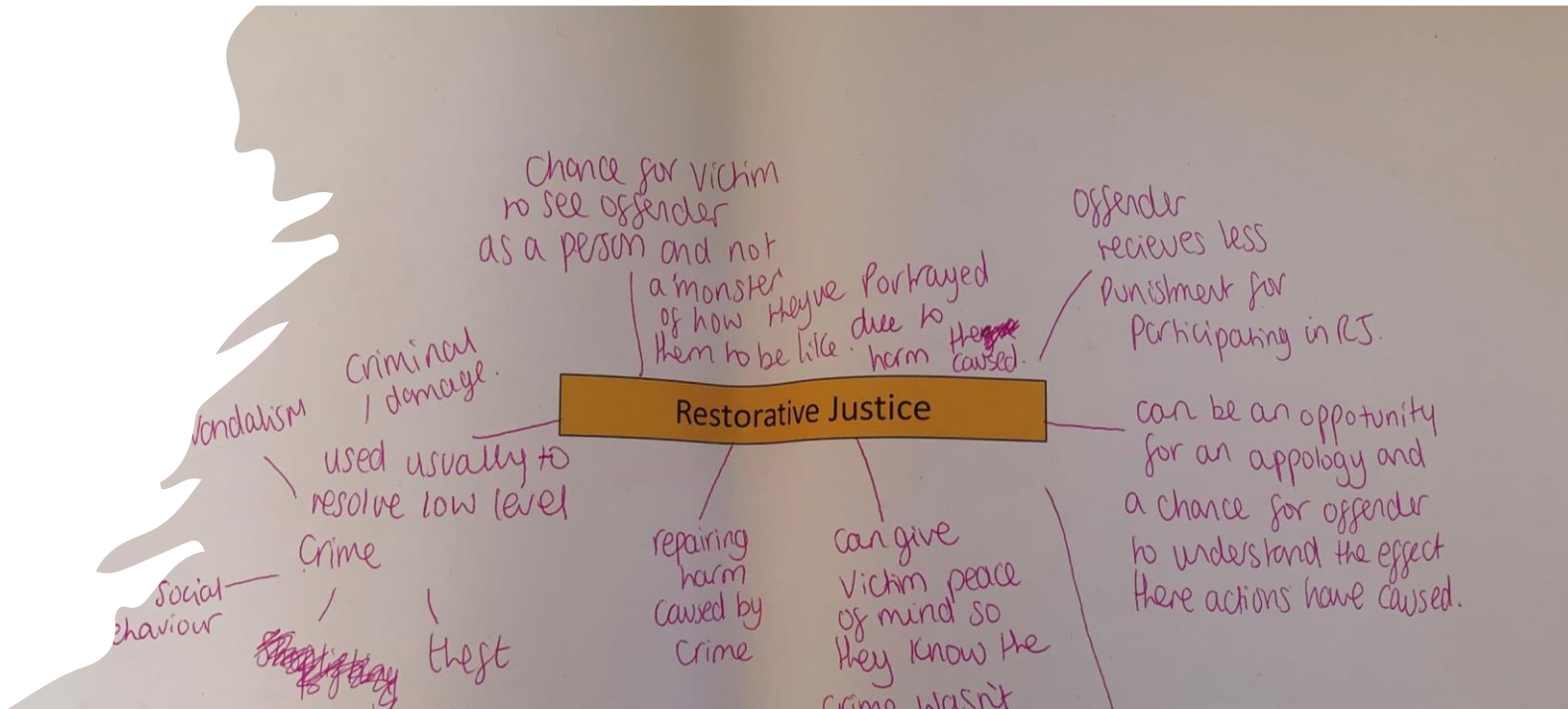
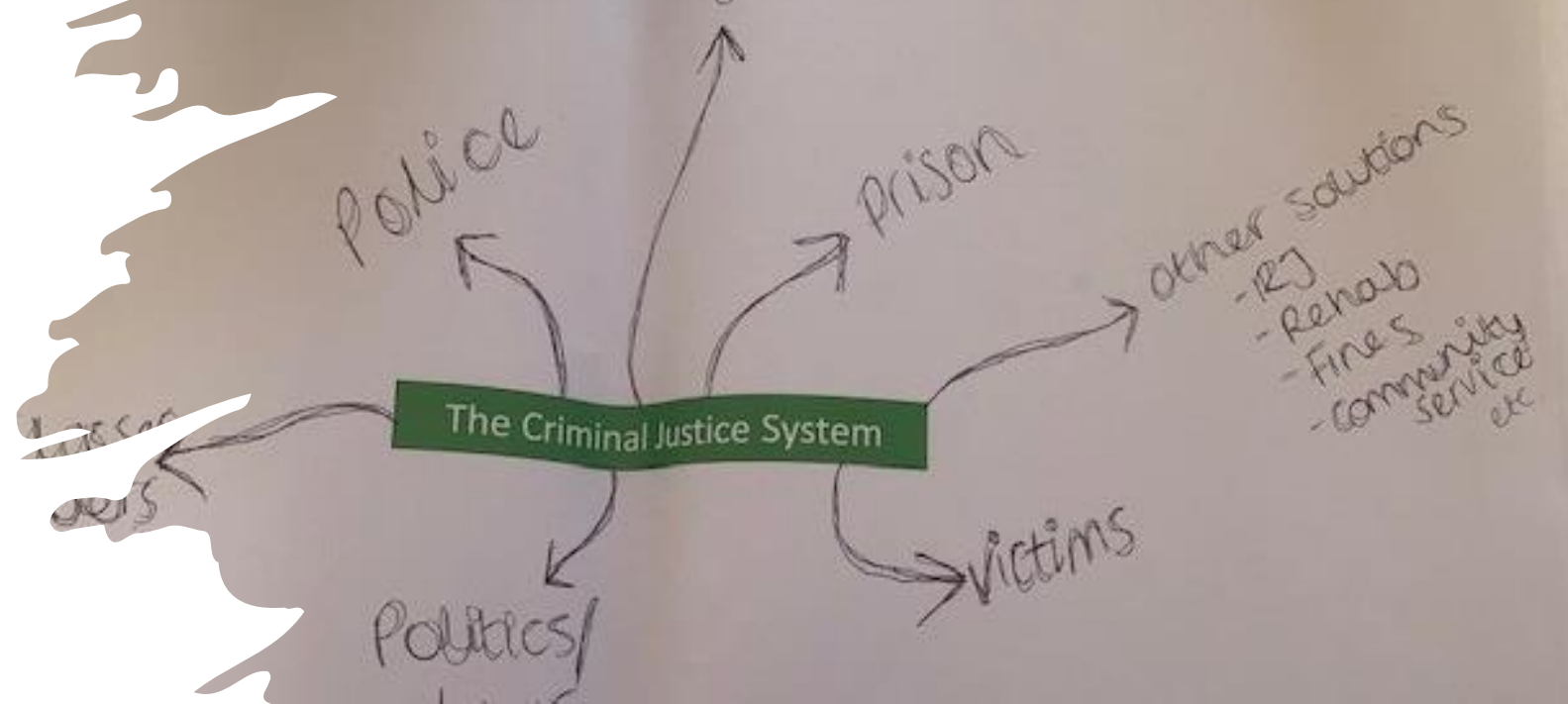
Rowan Sweeney
York St John University

Restorative justice in undergraduate criminology: the potential of restorative pedagogy.

Rowan Sweeney

York St John University

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Overview

Outline research aim and methods



Explore the use of restorative pedagogy in criminology



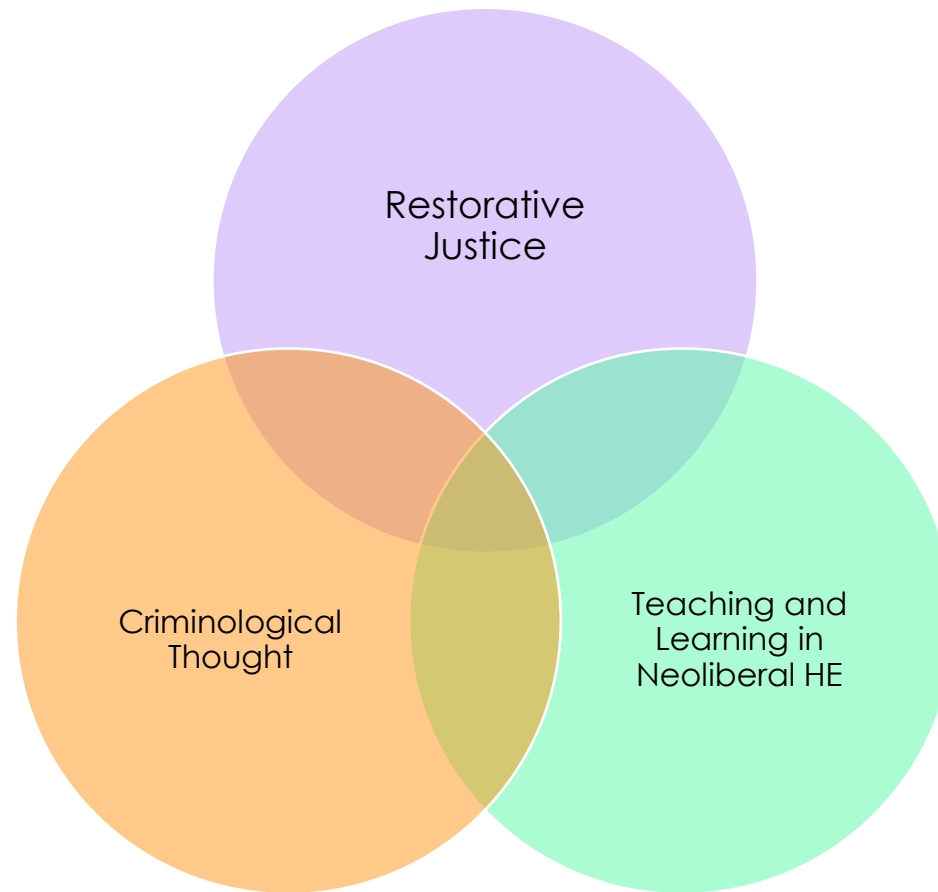
Consider the successes and challenges of restorative pedagogy for criminology



Critically examine the production, and exclusion, of restorative justice knowledge(s) in undergraduate criminology curricula in England and Wales.

“Given the international growth of and increasing support for restorative justice over the last thirty years, surprisingly little has been written on how this subject is taught within universities”

(Deckert and Wood 2013: 70).



Criminology is one of the “most rapidly expanding parts of the social sciences” (Young 2011: 1), and arguably one of the quickest developing academic disciplines in the United Kingdom (Bowling and Ross 2002; McLaughlin and Muncie 2013).

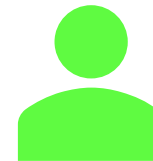
Research design and methods



33 of 2,324 criminology modules with restorative justice




10 modules focused on restorative justice



Interviews with academic (10)

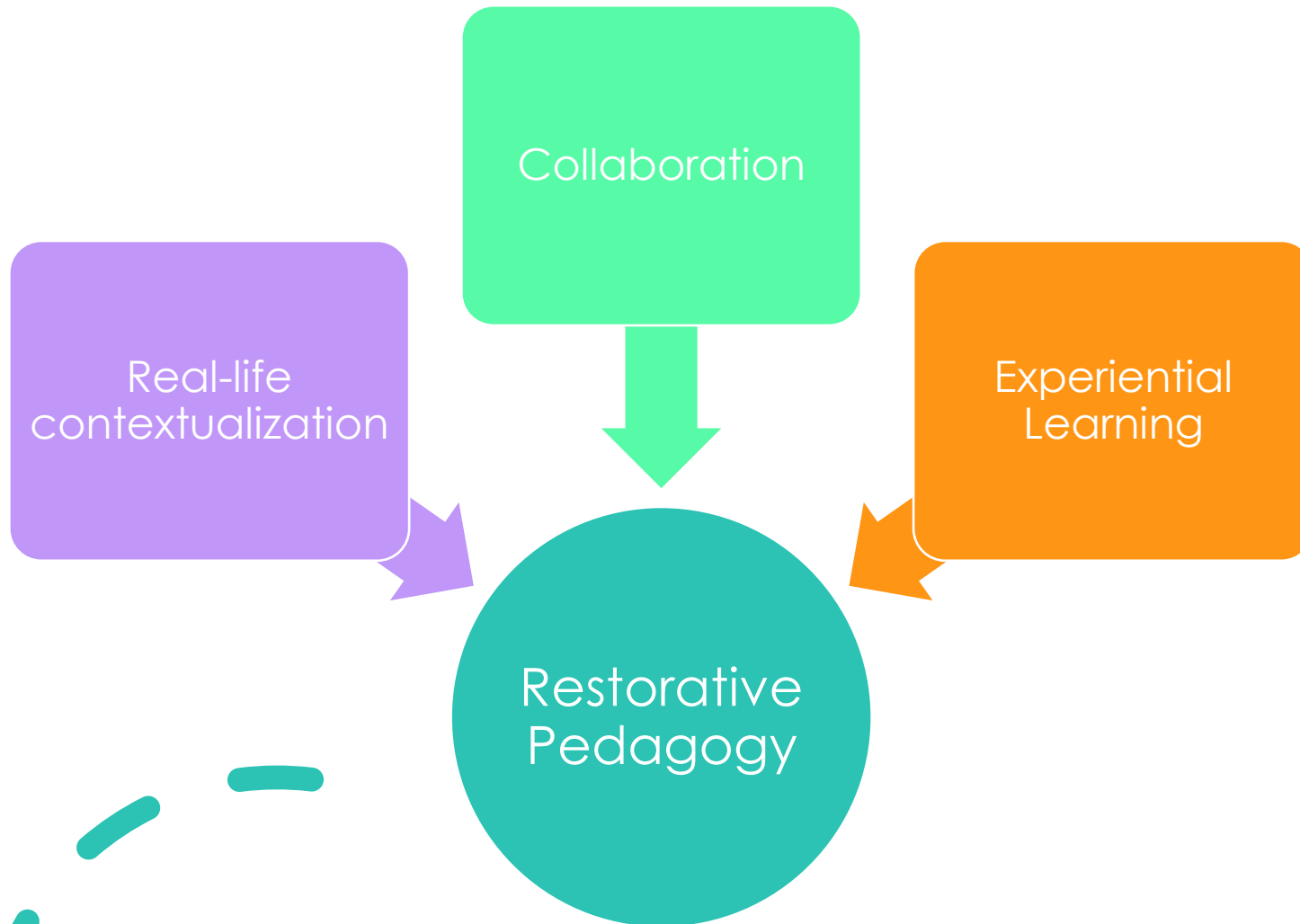


Focus groups with students (3)



Approaches to restorative justice teaching and learning

Restorative pedagogy



Restorative practice is a way of being, a style which informs “daily interactions with family, friends, colleagues, and indeed the general public” (Hopkins 2015: 11).

Real-life contextualisation

- Videos
- Case studies
- Guest speakers
- Conference attendance

“Real world examples
help bridge the gap
between the conceptual
and the actual”
[Interview 8].

“It’s easy to dehumanise people a lot, you’re
generalising people into boxes, and you
don’t look at that person as a person
anymore, it’s just a theory, it’s just number.
Whereas seeing things in videos it does help
putting it into context.”
(Year 2 Student)

Collaboration

- Debate
- Group working
- Discussion
- Removal of power imbalances
- Less formal class structure

“Yeah, we try to discuss, we try to participate, the sessions tend to be very informal, in the spirit of restorative justice, encouraging participation, debate, often people disagree, but it tends to be a very nice debate.”

(Interview 5)

“And so you know, that kind of element is really really important, and the kind of group work and the facilitating discussions and their ability to feel safe with me, but also to challenge what I'm saying... You know... and trying to facilitate that environment whereby people feel...safe.”

[Interview 2]

“I think having the different elements of it – rather than just having a three-hour lecture – it was group work and talking to people about it and I did really enjoy that style of teaching.”

(Year 3 student)

Experiential learning

- Restorative practice
- Role play of restorative justice encounters
- Sharing circles
- Restorative problem-solving tasks

"Introduces them to reflecting on two different parties, to any event but also overcoming this kind of misconception that offenders don't understand what they have done wrong and that they are just fine with everything."

[Interview 2]

"My favourite thing was we did check-ins every week, every morning, and to start with I was petrified, I wasn't really listening to what other people were saying, I was so nervous about what I was going to say.

But by the third week, we'd go round pass the ball round and say how we're feeling, I really like to see how that was applied in our lectures, so what we were learning we could see it, we could feel it a bit more."

[Year 3 Student]

"They [facilitators] ran a problem-solving circle, with an issue they had with their flat mates or something like that. And we went round the room, and everybody gave potential solutions. That sort of applied thing is not only a great experience but it's a really nice way for students to not just hear someone explain this kind of stuff. But to participate in it and understand it by being involved."

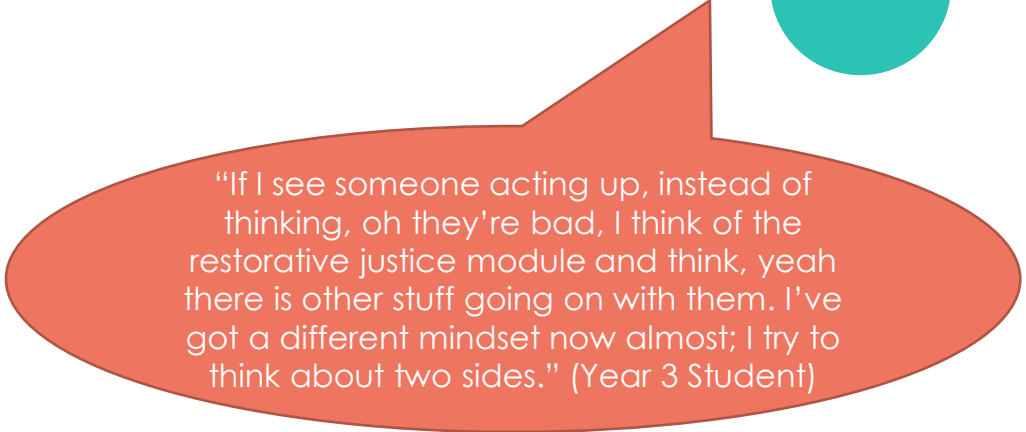
[Interview 8]



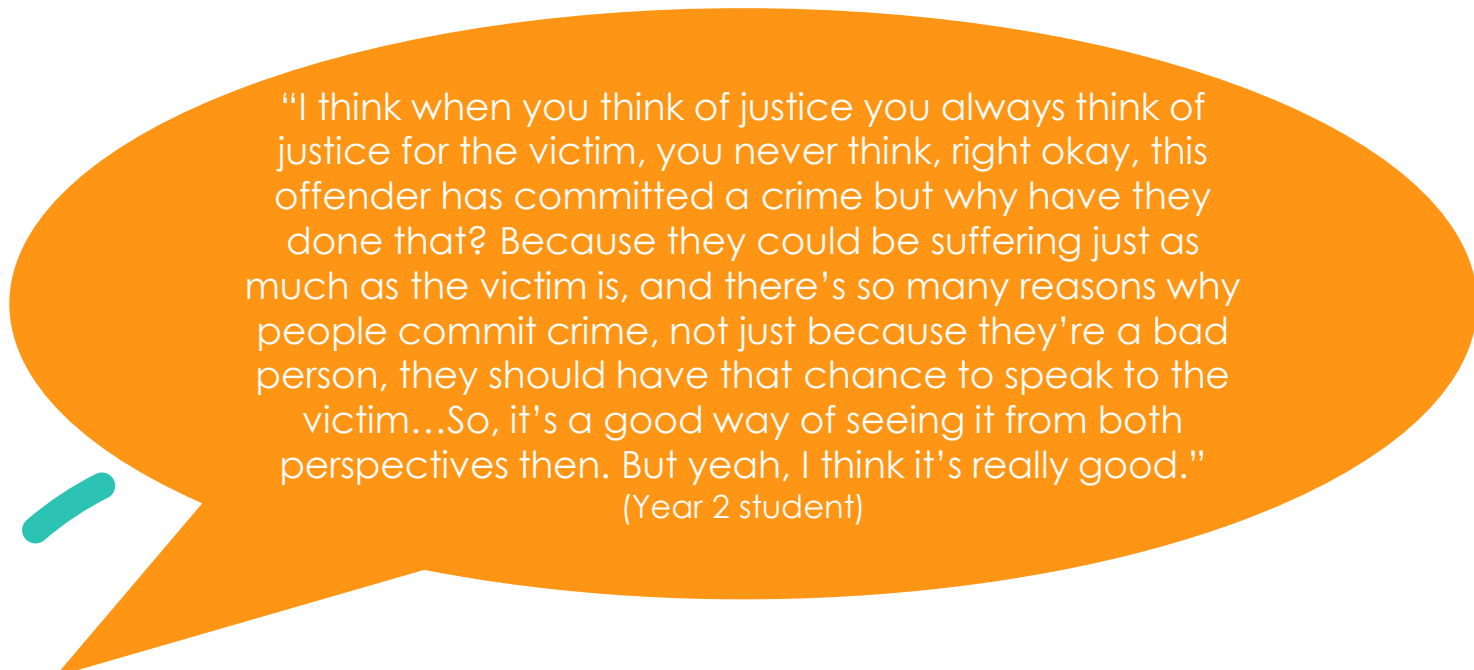
Successes and challenges

Successful learning outcomes

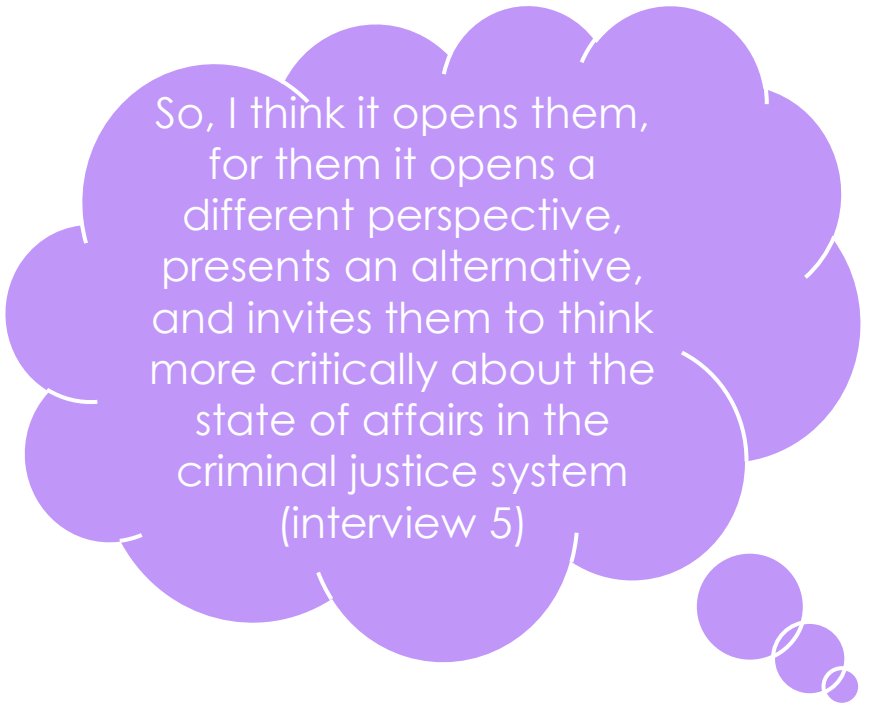
- Critical criminological thinking
- Humanising criminological concepts
- Students as social actors



"If I see someone acting up, instead of thinking, oh they're bad, I think of the restorative justice module and think, yeah there is other stuff going on with them. I've got a different mindset now almost; I try to think about two sides." (Year 3 Student)



"I think when you think of justice you always think of justice for the victim, you never think, right okay, this offender has committed a crime but why have they done that? Because they could be suffering just as much as the victim is, and there's so many reasons why people commit crime, not just because they're a bad person, they should have that chance to speak to the victim...So, it's a good way of seeing it from both perspectives then. But yeah, I think it's really good."
(Year 2 student)



So, I think it opens them, for them it opens a different perspective, presents an alternative, and invites them to think more critically about the state of affairs in the criminal justice system
(interview 5)

Challenges of facilitating restorative pedagogy

- Lack of awareness of restorative justice
- Access to resources
- Class size and time
- Module structure
- Unconnected teaching and learning approaches in department

"I would quite like to have students sort of play out a restorative justice scenario. But I don't know how, like it's really complicated isn't it you know. Like what roles they play, it's not an easy thing to role play."
[Interview 9]

"You know the extent to which my colleagues are integrated into what I do, its not necessarily a great amount."
[Interview 4]

"When you are looking for resources online, I mean I don't know if others have maybe had a different experience, but I remember being really frustrated that there wasn't, that I couldn't find, decent videos that illustrated it in an eloquent and concise way which you could show as part of a lecture really."
[Interview 10]

Conclusion

Restorative pedagogy offers an **innovative and valuable approach to teaching and learning in criminology**, and beyond.

Through real-life examples, collaboration, and experiential learning **complex, abstract, concepts (like restorative justice) are relatable and understandable for students.**

Questions raised by exploring restorative justice via a **restorative pedagogic approach enables humanisation of topics and concepts encouraging critical thinking and social action** among students.

Conflict between restorative pedagogy and 'traditional' approaches to teaching and learning influence **the extent to which restorative pedagogy can be developed** in higher education settings.

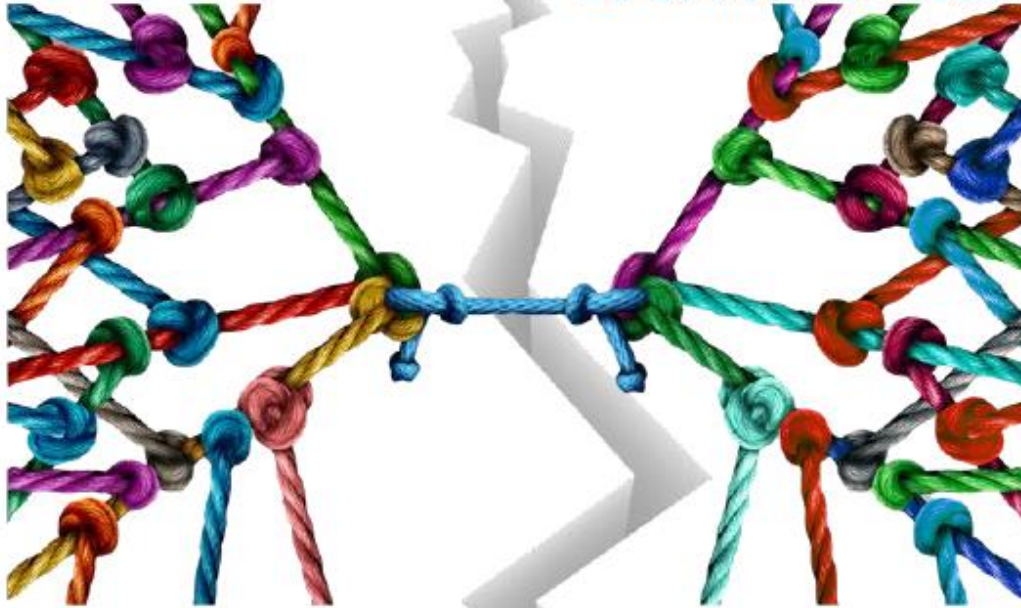


Thank you for listening, any
questions?

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Presentation 3:

Dr Brian Payne
Ulster University

An Adult Restorative justice Strategy for Northern Ireland: Defining the roles for State, Community and Civic Society



Incore
International Conflict
Research Institute

Dr Brian Payne
Ulster University



Growing Restorative Justice in the Context of 'Post' Conflict Northern Ireland

- The community Projects
- Youth Justice
- Police





Enduring Issues

- Segregation in a 'Divided Society'
- Inequality and Social Separation
- Access to Services and State Legitimacy
- Over-Representation in the Criminal Justice System

Proposals for an Adult Restorative Justice Strategy

- Building on the growth of restorative practice both inside and outside of justice
- Towards an overarching and strategic approach
- Placing victims front and central
- Engaging and challenging offenders
- Bridging State and Community
- Improving outcomes for those involved and transforming communities



Defining Roles for State, Communities and Civil Society



- The ambition for a “Centre of Restorative Excellence”
 - Bringing the state to communities or communities to state?
 - Who might be involved?
 - Standards, Accreditation and Training.
 - At what stage of the Criminal Justice System?
 - The role for non Justice?
 - Towards a restorative society?

Thanks for listening!

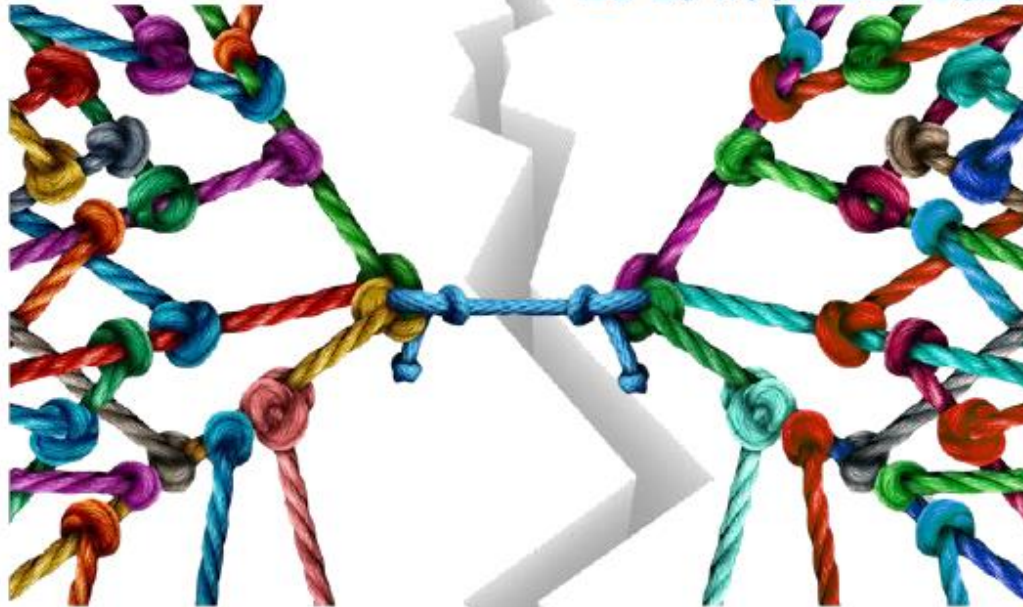
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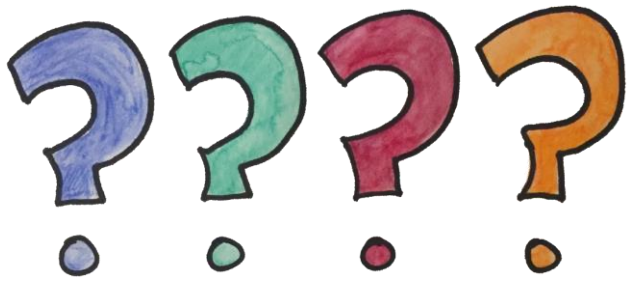


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Summary of questions



Q. How long did it take for RJ to become an embedded practice in your school?

Tom: It's a difficult processes, it doesn't happen overnight. It's a continual journey: for new staff, for new parents, and of course the new students coming into Year 7 each . One teacher is running an idea of students being 'restorative champions', with training as part of an inset day in September. As a school we are linked with transforming conflict and Belinda Hopkins – but the investment takes time.

Q: do you use restorative approaches with team-teach and restraint?

Tom: 95% of team teach is about escalation without being hands on - this reflects well with restorative practice. We do have team teach and restraint, but it is much lower than other schools – we cant say its causal, but its interesting. You can only have restorative conversations if its safe.

Q: How do we encourage other schools to become restorative?

Tom: You can help schools to relict on this process. that might include supporting the development of school reediness tools and other improvement tools that can be used as evidence for other stakeholders. There could be value in a tool shared with Ofsted that could be part of an Ofsted feedback process. In terms of staff absence, you could also support them to think about this through restorative lens; to think how we can use RP to support this.



Q. What is so interesting is how pedagogy can transform teaching not just in criminology but also in teaching. Its about transforming the way that you are and the way that you teach! But How do we develop this – is it a top-down approach that comes from systems and processes, or is it bottom-up approach that grows organically?

Rowan: Some of this is top-down, for instance within universities this might be about the way that the organisation is set up or how it supports these processes. There are organisational impediments, such as class numbers, and structure of a university reduces the capacity to have time to some of the things we might want to do. We need a two step approach: grass roots but also backing of the institutions.

Brian: In Northern Ireland, there is a huge mandate for implementing RJ in schools. For example, in recent there has been a request that RJ is built into new anti-bullying legislation coming through. But at the moment its coming from the bottom up, there isn't the institutional support. The 'Bottom' is doing their best, but they need support from the top down. The DFE needs to produce a legislative mandate.

TPL: it is true that a mandate would help, but the challenge to that is the equality: if implemented it has to come with standards and training packages so that delivery is consistent and sufficient.