

NOTE TO USERS

This reproduction is the best copy available.

UMI[®]



uOttawa

L'Université canadienne
Canada's university

**FACULTÉ DES ÉTUDES SUPÉRIEURES
ET POSTDOCTORALES**



uOttawa

L'Université canadienne
Canada's university

**FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND
POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES**

Kristin Reimer

AUTEUR DE LA THÈSE / AUTHOR OF THESIS

M.A. (Education)

GRADE / DEGREE

Faculty of Education

FACULTÉ, ÉCOLE, DÉPARTEMENT / FACULTY, SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT

**Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers of Change: A Case Study of the Implementation of
Restorative Justice in One Ontario Public School**

TITRE DE LA THÈSE / TITLE OF THESIS

Lorna McLean

DIRECTEUR (DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS SUPERVISOR

CO-DIRECTEUR (CO-DIRECTRICE) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS CO-SUPERVISOR

EXAMINATEURS (EXAMINATRICES) DE LA THÈSE / THESIS EXAMINERS

Sharon Cook

David Smith

Gary W. Slater

Le Doyen de la Faculté des études supérieures et postdoctorales / Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

**Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers of Change:
A Case Study of the Implementation of Restorative Justice
in one Ontario Public School**

By Kristin Reimer
Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Thesis presented to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies,
University of Ottawa
For completion of the degree of Master of Arts (Education)

Thesis Advisor:
Dr. Lorna McLean
Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Thesis Committee:

Dr. Sharon Cook
Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

Dr. David Smith
Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa



Library and Archives
Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file *Votre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-61214-9
Our file *Notre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-61214-9

NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.


Canada

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

Acknowledgements

First I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Lorna McLean. Your openness and kind guidance were invaluable as I both explored a topic very dear to me and somewhat awkwardly tried on the hat of the academic. I have greatly appreciated your insight, humour and creativity, and hold you in the highest regard, both personally and professionally. I would also like to express my gratitude to the members of my thesis committee, Dr. Sharon Cook and Dr. David Smith. To Dr. Cook, your tireless curiosity, enthusiasm and knowledge of the world around you are inspiring. I am honoured that your voice and advice could enrich my work. To Dr. Smith, thank you for contributing your understanding of restorative justice to my research and challenging me throughout the process as you brought forth insights from your own studies.

Special thanks to the participants of this study who shared their time and energy with me and graciously allowed me access to their busy lives. All the best in your continued work as dedicated teachers and administrators, touching the lives of the many young people who walk through your doors.

I would also like to thank my parents who unconditionally support me with their love and prayers and the rest of my family and friends who always refresh and enliven me. Finally, to my partner Louis, thank you for loving me unconditionally, believing in me unreasonably and giving me the space to stretch my mind.

Abstract

This qualitative case study explores the implementation of restorative justice within one Ontario Public School. Restorative justice is a philosophy and a process for dealing with harmful behaviour, viewing such behaviour as a violation of relationships, not rules. My research seeks to present how restorative justice has been implemented in one school, situating this experience within the literature on educational reform. This research reaches beyond an examination of the effectiveness of restorative justice to an exploration of how teachers and administrators think and feel about, and actually employ, restorative justice practices. Findings suggest that while there exists personal commitment to the practice of restorative justice on the part of both teachers and administrators, if necessary structures and cultural systems are not in place, then it is difficult to sustain the restorative justice program. This study identifies the crucial factors needed to sustain a transformative reform such as restorative justice.

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
ABSTRACT	5
TABLE OF CONTENTS	7
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	9
DEFINING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	10
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT	12
SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY	13
DEFINITION OF TERMS	13
<i>Defining restorative justice.</i>	13
<i>Defining restorative justice in schools.</i>	16
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	21
EFFECTIVENESS OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE	21
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN SCHOOL SETTINGS.....	26
EDUCATIONAL REFORM.....	32
CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	37
THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.....	37
PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND PARADIGMS	40
CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY	43
PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE	43
DATA COLLECTION	46
DATA ANALYSES	48
STRATEGIES FOR VALIDATING FINDINGS	50
CHAPTER FIVE: THE CONTEXT	53
THE REGION	54
THE SCHOOL BOARD	55
THE SCHOOL	63
CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS	69
THEME 1: DEFINITION OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE	71
THEME 2: ENACTMENT OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE.....	73
THEME 3: INAPPROPRIATE USE	75
THEME 4: TRANSMISSION	76
THEME 5: BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS	78
THEME 6: BENEFITS FOR SCHOOL COMMUNITY.....	80
THEME 7: POSITIVELY FITS WITH PAST THEORIES.....	81
THEME 8: OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME	83
THEME 9: RESTORATIVE JUSTICE REQUIRES STRONG COMMUNITY	84
THEME 10: WORKING AGAINST MAINSTREAM CULTURE.....	88
THEME 11: COLLEGIAL COLLABORATION	89
THEME 12: COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS	91
THEME 13: TOP-DOWN SUPPORT	93
THEME 14: FEELING OUT OF THE LOOP	95
THEME 15: LACK OF SUSTAINABILITY	96
CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION	101
CONSTRUCTING PERSONAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE	102
FACILITATING ADOPTION OF NEW PERSONAL PRACTICAL THEORIES	104

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

COMPLICATING CONTEXTUAL FACTORS OF STRUCTURE AND CULTURE.....	106
INCONSISTENT SUPPORT FROM GATEKEEPERS OF CHANGE.....	111
CONCLUSION OF DISCUSSION	115
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION	117
CONTRIBUTIONS / IMPLICATIONS	120
LIMITATIONS	121
FURTHER RESEARCH.....	123
REFERENCE LIST	125
APPENDIX A	139
APPENDIX B.....	140
APPENDIX C	141
APPENDIX D	142

Chapter One: Introduction

In 2000, the Ontario Ministry of Education introduced the Safe Schools Act (Bill 81), designed to “increase respect and responsibility” and to “set standards for safe learning and safe teaching in schools” (p.1). Educators and administrators, in a desire to create safe schools and comply with Bill 81, responded to this legislation in a variety of ways. Some schools emphasized mandatory consequences for student actions as outlined in the Act; others focused on progressive discipline; and still others introduced preventative measures such as anti-bullying, conflict resolution and community-building programs (Safe Schools Action Team, 2006).

Notably, a few Ontario school boards embraced restorative justice as a way to think holistically about safe schools, conflict, punishment, relationships and community. Restorative justice is an ancient concept with strong roots in many traditions. While the approach has been used broadly in the criminal justice setting, its popularity and practice in the educational setting is relatively recent (Drewery, 2004). At the core of its philosophy, restorative justice views harm as a violation of people and relationships, rather than of rules or laws. Community Justice Initiatives, a Canadian non-profit organization recognized as having started the first modern restorative justice program, located in Kitchener, Ontario, defines restorative justice as “a way of addressing conflict and crime that engages the person who caused the harm, people who were affected by the harm, and the community” (Community Justice Initiatives Website, About Us section, ¶ 2).

With this study, I entered into an exploration of one school board that chose to introduce a restorative justice approach into its schools as part of its Safe Schools

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

initiative. The purpose of this bounded case study was to discover and analyze how restorative justice was being experienced and implemented by teachers and administrators in a specific Ontario Public School Board. This case (the restorative justice approach) was bounded by place (one school within the School Board) and time (School Year 2008/2009). My research seeks to present how restorative justice has been implemented in one school, situating this experience within the literature on educational reform.

Defining the Research Questions

Prior research in both the justice and education systems, conducted in Canada, the United States and Australia, have indicated that restorative justice deals effectively with inappropriate behaviour by reducing recidivism rates and promoting positive relationships (Arnott, 2007; Morrison & Martinez, 2001; Porter, 2007; Riestenberg, 2003a; White, 1998). With this research, I reach beyond an examination of the effectiveness of restorative justice to an exploration of how teachers and administrators—the people in the education system with the most opportunities to utilize restorative justice on a daily basis—think and feel about, and actually employ, restorative justice practices. Teachers and administrators, and the meanings they ascribe to restorative justice, have the potential to greatly influence the ways in which restorative justice practices are or are not implemented.

While there is a growing body of research on the effectiveness of restorative justice in schools and its impact on the lives of students, there has been little written about the teachers and administrators who implement restorative approaches. Even less has

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

emerged from a Canadian context. This research was an investigation of teachers and administrators employed by an Ontario School Board that implemented a board-wide restorative justice approach. While many teachers and administrators of this School Board were trained in the same restorative justice approach, the manner in which individuals understood, experienced and implemented restorative justice varied widely. To examine these differences of understanding and practice—differences among individual teachers and administrators and between teachers, administrators and the School Board—this research asked the following three related questions: How do teachers and administrators perceive restorative justice and its implementation in their school? How do teachers and administrators perceive their own roles in enacting restorative justice practices? And, how do the teachers' and administrators' perspectives fit with the School Board's understanding of restorative justice?

Teachers and administrators do not operate in a vacuum, but within a culture and context that affect their actions and beliefs. By speaking with those people who are entrusted to bring life to the practice of restorative justice, while also being cognizant of the context within which they are working, we are given a window into the factors that help restorative justice to flourish in schools as well as those that damage its chances of survival. Understanding the experience of teachers and administrators adds to our knowledge of educational reform theory, and thus strengthens the probability of future effective implementation.

Autobiographical Statement

I come to this research as a restorative justice practitioner and advocate. I first received training in the field in 1999 in Ontario as a volunteer with a victim-offender mediation centre. Soon after I moved to the United States where for six years I worked and studied in the fields of conflict transformation and restorative justice. My restorative justice work included facilitating meetings between juvenile offenders and their victims, working with victims and perpetrators of crimes of severe violence, assisting churches to think through restorative responses to harm, helping to facilitate restorative circles in schools to deal with inappropriate behaviour and, as part of a team, training volunteer facilitators in restorative justice philosophy and process. Currently I volunteer with several restorative justice organizations: I facilitate victim-offender meetings; I support a long-term sex offender in living safely within the community; and I am part of the Ottawa-area Restorative Justice Network, a group that seeks to expand restorative justice services in the Ottawa area through networking and increasing public awareness. I am also a recently certified teacher, preparing to use a restorative justice philosophy in my own classroom. As is true for all researchers, I do not approach my research from a neutral position.

Yet I entered into this research not to substantiate my own beliefs, but to understand as fully as possible the state of restorative justice in the school system. I was not interested in confirming my belief that restorative justice is an effective and powerful philosophy for schools, but rather in exploring how other educators feel about and experience it. I believe that my passion for restorative justice assisted me in being a

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

critical researcher; I would like to see restorative justice implemented as effectively as possible and was therefore driven to discover both stumbling blocks, as well as that which eases implementation.

Significance of Study

Educators, in an effort to create safe and effective learning environments, often find themselves bombarded by new ideas, philosophies and trends. Depending on a large number of contributing factors, some of these new ideas take root and others disappear quite rapidly. While the quality of the new idea is obviously part of the dynamic, quality is not the sole determiner of which programs become successfully institutionalized (Feldman, 2000; Fullan, 1995).

In the past ten years, a number of Canadian school boards have decided to introduce restorative justice practices to the teachers and administrators employed in their region. As with any idea, it attracts both its advocates and its opponents. If we believe, as the research has indicated, that restorative justice helps create safer, more welcoming schools, then we need to ensure that it is implemented creatively and utilized to its full potential. By exploring how educators in one School Board experienced and implemented a restorative justice approach, we increase the understanding of educational reform and better attend to obstacles to implementation that may arise.

Definition of Terms

Defining restorative justice.

Restorative justice is a diverse, multi-layered concept. To suggest that there exists one

universal definition of restorative justice is, as Johnstone and Van Ness (2007) purported, to present restorative justice as a “more limited and more impoverished movement than it truly is” (p. 9). There are both tensions and connections among the various definitions, allowing for agreement as well as continued reflection on the nature of restorative justice.

While the idea of restorative justice has been articulated in Western societies only since the early 1970s, the concept draws from a rich source of related knowledge found in such areas as community justice, peacemaking circles of various First Nations’ groups in Canada and the United States, biblical interpretations of justice, mediation, Maori meetings, African village moots, and re-integrative shaming theory, among many others (Schweigert, 1999). The emergence of restorative justice as a field is often accredited to a 1974 criminal case involving two young men who committed vandalism in Elmira, Ontario, Canada and subsequently met with all available victims, negotiated restitution and repaid the victims completely within months. This case gave birth to the victim-offender reconciliation movement—one example of restorative justice—across Canada and, a few years later, in the United States (Sawin & Zehr, 2007; Zehr, 1990; see also Peachey, 1989).

The “Elmira Case” emerged from discontent with the perceived inflexibility and impersonal nature of the retributive model of state justice. American Howard Zehr (1990) depicted the modern retributive justice system as one that viewed the state as the real victim and denied any participatory role to actual victims. He wrote, “Justice consists of establishing blame and administering pain in a battle grounded by rules. The process is assumed to be the responsibility—indeed, a monopoly—of the state” (p. 82). Current Ottawa Police Chief, Vernon White, concurred with Zehr in his 1998 Master’s thesis on

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

restorative justice, characterizing justice in Canada as a “system that is increasingly institutionalized, bureaucratized and less personal than it was previously. This has resulted in the words victim and community being dropped from mainstream justice and replaced with the word ‘the state’” (p. 4).

Restorative justice proponents seek to re-personalize the justice system, bestowing priority on the actual victim, offender and community, rather than the anonymous state and thus transforming the way societies respond to crime and other inappropriate behaviour. Zehr (2002), often referred to as the grandfather of modern restorative justice, summarized the approach by stating that violence is not simply a violation of a law or rule, but a violation of people and of interpersonal relationships; violations create obligations; and the central obligation is to right the wrongs.

In its attention to relationships, it is clear that restorative justice is not only a process, but also a set of values and principles. While there are slight variances in the articulation and naming of these shared values, Toews (2007) listed the values underpinning restorative justice as interconnectedness, respect, transformation, accountability, participation, transparency, humility, self-determination, trust and care. These values are, as Sawatsky (2001) pointed out, “strikingly different” from the modern Western justice system but quite coherent with many traditions, cultures and ways of being. By attending to these restorative values, restorative justice practitioners and proponents, regardless of differences in definition, attempt to develop processes that make things as right as possible for all affected by harm.

Defining restorative justice in schools.

The application of restorative justice in schools, at least in North America, emerged from dissatisfaction among some educators with aspects of the school system, particularly punitive forms of discipline and “zero tolerance” policies. Zero tolerance policies name certain behaviours as unacceptable and mandate predetermined consequences for students who participate in such behaviour. They were developed in the 1980s by the U.S. Customs Agency in order to target the illegal drug trade and were introduced to American school systems in 1990 with the passing of the Gun-Free Schools Act (Martinez, 2009). While initially intended for use strictly in regards to firearms, zero tolerance policies were amended federally and later by district to include offences such as weapon possession, illegal drug and alcohol possession, fighting among students, and even disrespect (Casella, 2003). Daniel and Bondy (2008) called zero tolerance policies “standardized solutions to complex issues” (p. 2). Canada, too, embraced the idea that zero tolerance policies would lead to safer schools. Although the phrase zero tolerance was never specifically used in Ontario’s Safe Schools Act (2000), the Act was seen as much more prescriptive than previous legislation and the phrase did enter into the Canadian media as well as many Canadian school discipline policies around the same time (Daniel & Bondy, 2008). Martinez (2009) emphasized that there has been little research to prove the effectiveness of zero tolerance policies on creating safer schools; the only conclusive data revealed that zero tolerance policies resulted in an increase in the number of suspensions, a fact that Martinez believed did little for long-term positive change in schools.

In contrast to zero discipline policies, restorative justice views inappropriate behaviour as a violation of relationships, not rules. Built upon the same principles and practices as utilized in responding to the criminal justice system, restorative justice in the school setting diverges from traditional discipline in which punishment is meted out by an authority above and instead focuses on “long-term healing for all affected and reintegrating offenders back into the school community” (McCullough, 2007, p. 55).

The movement in the school system is sometimes renamed in order to distance itself from its criminal justice connections, being called restorative discipline, restorative response, or restorative practice, among others (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005; Mennonite Central Committee, 2007; Morrison, 2007). For the purpose of this research, I will continue to use the term restorative justice to refer to its application within school settings, as that is the term most commonly used by the School Board where I conducted my research.

In the school setting, restorative justice draws upon the strength of a number of similar movements such as conflict resolution education, character education, moral education and emotional literacy (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005; Morrison, 2007; Schweigert, 1999). Conflict resolution education (CRE) teaches skills that “help people actively and nonviolently solve problems” (Association for Conflict Resolution, What is Conflict Resolution Education Section, ¶ 2). The three distinct areas of character education, moral education and emotional literacy, rather than concentrate on teaching skills to resolve conflicts, focus on building social and emotional intelligence, and encouraging positive values and behaviours (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005; Morrison, 2007). Restorative justice marries the skills of CRE with the relational focus of the other movements. Amstutz and

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

Mullet (2005) have illustrated the marriage by comparing the key question of CRE (“How can you solve the problem?”) with that of restorative justice (“How can you put it right?”). They wrote, “The first focuses on finding a solution that is fair and acceptable to all parties; restorative discipline adds the additional layer of working on the relationship that was harmed or deterred” (p. 20). For this layer, restorative justice draws on the lessons of movements such as character education, moral education and emotional literacy, among others.

Although many educators and educational leaders, both within the movements mentioned above and of their own accord, have inherently practiced being restorative, the field of restorative justice provides a framework within which to encourage such restorative values and build restorative processes. Restorative values play out in a continuum of practices in the school context, ranging from classroom circles to peer mediation to multi-party restorative conferences. Although circles and conferences vary in structure and purpose, they are generally facilitated discussions involving victims, offenders, and, often, other affected individuals such as family members, friends, school personnel and community members. According to Amstutz and Mullet (2005) circles are often used as preventative measures: for class meetings, community problem-solving and for re-integrating suspended students into the classroom. Conferences, on the other hand, are often used as responses when serious harms have been committed: for exploring what happened, what needs to be done to make things as right as possible, and how the situation will be prevented in the future. While descriptions of the restorative practice continuum in schools vary, most writers have agreed that the practices range from preventative measures on one side to dealing with serious incidents of harm on the other

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

(Morrison, 2007). Wachtel and McCold (2001) suggested that restorative justice practices, as they move along the continuum, “involve more people, more planning, more time, are more complex in dealing with the offence, more structured and, due to all those factors, may have more impact on the offender” (p. 125). Regardless of which practices are employed, all must be grounded in restorative values and, taken together, contribute to the creation of a restorative climate in the school (Smith, 2006).

In the creation of this restorative climate, Amstutz and Mullet (2005) discouraged what they referred to as a “cookie-cutter approach” to restorative justice in schools in which set steps are applied to all schools; rather they urged schools to develop their own restorative processes appropriate for their particular contexts, using the following definition to guide their development:

Restorative Justice promotes values and principles that use inclusive, collaborative approaches for being in community. These approaches validate the experiences and needs of everyone within the community, particularly those who have been marginalized, oppressed or harmed. These approaches allow us to act and respond in ways that are healing rather than alienating or coercive. (p.15)

This research attends to the manner in which this definition became a lived reality in one School Board.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Effectiveness of Restorative Justice

Advocates for restorative justice claim that it offers wide ranging benefits for all parties (offenders, victims and community) affected by crime: healing, restitution, low rates of recidivism, and safer, more connected, communities. Indeed, in a meta-analysis conducted in Canada on 22 unique studies of 35 restorative justice programs, Latimer, Dowden and Muise (2001) found that restorative justice programs improved victim and offender satisfaction, increased offender compliance with restitution and decreased recidivism rates of offenders when compared to mainstream justice approaches and, with the exception of offender satisfaction, did so significantly.

While much of the data gathered on restorative justice programs is consistent with an intuitive sense that restorative justice offers a more satisfying justice experience (Hayes, 2007; Latimer et al, 2001), actually proving its effectiveness is quite complex. To begin with, what does it mean for restorative justice to be *effective*? For those who observe the justice system it may seem logical to look to recidivism rates, comparing restorative and mainstream justice, in order to prove the worth of restorative justice; if offenders are affected by what occurs in restorative justice conferences, it logically follows that they would change their behaviour and recidivism rates would decrease. Yet for many proponents of restorative justice, effectiveness cannot be reduced to an examination of recidivism rates. Morris and Young (2000) pointed out that beyond a decrease in reoffending, restorative justice seeks meaningful ways to hold offenders accountable, satisfy victims' needs and restore communities from the harmful effects of crime. As well, as some proponents have noted, restorative justice calls for a fundamental shift in

the manner in which we view and respond to crime (Zehr, 1990; Johnstone, 2002) making it problematic to compare restorative justice with the current mainstream justice system as though they were equivalent. Yet, though the key goals and values of restorative justice may run deeper than recidivism rates, these rates determine the effectiveness of restorative justice programs in the minds of many governments, criminal justice agencies, members of the public and, indeed, some practitioners and advocates of restorative justice. There exists a belief in the restorative justice community that given all the potential positive outcomes, restorative justice should naturally be expected to result in lower rates of reoffending (Braithwaite, 1999; Hayes, 2007; Johnstone, 2002).

Moving, however, from intuitive feelings of what restorative justice *should* do to empirical evidence is no simple step. For one, only a relatively small number of empirical studies exist and with varied results, as will be demonstrated below. The discrepancy in results is partly informed by the fact that restorative justice is a broad concept without a universal definition, serving as an umbrella term for multiple justice processes (Bazemore & Elis, 2007; Hayes, 2007). The varied forms of restorative justice understandably lead to varied effects. Morris and Young (2000) concurred with the idea that personal interpretation of the concept results in a range of practices, suggesting that negative results in some research on restorative justice was related to “bad practice rather than to fundamental flaws in its [restorative justice’s] underlying principles” (p. 20). Besides variation in restorative justice practices, Hayes (2007) highlighted the lack of consistency by researchers in measuring rates of reoffending. Studies Hayes (2007) examined disagreed in terms of the timing of follow-up periods, qualifications for reoffending, and how recidivist events should be counted. Therefore, while studies on the effect of

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

restorative justice on recidivism are important to consider, equally key is tempering their results with the knowledge of the limitations listed above.

Moving to the research that has been conducted on recidivism rates, there are several studies that have reported very positively on the impact of restorative justice. For instance, randomized controlled trials in Indianapolis (McGarrell, Olivares, Crawford & Kroovand, 2000) and Canberra, Australia (Sherman, Strang & Woods, 2000) found that youth violence repeat offending was reduced by as much as 38 percent when restorative justice conferences were used, as compared to similar cases which were prosecuted through the courts. In St. Louis, Missouri, a study conducted by the city's Family Court program showed that from 2001 until mid-2005, 41 percent of juveniles who did not participate in one-on-one dialogues with their victims committed a new crime. The rate for those who began but did not complete the dialogue program was 35 percent, and for those who completed the program, it was 27 percent (Wiese, 2008). There was no claim, however, that these differences were statistically significant.

As mentioned earlier, not all studies are quite as clear in their findings. A study by Umbreit and Coates (1992) of four victim-offender programs in New Mexico, California, Texas and Minnesota, involving a substantial amount of qualitative and quantitative data collected from 1,153 interviews with crime victims and juvenile offenders, review of program and court records, interviews with court officials and program staff and observation of 28 mediation sessions over two years, was inconclusive. While they reported that juvenile offenders who went through the victim-offender mediation program committed considerably fewer crimes than a matched sample of similar offenders not in mediation, Umbreit and Coates admitted that the finding was not statistically significant

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

and they could not rule out chance for the drop in recidivism rates. They did, however, report several other benefits of the victim-offender programs: victims were significantly more likely to receive restitution; the process had a significant impact on increasing victim satisfaction with the juvenile justice system; and when compared to similar cases, both offenders and victims were more likely to indicate they felt the case was dealt with in a fair manner.

In a Canadian context, White (1998) in a review of restorative justice practices in the Yukon Territory, also looked at recidivism rates as well as client (victim and offender) satisfaction, comparing restorative justice with mainstream justice. While White cited some concerns regarding the control of variables and their influence on data gathered in his study, he concluded that restorative justice practices dramatically decreased recidivism rates in both repeat and new offenders. In one program, of the 66 low-risk offenders studied, 33 percent who went through a restorative justice process re-offended within one year, as compared to 62 percent of a random sampling of the same number of low-risk offenders who had experienced mainstream justice. Of the 69 participants studied with extensive criminal histories, 40 percent who went through a restorative justice process re-offended within one year, as compared to 66 percent of a random sampling who were dealt with by the mainstream system. The statistics for these 69 participants both pre- and post- restorative justice involvement were also examined, and both the number of offences and their seriousness decreased significantly up to nine years following their participation. In addition, White found that 75 percent of those previously involved in court processes felt that restorative justice satisfied their needs (as they defined them) more than their experience with mainstream justice.

While the findings on the effectiveness of restorative justice have been generally positive or neutral in terms of such factors as re-offending and victim satisfaction, Bazemore and Elis (2007), in their proposal for principle-based standards to be used in the evaluation of restorative justice programs, identified some of the issues discussed earlier that complicate research in the field of restorative justice. They pointed out that researchers of restorative justice seem to be “less than certain about the ‘independent variable’ that has most likely produced either positive or negative results” (p. 398); that is, there is some confusion as to how and why restorative justice achieves its outcomes. They recommended that researchers need to first be absolutely certain that the intervention being studied is anchored in restorative values rather than being restorative in name only, so as to be truly studying the impact of restorative justice practices. Bazemore and Elis also suggested that researchers need to move beyond the usual comparison of restorative justice practices to mainstream approaches and focus instead on best practices within categories of restorative justice, thus strengthening the possibility of effective practice.

It should be mentioned that there also exists some criticism of the practice of restorative justice. Critics have suggested that it falls short of its potential by failing to address the socio-economic roots of crime (Lofton, 2004). Christie (2000) wrote that the literature on restorative justice is “devoid of any substantial discussion on the effect of restorative justice on race, class and gender relationships” (p. 3), and concluded that gender, race and class variables, and their interdependence, had also not been considered in the development and implementation of restorative practices. Christie warned that without critical analysis restorative justice could serve to duplicate the power imbalances

that currently exist in the criminal justice system. Although the conversation in recent years has more explicitly explored various shortcomings of restorative justice (Carvalho, 2006; Zehr & Toews, 2004), attending to these flaws remains a key challenge for those interested in maintaining the integrity of restorative justice theory and practice. As Zehr and Toews (2004) wrote, advocates are obligated to have “our eyes wide open, to listen to our critics, to balance our visions against realities” (p. ix).

Balancing visions against realities appears as a key theme for researchers in the field of restorative justice. Although there exists an appetite for data confirming that restorative justice is effective in reducing recidivism rates, achieving reproducible, credible results remains elusive. Indeed, there is a question as to whether so much emphasis need be placed on recidivism rates when restorative justice seeks to offer much more in terms of the individuals and relationships affected by crime. While the vision of restorative justice requires a fundamental shift in the way we view and respond to crime, the reality calls for research firmly situated in values associated with our mainstream justice system. This balancing act will continue to play out as the interest and research on restorative justice increases, adding more depth to a relatively shallow pool of research.

Restorative Justice in School Settings

In the school system, the available data—though even more sparse than that which exists in the justice system—have portrayed restorative justice in a mainly positive light. Morrison (2007), in a review of the most extensive studies conducted on restorative justice in schools to date, identified the first evaluation as occurring in Queensland, Australia in 1995. Two pilot studies looked at a total of 89 community accountability

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

conferences (one variation of restorative justice conferences) conducted in schools, and reported exceedingly positive results: 96 percent of participants felt they had a say in the process; 89 percent of victims reported getting what they needed out of the conference; 98 percent of offenders felt cared about during the conference; 84 percent of offenders complied with most or all of the agreement; 83 percent of offenders did not reoffend within the study's one-year time period; 100 percent of school personnel indicated that the process reinforced school values; and 92 percent of family members who participated expressed positive feelings toward the school. The results of the first evaluation clearly revealed a very promising future for restorative justice in schools.

Certainly, there have been several other studies that have corroborated the findings of this first study (Morrison & Martinez, 2001; Stinchcomb, Bazemore & Riestenberg, 2006). Also in Australia, a program was evaluated in an elementary school where students in one classroom were introduced to restorative justice through five workshops centred on social and emotional skills, as well as the use of restorative justice circles and conferences to address classroom and personal issues. Using an adaptation of Ahmed et al's (2001) Life at School Survey, originally developed to study bullying and shame management, Morrison and Martinez (2001) compared these students to students in two other classrooms in which they did not learn about or implement any restorative justice practices. Students in the restorative justice classroom showed greater emotional intelligence, reported using conflict resolution techniques more, felt the teacher was more interested in stopping bullying, and reported less involvement with bullying than their counterparts.

Turning to the United States, the Minnesota Department of Children, Family and

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

Learning has conducted one of the largest evaluations of restorative justice in schools in that country. Beginning in 1995, restorative justice concepts and practices were introduced to some Minnesota schools as a way to deal with inappropriate behaviour (Stinchcomb, Bazemore & Riestenberg, 2006). In 1998, a grant was received and schools interested in participating were “exposed to a variety of restorative justice practices and were encouraged to be innovative in merging restorative principles into the curriculum and other aspects of the school experience” (p. 134). The goal was to have the philosophy of restorative justice infused in multiple practices within schools, rather than only as a focused response to individual incidents. Each school district collected pre and post data throughout the funding period (three years for the first round of funding and two years for the second) measuring impact in five areas: suspensions, expulsions, attendance, academics and school climate. In general, schools experienced fewer suspensions, fewer expulsions, fewer behavioral referrals, and greater overall attendance compared to data collected before the implementation of restorative justice practices. After the first round of grants, schools that had collected baseline data showed a reduction of 30 to 50 percent in suspensions (Riestenberg, 2003a). Academics and school climate proved more difficult to track. Researchers examining one particular school district within the project admitted that, *similar to studies on the effectiveness of restorative justice in the justice system, due to the wide range of variables and lack of a control or comparison group in the same region, it was impossible to conclude with absolute certainty that these outcomes were a direct result of the implementation of restorative justice principles* (Stinchcomb, Bazemore & Riestenberg, 2006); at the same time, no alternate explanations for the findings were offered. Despite this lack of certainty, those involved in the statewide

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

project were encouraged by both the evaluations, as well as anecdotal evidence of success. In a report written in the middle of the second round of funding, Riestenberg (2003a) identified three findings from the first round of grants and evaluations: Restorative practices were viable alternatives to suspension; restorative philosophy and practices had classroom management and teaching applications; and staff hired on grant money inevitably left once the grant money was spent (p. 7). The third finding led the organizers of the project to focus more on training staff in the second round of grant money.

Interestingly, as is evident in the above studies, research conducted on restorative justice in schools has been not nearly as focused on recidivism rates as those that looked at the criminal justice system. Reflecting the priorities of the education system, much of the research has reached more broadly, asking questions about the change in school climate, attendance records, academic achievement, building emotional intelligence, among many other indicators of success. Perhaps most similar to recidivism rates are numbers of expulsions and suspensions a school records in one year. As with reoffending, these rates are affected by many factors, but some proponents and critics of restorative justice in schools alike have looked to the numbers for confirmation. For the most part, the numbers have cast restorative justice in a favourable light. One high school in Pennsylvania that implemented a restorative justice program in 1998 found that disciplinary referrals to the school office fell from 1752 in 1999 to 815 in 2003 (Chmelynski, 2005). Corroborating this finding, after introducing restorative justice in 2005, a middle school in Michigan's urban Lansing School district reported: a 15 percent drop in suspensions at the same time that suspensions in other schools in the same district

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

were rising; the aversion of two expulsions; and the self-report that 93 percent of participating students were using restorative methods to solve conflicts (Porter, 2007).

Research conducted in Canadian schools, while sparse, has indicated similar findings to American studies. A year after the Waterloo Region District School Board in Ontario fully implemented restorative justice, circles/conferences were used instead of suspensions to deal with 115 students, and the conferences assisted eight students in avoiding full expulsion (Arnott, 2007). Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board in Ontario has been implementing restorative practices in their schools since 2004. In a recent publication, they reported that suspensions in secondary schools have dropped from 8480 in 2005-2006 to 7821 in 2007-2008 (Lewis, 2009). Fleshing out the numbers, the report describes how restorative justice has positively changed interactions between students and teachers:

Children meeting in impromptu restorative circles, thousands of informal restorative interventions, over 60 formal restorative conferences over the 2007–2008 school year to address harm, school staff meeting in facilitated restorative circles to deal with conflict, the restorative questions posted throughout schools as a way to guide and influence language and thinking. All indications are that a paradigm shift is occurring, as school administrators, teachers, students and parents across the board move from addressing harm in a punitive way to thinking of restorative solutions. (Lewis, 22)

Research on restorative justice in the schools has not been limited to studies on the effectiveness of programs. Being such a new field with a wide variation of practices, researchers have been also interested in identifying best practices for implementation. Morrison (2007) wrote that the research conducted on the first pilot studies in Australia, despite their very positive numbers, also highlighted tensions that were evident between

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

existing philosophies and discipline practices and the philosophy and practice of restorative justice. Although 227 school personnel from 75 schools were trained for one pilot study, only 56 conferences were convened in the entire 12 months of the study (p. 335), a bit of a disconnect between the promising appearance of the data and the actual practice. In the case of Minnesota, since restorative justice was implemented in many schools across the state, Riestenberg (2003b) in a final report on the restorative schools grant, was able to comment broadly on some of the factors she saw as contributing to effective implementation. She cautioned against using grant money to hire specialists since they were likely to disappear with the funding, leaving the school ill prepared to continue on with the initiative. Rather, Riestenberg recommended intensive school-wide training sessions followed by coaching, mentoring and advanced training. Schools that offered such sessions reported the largest positive changes in school climate.

In one case study (Karp & Breslin, 2001), the researchers were not interested in examining effectiveness, but simply described the practice of three school-based restorative justice programs in the United States. They discovered three problematic areas for implementation: restorative justice practices took a lot of time; broader institutional policies did not always support spending time and energy on restorative justice; and internal inertia on the part of teachers and/or administrators inhibited implementation. The researchers collected their data from published reports by the schools and from telephone interviews with participants they called “key informants.” The roles key informants played in the schools were not identified and it is not clear that principals and/or teachers themselves were necessarily asked to reflect on these problematic aspects.

The notion of internal inertia as identified in the Karp and Breslin study is an intriguing one. Karp and Breslin (2001) found that even when restorative justice practices were adopted, they were sometimes only accepted with suspicion. Principals, teachers and other staff members had been socialized in a retributive culture and their reluctance (or inability) to abandon that culture could be a major obstacle facing the implementation of a restorative justice philosophy (p. 269).

Though there is still much research to be done in the area of effectiveness, Bazemore and Elis' (2007) suggestion that researchers of restorative justice in the justice system focus on improving best practices appears to be equally relevant to the field of restorative justice in schools. Building on these researchers' findings (Karp & Breslin, 2001; Morrison, 2007; Riestenberg, 2003b) on implementation issues, and coupling it with the literature on institutional change, my own research attempted to gain a deeper understanding of potential implementation barriers and ways to overcome these barriers.

Educational Reform

Educational reform is clearly not a new concept; Woodbury and Gess-Newsome (2002), however, claimed that most reforms fall under the title of "change without difference." Cuban (1988) categorized this as "first-order change" or change that enhanced the effectiveness of established and accepted patterns of schooling while leaving the existing structures intact. Changes which alter fundamental ways of thinking, acting, and organizing, on the other hand, were called second-order or transformative change (Romberg & Price, 1983; Woodbury & Gess-Newsome, 2002). Since transformative change, the category of change under which restorative justice would fall,

requires a shift in a school's culture and structure, it is the decidedly more elusive of the two types.

Reform proposals attempting second-order change must take into consideration contextual factors of structure and culture, particularly leadership. Berman and McLaughlin (1978), in their noteworthy study in the United States, called principals the "gatekeepers of change" asserting that in order for implementation of reforms to take root, principals must lend moral support to teachers and legitimacy to the project. While finding evidence of the key role principals played in bringing innovations to their schools, Fullan and Newton (1988), in a study of second-order change in secondary schools, noted that the principals' role evolved during the implementation of the reform from one of initiator to one of facilitator of change. Copland (2003) highlighted this role evolution in his longitudinal study of sustained reform. He found that while principals are crucial "catalysts of change" and "protectors of vision" (p. 392) in the early stages of reform, a shift to distributed leadership among all staff members was essential and the reform needed to become embedded in the culture of the school for a reform to be sustainable. Fullan (1993) corroborated this finding in his thorough study of the multiple factors affecting educational reform. Change, he wrote, failed if it was strictly top-down or bottom-up; for educational reforms to succeed and be sustained, there had to exist a "two-way relationship of pressure, support and continuous negotiation" (p. 38).

Within that two-way relationship, Woodbury and Gess-Newsome (2002) chose to concentrate on the role of teachers, purporting that "school change is ultimately about teacher change" (p. 774). Administrators may set the stage, but teachers choose whether or not to act. Several researchers in the field of educational reform affirmed individual

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

teachers as crucial to successful implementation of new ideas. Gess-Newsome, Southerland, Johnston and Woodbury (2003), while tracking three American college professors as they designed and implemented an inquiry-based science course, declared that the “foundation of systemic change is individual change” (p. 763). It must be noted that since their study was conducted in a college setting, their findings, while important, are limited in their direct extension to a school setting. Their study focused on Feldman’s (2000) concept of teacher’s personal practical theories—complex systems of beliefs formed through past experience that guide and constrain instructional goals and teaching practices. Gess-Newsome et al (2003) found that for fundamental educational change to occur, faculty must experience significant dissatisfaction with their current personal practical theories. To adopt a new practical theory and sustain the change, however, there must be more involved than dissatisfaction. Feldman (2000) argued that before teachers claimed a new theory, they had to conclude that it was 1) sensible, 2) as equally beneficial as past theories, and 3) capable of presenting the individual with new insights into teaching.

Studies on educational reform conducted in Canada, while acknowledging cultural and structural influences, also often have stressed the importance of individuals’ experiences and expectations. In cases where a transformative policy was implemented without consent or perceived attention to teachers’ voices—such as was the case in Ontario in 1993 when destreaming (the elimination of the practice of placing students in homogeneous ability classes) was introduced for grade 9 students—teacher efficacy rates tended to fall (Ross, McKeiver & Hogaboam-Gray, 1997). According to Ross et al (1997), teacher efficacy refers to the extent to which teachers anticipate that they will

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

perform their jobs at a satisfactory level. Teacher efficacy rates were measured by teachers making personal interpretations of their own practice based on past success, observations of peer behaviour, and feedback from colleagues. In the case of destreaming, Ross et al (1997) found three factors to be influential for teacher efficacy to rebound: credible evidence (as defined by individual teachers) that the reform was working; constructive collaboration with other teachers; and a positive personal mindset.

These studies pointed to the critical role of individual teachers—influenced by organizational climates, structures and leadership—in ensuring the success of transformative reform measures. Combining the studies' focus on individuals' roles with the need to explore the practices of implementing restorative justice in schools more deeply, my research sought to discover how teachers and administrators who were charged with implementing restorative justice practices were experiencing the approach. By understanding teachers' and administrators' contexts and personal practical theories, could those who wish to implement restorative justice counter what Karp and Breslin (2001) described as internal inertia?

Chapter Three: Conceptual Framework

This study drew on the theories and literature of educational reform, restorative justice, and restorative approaches in the education system. In reviewing the literature, it was apparent that there was a lack of research on restorative justice in the education system conducted in the Canadian context, as well as scarce data on the role teachers and administrators play in this transformative reform. There was, however, ample research indicating that teachers and administrators are central to ensuring the success of reform initiatives. Thus by concentrating on teachers and administrators who were experiencing the first few years of the implementation of restorative justice policies in their School Board, and by examining the context in which they were operating, it followed that their experiences could result in an understanding of some of the factors that affect the implementation of restorative justice in Canadian schools.

Theoretical Orientation

My research was situated within a theoretical orientation based on two models. The orientation emerged from Woodbury and Gess-Newsome's (2002) model of educational reform, the Teacher-Centered Systemic Reform (TCSR) model, as well as from Feldman's (2000) concept of teacher's personal practical theories. Together, these two theories created a framework for both my data collection and my analysis of the implementation of restorative justice in the School Board. In this section, I will explore the theories and their application to my own research.

The TCSR model of educational reform (Woodbury & Gess-Newsome, 2002) highlighted teachers' thinking as a central factor impacting educational reform, and

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

considered the interaction between their thinking and their backgrounds, classroom practices, and the contexts of their work, including board policies, administrative leadership and the overall climate in the school. Woodbury and Gess-Newsome have argued that previous educational reform models have been limited by the tendency to attend solely to either teacher thinking or systemic contexts to the detriment of each other and other factors. They suggested that a “systemic picture of educational reform is built from the interrelatedness of these alternative perspectives on change” (p. 772). Reform initiatives need to first take into consideration the contextual factors of structure and culture. These include, but are not limited to: the effects of national, provincial and municipal governments, agencies and organizations; structures and climates of schools and classrooms; and cultural norms of behaviour. Placed within this context are the individual teachers and administrators. Their thinking and practice emerge from the interplay between knowledge and beliefs which are affected by their personal contextual factors. Personal context is built through such factors as: demographic profile, teacher preparation and professional development opportunities. It was here, in the personal contextual factors, that I turned to Feldman (2000) and his description of personal practical theories for more insight.

Personal practical theories are complex systems of beliefs that guide and constrain teachers’ decisions and include sets of ideas, strategies and practices. They are shaped by “life experience, professional experiences, the stories of others, and reflection on personal experiences and the experiences of others” (Feldman, 2000, p. 611). Feldman described personal practical theories as “tenacious” (p. 611) and while people do modify their personal practical theories when they no longer appear to be working, a person may also

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

choose to keep the theory intact by acting in such a way as to ensure his or her theory cannot be disproved. As discussed in the literature review section of this paper, Feldman stated that for educators to modify their theories, they must view the newly presented theory as 1) sensible, 2) as equally beneficial as past theories, and 3) able to enlighten the individual about his or her teaching practice. For educators to put aside previous ideas and practices regarding discipline and accept restorative justice as a new way of thinking and responding, all three of these criteria must be met.

As a framework for my own research, I have adapted the TCSR model (see Appendix A) to be more appropriate for a Canadian context (incorporating national, provincial and municipal policies), more focused on the specific implementation of restorative justice and I have expanded some aspects by attending to Feldman's (2000) conditions for the accommodation of personal practical theories. With its focus on individuals and the contexts of their work, and on second-order change, the adapted TCSR model is an appropriate lens through which to view restorative justice implementation. The use of the model enriched both my data collection and analysis. Teachers' and administrators' personal contextual factors, their knowledge and beliefs and their practice, all as depicted in the adapted TCSR model, were elicited through interviews and questionnaires. Aspects of the contextual factors of structure and culture were also gathered through interviews and questionnaires. More importantly, however, for the contextual factors, were the documents provided me by the Board Administrator and my own observations while within the School and the School Board office to conduct my interviews. In my analysis of the data, I was particularly cognizant of the need to situate the role of teacher thinking within a broader structural context. In order to do so, and in keeping with the tradition of

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

case studies, I devote a section of this paper to discussing the context of my study, focusing on the regional, School Board and the individual School contexts. Based on my theoretical framework, coupling an extensive exploration of the context with the data on teachers' and administrators' personal practical theories provides a more complete understanding of the implementation of this particular educational reform.

Philosophical Assumptions and Paradigms

Zehr and Toews (2004) wrote that the field of restorative justice was enriched by a diversity of definitions and understandings of the concept; presumably, teachers and administrators are no different from other people, ascribing multiple, varied meanings to the phenomenon of restorative justice. It is through making sense of those meanings and determining the essence of the meanings—while keeping them in context—that we are able to understand how to more effectively implement restorative justice practices. This approach has been developed from a constructivist paradigm as seen through a phenomenological lens. Meaning of the phenomenon of restorative justice is constructed within cultural, social and historical perspectives with multiple influences. Therefore, in the design of my bounded case study, I ensured that my interview questions were open so as to allow for many voices to respond according to their own understandings and to speak to the essence of their own experiences. During the data collection (and subsequent analysis), I attempted to understand how I was positioned in the research—the biases and assumptions that coloured my interpretation of events—through the use of a journal. Taking the time to reflect critically on my own actions and thoughts assisted me in being more aware of how I might be affecting the participants' responses. For my first

interview, I determined to be upfront about my own bias, stating clearly both my background as well as my desire to gather meaningful information about the School Board's implementation of restorative justice, both positive and negative. My thought was to be honest about my positioning, while putting the interviewee at ease so that she could speak freely about her own experience. Upon reflection in my journal, I decided to present myself as more impartial in the following interviews. The first interview felt almost too familiar in terms of my accepting statements as inherently true, due to my similar experiences, rather than probing them to understand the statements more fully. In later interviews, by assuming a more impartial persona, I found I was able to better maintain a critical line of questioning, thus exploring ideas and themes deeper.

As mentioned above, I have come to the research as a restorative justice practitioner and advocate, yet I was interested in exploring how others felt about and experienced restorative justice. Although full bracketing seemed unattainable, I attempted to ensure that my questions and responses did not bias the answers by valuing my participants' opinions and critiquing my own interaction with participants.

Chapter Four: Methodology

Participants and Procedure

In September 2008, during a brief conversation with the School Board Administrator responsible for restorative justice, I was made aware that the training of teachers and administrators in restorative justice practices had been somewhat sporadic across the School Board: some schools had almost every teacher trained, others had one or no teachers trained. Within this conversation, I was informed that I would need the Board Administrator's assistance to uncover a school with a sufficient number of teachers and administrators trained in restorative justice from which to draw for my study. Additionally, there had been research conducted in the School Board recently, and the schools previously studied had indicated that they did not wish to be part of further research at this point; the Board Administrator offered to look for an appropriate school and assist me in gaining access to the school.

The Board Administrator continued to be a source of valuable information for me throughout my research. I conducted one 90-minute semi-structured interview with her at the beginning of my data collection period in March 2009. At this time, the Board Administrator presented me with 15 documents: Board-produced material, material written by others about the restorative justice program at the Board, materials used during training sessions and documents that related to the restorative justice program's philosophy and/or process. The Board Administrator had been in her position for four years; during her first two years, the program was fully funded and during the next two, the program received little to no funding. Therefore she was able to offer a variety of perspectives on what the program had been, is and could potentially become. She also, as

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

promised, connected me to an administrator at a school in which multiple teachers had received restorative justice training. The Board Administrator sometimes referred to this school as the Board's "model school" of restorative justice.

I chose to focus only on one school rather than several so as to remove some of the contextual variances from my study and to allow for better delineation of the differences among educators in terms of their experiences of restorative justice. I began by sending a questionnaire to all teachers and administrators at the School to obtain an overview of their use of restorative justice practices, and their knowledge and beliefs regarding restorative justice (see Appendix B). Out of 36 questionnaires sent, 14 were returned--a 39 percent response rate. Of these, seven respondents indicated a willingness to be contacted for interviews. Two of the respondents were administrators and both highly involved in the use of restorative justice in their school. Of these two, I selected the administrator who the Board Administrator had informed me is a strong advocate for restorative justice training among her staff. Since this school was deemed to be a model one, I preferred to interview the administrator most responsible for the successful implementation of restorative justice in order to learn the factors that may have contributed to the success. This female administrator has had many years of both teaching and administrative experience. In her last school, a school within the same Board, she had almost all of her staff trained in restorative justice. She has been an administrator at her current school since its opening a few years ago.

Of the five remaining teachers willing to be interviewed, I contacted the four respondents who returned their questionnaires first. In the early conception of my research design, I had intended to select two teachers who indicated on the questionnaire

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

that they were strong proponents of restorative justice and its implementation in their school (reported using restorative justice practices, had confidence in their abilities, and believed it to be effective), and two who indicated negative opinions (reported rarely using restorative justice practices, did not have confidence, did not feel it was effective). Due to the low number of respondents willing to be interviewed, however, I was not able to exercise much control over whom I chose to interview. Yet, even without the control, the participants naturally expressed a diversity of views on restorative justice, understood through the lenses of their various life paths, personalities and teaching experiences. Two of the teachers interviewed were male and two were female. All four were Caucasian. Three were classroom teachers and one was a support teacher. Their teaching experience ranged from six to 15 years, and one came to teaching after a long career in the medical field. Three had received their restorative justice training in the last two years while at their current School and one had received training over two years ago while teaching at a different school. For all the teachers, their restorative justice training occurred in the form of two- or three-day workshops offered through the School Board. All had utilized restorative justice practices in one form or another, some on the playground and others in their classrooms. None had facilitated a formal restorative justice conference with participants other than their immediate students.

Semi-structured interviews with the teachers and School Administrator took place at the School, before and after school hours, in either the participant's office or classroom (see Appendix C for interview questions). Two teachers chose to be interviewed together, since one did not feel she had sufficient experience in the practice of restorative justice to warrant an individual interview. The other teachers and the School Administrator were

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

interviewed individually with all interviews ranging from 19 to 32 minutes. The interviews were recorded and once transcribed, I provided a copy of the transcription to each participant with an invitation to respond with comments and clarifications. The only response I received was one spelling correction.

Data Collection

As it is nearly impossible to fully separate data collection from data analysis (Creswell, 2007), both my data collection and analysis were conducted through a phenomenological lens, attempting to locate in the data the essence of teachers' and administrators' experience of restorative justice in their School. By examining and analyzing the School Board Website and other documents such as the School Board's training material and public communications on restorative justice, and conducting a semi-structured interview with the Board Administrator, I gained important background and programmatic information. The documents, as selected by the Board Administrator, were significant not only in their contents, but also in their inclusion in the package given me, revealing how the School Board wished its restorative justice program to be seen.

As mentioned above, I sent a questionnaire to all teachers and administrators at the School (see Appendix B). The questionnaire was developed in accordance with the TCSR model of educational reform (see Appendix A) which emphasizes teachers' practice, knowledge and beliefs. The questions asked in the survey mirror this emphasis, asking participants to respond to nine statements: three based on their practice of restorative justice, three on their knowledge and three on their beliefs. The questionnaire was tested in a pilot project involving two teachers from the same School Board as the final

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

participants. The teachers had completed restorative justice training through the School Board and had used restorative justice in their own practices. They were selected through personal connections in the School Board. They received the questionnaire via email and were asked to comment on the clarity and significance of the questions. The participants in the pilot study were aware that their feedback would be taken into consideration when revising the questionnaire. Both participants felt the questionnaire was thorough and clear. Therefore no revisions were made.

The interviews I conducted with the four selected teachers and one School Administrator were semi-structured interviews, similar to the interview with the Board Administrator and based on Hall and Hord (1987) (see Appendix C). Although data gathered through interviews is indirect and filtered by the participants, Creswell (2003) suggested interviews allow for researchers to gather data more directly related to their research questions, permit historical information to be provided by participants, and are useful when direct observation is not possible. I chose to specifically employ semi-structured interviews with the participants in order to both ask direct key questions of all the participants as well as leave the discussion open for insights and perspectives which are difficult to fit into set questions. Similar to the questionnaire, the interview questions were tested through a pilot project using the same two educators who responded to the questionnaire. Again, feedback was positive and except for a few changes in wording, the interview protocol was not significantly revised.

Data Analyses

Data were first analyzed by conducting a preliminary review of all the documents provided me by the Board Administrator. My intention in analyzing these documents was twofold: to gain insight into the Board's expressed understanding of restorative justice in order to later compare this understanding with teachers' expressed understandings; and to appreciate better the regional context in which educators are operating. Therefore, during my initial reading, I identified words, phrases and images which related to restorative justice philosophy, restorative justice practice, historical references to the program, references to the effectiveness of the program, and program and training details. Connected more indirectly, I also took note of mentions of organizations / people in the community; connections to wider Board and Ministry of Education initiatives; the types of incidents reported as being dealt with through restorative justice practices; the roles (principal, teacher, etc.) held by the people who wrote, were interviewed or were referenced in the documents; and when the documents were published in connection to the timing of the program's life. After transcribing the text that related to the above topics, I identified any common themes or ideas, thus enhancing my understanding of the data in the documents. I wrote a preliminary overview of the regional context, as gathered from my reading of the documents. For areas in my overview that were not well supported, I returned to the documents to strengthen or revise my initial thoughts. Once I had also transcribed and analyzed the interview data from the Board Administrator, I used that data to add depth and detail to the overview that had emerged from the documents.

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

The questionnaire, sent to all teachers and administrators at the school, was intended to both provide me with an overview of staff's use, knowledge and beliefs regarding restorative justice, as well as obtain names of potential interviewees. Having provided the latter, the analysis focused on gaining an overall sense of the School environment in terms of restorative justice. To begin, I tallied the responses as a collective, in search of as comprehensive a view of the School as possible given that only 39 percent of teachers and administrators responded to the questionnaire. Then I separated the results into two categories: staff who had received restorative justice training and those who had not. I wanted to see if understandings and beliefs about restorative justice would be significantly affected by the provision of training. Comments written by individuals on the questionnaire forms were also recorded as part of the analysis.

As the interviews contained the largest amount of data, I invested a significant amount of time in their analysis. In order to bridge the gap between raw data and my research concerns and locate meaningful patterns within the interview text, I employed Auerbach and Silverstein's (2003) coding method. Their method contained three separate phases, each dealing with a different level of analysis. They acknowledged, however, that the coding process does not move linearly through these phases, but rather moves back and forth as understanding of the text grows in complexity; I certainly found this to be true in my own coding process. The phases as Auerbach and Silverstein presented them were: making the text manageable; hearing what was said; and developing theory. Although their method was focused on developing theory and therefore more suited for grounded theory studies (p. 31), I found their explicit process of organizing text in transcripts and discovering the patterns within immensely helpful. Once my

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

transcriptions were complete, I began by selecting the relevant text in each interview. Relevant text is considered to be text that is specifically related to my research concerns. I then grouped the relevant text into categories called repeating ideas, text that expressed similar thoughts. This was done first for each individual interviewee and next for all the interviews collectively. My master file of repeating ideas contained 33 distinct ideas. These 33 repeating ideas were then organized into larger groups called themes. A theme is “an implicit idea or topic that a group of repeating ideas have in common” (p. 62). My repeating ideas merged together to create 15 themes that I will present in the findings section of this paper. The process of discovering the implicit theme held in common by several ideas allowed me to enter into a deeper understanding of the text. Finally, the themes were organized into theoretical constructs. A theoretical construct is an “abstract concept that organizes a group of themes by fitting them into a theoretical framework” (p. 67). I developed four theoretical constructs that I will present in the discussion section of this paper. Again, by organizing themes under abstract concepts, my understanding of the text deepened.

Strategies for Validating Findings

In order to ensure quality of data and accuracy of the conclusions I drew from the data, it was crucial that accepted strategies were employed in order to validate my findings. Creswell (2007) suggested that while any report of research is a representation by the author, validation strategies assist in documenting the accuracy of the study for the researcher, participants and readers. Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) proposed three criteria for determining what they referred to as the *justifiability* of a study’s procedure,

analyses and findings: transparency, communicability and coherence. Transparency referred to the ease with which other researchers and readers are able to follow the steps taken by the researcher to arrive at his or her interpretation; communicability meant that what the researcher proposes is understandable, especially to research participants themselves; and coherence referred to how the different parts of the study fit together to form clear and organized ideas.

In keeping with these three criteria, and utilizing validation strategies suggested by Creswell (2007), the following outlines the steps I took in order to ensure quality and accuracy of my data and findings. In the interest of ensuring transparency throughout my study and in this paper, I intentionally clarified my researcher bias, recording my thoughts and biases in a journal, as mentioned in the previous section, and including an autobiographical statement near the beginning of this paper to provide the reader with a sense of my own perspective. In conjunction with clarifying researcher bias, I also sought to obtain transparency by clearly detailing the steps taken to arrive at the theoretical constructs named in the discussion section. Each theoretical construct was built from various themes, which, in turn, arose out of repeating ideas discovered in the words of participants. The findings section, in particular Table 1, explains this procedure in detail.

Communicability was obtained through the use of two validation strategies: providing the reader with a rich, detailed description of the case and member checking. By setting the context through detailed description, the reader reaches a more nuanced understanding of the study and is better poised to determine whether specific findings are transferable to other cases (Creswell, 2007). I also engaged in member checking by initially sending transcripts of interviews to all participants and later sending my findings

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

to the Board Administrator who had expressed an interest in seeing them; however, I only received limited feedback from participants.

In order to present a coherent interpretation of the data, I engaged in triangulation which involves making use of multiple and different sources and methods to provide corroborating evidence (Creswell, 2007). I conducted document analysis on both the multiple documents offered me by the Board Administrator as well as publicly available documents such as the School Board Website and provincial education bills in order to better understand the context in which the teachers and administrators were working. These findings were corroborated by the questionnaires sent to all staff members at the School and further corroborated by the interviews conducted with the four teachers, School Administrator and Board Administrator. While there exists an emphasis in the findings section on the interview data, that data was interpreted in conjunction with the questionnaires and documents, and all data connect to form the basis of the discussion section.

Chapter Five: The Context

Researchers of case studies move themselves as well as their readers to a deeper understanding of the study by situating the case being studied in context, thoroughly analyzing and describing its setting (Creswell, 2007). In order to more fully understand the case being studied in my research, teachers and administrators in one Ontario School, I have set the context by describing the region in Ontario within which this School is situated, the School Board and any provincial policies to which it must adhere, and, finally, the School itself.

Setting the case in context was done not only to be consistent with common practice in case studies, but because the context was integral to understanding this particular case. As demonstrated in the Teacher-Centered Systemic Reform model (Woodbury & Gess-Newsome, 2002), teachers and administrators are affected by the context in which they operate, their decisions and practice influenced by contextual factors of structure and culture. In order to describe the setting of this specific case, I analyzed the documents given me by the Board Administrator as well as the School Board's Website, and drew from the interview with the Board Administrator and the questionnaires sent to the teaching and administrative staff at the School. I also examined external documents necessary to enhance my understanding of the context, such as provincial education bills and regional Websites. Since this section presents information derived from the data, it could conceivably be offered under the heading of findings. I have chosen to separate the context from the findings, however, as they serve two distinct purposes in this paper. The context section allows for the reader to enter into a richer understanding of the contextual factors of structure and culture in which the six participants are working. Data were

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

necessarily gathered from far-reaching sources so as to describe the context in as broad terms as possible. In the findings section, the focus narrows to the six participants and their own understandings of their experiences within the context being set in this section. One section influences the other, as context influences personal experience, and the data will merge again in the discussion section.

In the interest of maintaining the anonymity of the participants in this study, the details of any potentially identifying documents have been obscured with xxxxxx in the reference section of this paper.

The Region

The School being studied is situated within a medium-sized region in Ontario, encompassing a mix of both urban and rural communities. It is a region that is flourishing, evidenced by the fact that the growth rate of the Region is twice that of the national average and the median population age is one of the lowest in Canada (Regional Website, 2009). The latest figures from Statistics Canada stated that 13 percent of the population is identified as visible minority (2006). The Region boasts several higher education facilities, innovative businesses and a thriving arts and culture community. Historically and currently there exist several restorative justice organizations, agencies and coalitions in the Region. Restorative justice is a concept that is both recognized and supported by the community, causing the Board Administrator to call the Region a “restorative area.” Community support extends to the restorative justice initiative in the School Board, as evidenced in the numerous newspaper articles lauding its efforts (Youth justice xxxxxx, 2001; Beating the bully, 2006; Restorative justice circles in the school

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

system, 2006; Talking it out, 2007). Recently, Regional Council commissioned a study on how to prevent violence within the Region. A long-term plan to create a safe and secure community for all residents was developed. One recommendation in the plan called for schools to ensure that all staff be trained to use restorative justice models when dealing with student conflict (Violence Prevention Plan, 2006). Clearly, the Region within which the School being studied is situated is quite supportive of the concept of restorative justice.

The School Board

Enrolment in the over 100 schools that stretch across the School Board's nearly 1500 square kilometers, reached close to 57 000 students in 2008, according to the School Board's annual report. In the launching and maintenance of its school-based restorative justice program--usually called restorative justice in its documents though at times referred to as restorative practice--the School Board has drawn on the support of the surrounding Region. In most of the Board-produced public communications, there was mention of community organizations, either in direct pairing with the School Board as in a partnership with public health or by profiling various restorative justice organizations in the documents. The School Board's restorative justice mission statement emphasizes working with community partners, a clear indication that the School Board does not feel alone in its endeavours.

Alongside the community support of restorative justice, many other factors play key roles in both the implementation and maintenance of the practice of restorative justice in this Region's School Board. In 2000, Ontario Ministry of Education's Bill 81, the Safe

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

Schools Act, was passed, making expulsions or suspensions mandatory for a number of offences: possessing a weapon, committing sexual assault, possessing alcohol or illegal drugs, swearing at a teacher or another person in a position of authority, among others (Safe Schools Act, 2000). While the phrase zero tolerance never appeared in the Safe Schools Act, this phrase was often used to refer to the Act in both the media and the Ontario education community. The Board Administrator told me “Initially, when zero tolerance came out, we were one of the highest suspending boards. Extremely punitive.” Around the same time that the Safe Schools Act came into existence, the Ministry of Education implemented several pilot projects called strict discipline programs throughout the province to deal with the growing number of expelled students. In order for expelled students to return to the public school system, they had to meet the requirements of the individual program and “demonstrate respect and responsibility” (Ministry of Education, Making our Schools Safer, for students, Strict Discipline Programs, ¶ 2). One such program was selected for implementation in the School Board being studied. This particular program was not punishment-based, as were some other strict discipline programs, but emphasized skill building to help students make good choices and think through consequences. It also utilized restorative justice practices as part of the program, introduced by an individual who had had experience with non-punitive practices, such as restorative justice, of responding to harm at previous schools.

While restorative justice found its way more formally into this particular School Board through strict discipline programs, the Ministry of Education did not at the time articulate much support for restorative justice. That began to change in 2004 when the government, aware of criticism of the Safe Schools Act amongst some educators, parents

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

and the public, established the Safe Schools Action Team to review the Act and its related policies and programs. In November and December of 2005, the Action Team conducted a province-wide public consultation and published its findings in June 2006. The report, in its review of the Safe Schools Act and its further discussion of how to ensure student safety, emerged with recommendations focused around eight themes: prevention, progressive discipline, community and parental involvement, consistent application of the Safe Schools Act, programs for suspended / expelled students, education and training for staff and students, improved communication at all levels of the education system and the creation of a provincial safe schools framework (Safe Schools Action Team, 2006). The report even specifically identified restorative justice as a successful practice. On the heels of this report, the Ministry of Education brought forward Bill 212 in June 2007 (which was to be fully enacted by February 2008), as an amendment to the Education Act in “respect of behaviour, discipline and safety” (Bill 212, p. 1). Bill 212, while not incorporating all recommendations of the Safe Schools Action Team, did include a number of its key ideas. In particular, Bill 212 was seen to be much more focused on progressive discipline, rather than procedures characterized as zero tolerance. Progressive discipline was described in the Safe Schools Action Team report (2006) as a series of defined disciplinary steps progressively applied in order to improve student behaviour (p. 8). In a July 2007 memorandum to directors of education, supervisory officers and secretary-treasurers of school authorities, acting Deputy Minister Philip Steenkamp explained some aspects of Bill 212. In the realm of progressive discipline he placed strategies such as “in-school detentions, peer mediation, restorative practices and referrals for assistance by agencies outside the school” (p. 2). By 2007,

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

restorative justice appeared to have been legitimated by some of the Ministry of Education's own policies.

At the same time that changes were occurring within the Ministry of Education's approach to ensuring safe schools, the School Board was also working hard to bring restorative justice into its schools more intentionally. In 2004, one of the Board Administrators heard about funding available through an outside source. A proposal was submitted and accepted to train staff in restorative justice practices, specifically to deal with issues of bullying and school violence, for the time period of 2004 to 2007.

According to the School Board's Website, the restorative justice project, which was facilitated by the outside funding, is part of the School Board's Safe Schools initiative and is designed to educate students about the impact of their actions on others. Since the funding began in November 2004, the Board Administrator reported having trained 538 individuals, consisting of teachers, principals, vice-principals, CYWs (children and youth workers), educational assistants, four trustees, 32 police officers and four nurses from Public Health. (Specific numbers for other positions were not provided.) This number, 538, is slightly less than ten percent of the entire School Board's teaching and support staff.

The restorative justice model used by the School Board is based on the New Zealand Family Group Conferencing model and was developed in conjunction with a local college. Family Group Conferencing (FGC) was formalized in New Zealand law in 1989 in the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act as a process of collective decision-making on how to deal with offending and its consequences (Doolin, 2008). According to the book used by the School Board in its trainings, FGC is a meeting of

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

community people affected by behaviour that has caused serious harm. For a conference to proceed, the person who has caused the harm must be willing to take ownership of his or her part in the incident, be willing to meet with those who have been harmed, and be willing to repair the harm.

Despite espousing this particular restorative justice practice, the School Board, as evidenced in the documents given me, appeared somewhat open in terms of how restorative justice is practiced in its schools. For example, contained in the package of documents I received from the Board Administrator were articles on a process called Real Justice (Porter, 2005; Snyder, 2003), which is sometimes criticized for its more narrow, scripted approach to restorative justice (Brown, 2000), as well as several articles more focused on the values, principles and spirit of restorative justice (Community Legal Education Ontario, 2002; Church Council on Justice and Corrections, n.d.; Restorative Justice of xxxxxx, n.d.). Additionally, while the School Board included in their training book a step-by-step process to use in facilitations, they also encouraged those who might use restorative justice not to get stuck in the particulars, but rather to root decisions in underlying principles. The public communications especially, stressed the existence and importance of a continuum of restorative justice practices, from preventative measures concerned with creating a restorative culture to family group conferencing circles used after the occurrence of a violent incident. For readers of the public communications, the inference was that the building of community is as restorative as actual conferencing circles.

Along with this projected openness to a variety of restorative justice processes, provided they are connected to underlying principles, there was also an evident concern

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

to clearly connect restorative justice with other School Board and Ministry of Education initiatives. In two of the newspaper articles, connecting restorative justice to the issue of bullying was the focus (Beating the bully, 2006; Talking it Out, 2007); finding ways to deal with bullying was also a key focus of the Ministry of Education. The amendments to the Education Act, detailed in Bill 212, added bullying to the list of infractions for which suspension may be considered. Bill 212 required school boards to develop and implement policies on bullying prevention and intervention and the Ministry of Education has invested more than \$43.7 million for training, programs and supports to address inappropriate behaviour (Ministry of Education, December, 2008). While not explicitly naming restorative justice as an option for attending to this requirement, the inclusion of restorative justice as a best practice in the Safe Schools Action Team (2006) report and in acting Deputy Minister Philip Steenkamp's July 2007 memorandum, placed restorative justice in a favourable position for being supported by some of this funding. Indeed, both the School Board-produced public communications and the Board Administrator mentioned individual schools or groupings of schools within the Region that had trained staff in restorative justice techniques using funding received to target bullying. Bullying was also key to the School Board's initial grant proposal; on the School Board's Website, the topic of bullying encompassed over half of the grant proposal summary. While restorative justice no doubt has applications for dealing with the issue of bullying, the inordinate attention paid to this connection seemed closely connected to the Ministry of Education's own attention to the issue, and the funding that traveled with that attention. By connecting restorative justice to the issue of bullying, school boards--including the

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

case School Board--sought to broaden their potential funding base and also to showcase the relevance of restorative justice.

For the years (2004-2007) that the outside funding was available for the School Board, restorative justice flourished. In its first year of operation, the program saved close to ten students from expulsion. The Board Administrator also cited 45 students who had gone through the process in lieu of suspension and 11 that had participated as part of re-entry to their schools. The public communications during this time had a decidedly celebratory tone, announcing the numbers of staff trained, citing improvements in school climates and suspension rates, discussing success stories and reporting on outside acclamations of the program. The popularity of restorative justice seemed to peak during the school year 2006-2007 in the School Board, the last full school year of funding. Five articles appeared in local and provincial media declaring restorative justice a success and calling the School Board a "leader" in the field. One article in the local newspaper suggested that restorative justice was the norm in the Region and that all incidents of bullying were resolved through the use of a restorative circle (Beating the Bully, 2006). Although restorative justice was definitely gaining momentum, it seems unlikely that all incidents of bullying were being handled restoratively, especially given the fact that at roughly the time the newspaper article was published, 290 people in the School Board had been trained in restorative justice, in a Board that employs over 5000. Hyperbole or not, positive articles such as the one mentioned served to increase the spirits and motivation of those being trained. One teacher I spoke with referenced the newspaper articles as proof that restorative justice was supported at the time by those both in and outside the school system. People outside the community were also taking notice:

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

A lot of school boards came here and modeled after this one because the success rate, the recidivism whatnot of the kids, the stats were far superior here, than the ones where they have the dogs in the hallways and the metal detectors. (Board Administrator)

As well, around the same time, both the School Board's restorative justice program and an individual working in the program received public honours for their work. The School Board seemed well positioned to continue moving toward their lofty goal, articulated in the last public communication of the 2006-2007 school year, that every student in Canada have access to restorative justice.

The outside funding, however, came to an end in October 2007 and the whole atmosphere shifted. The public communications dwindled from three issues per year to either one or two; they were also thinner on content and hope. The September 2008 issue kicked off with an article on impermanence and the realization that "everything is changing—nothing remains the same." Though not specifically referring to the situation of restorative justice at the School Board, its inclusion as the front-page article seemed to reflect the general mood of those working on the program. Inside the issue there was an admission that no grant money had yet been found, and an assurance that training would continue as soon as funding was secured. There was mention of over 350 people on the waitlist for training. Some training continued, but mostly with schools who received separate funding as part of the bullying prevention projects. Media also seemed to forget about the program: there were no more newspaper articles, no more awards. In 2008, the Board Administrator was even moved out of the actual School Board office, since the space was needed for a larger department and now sits in an alternative office. The Board

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

Administrator characterized the year as waiting and watching, and “hoping that when they do the budget stuff this year, that I will have a budget, because I didn’t this year.”

Interestingly, when I contacted the Board Administrator in September 2008 to discuss my possible research, timing which would have roughly coincided with the office move, I noticed that all references to the restorative justice program had been removed from the Website. An administrative error, for sure, soon corrected, yet an error that spoke to the diminishing importance of restorative justice in the eyes of the broader School Board.

The School

The School in which I conducted my research was new within the Region. It served children from junior kindergarten to grade six. In the 2008-2009 school year, there was an enrollment of 640 students, an increase of 100 students from the previous year. The whole area was expanding and, although the School was only a few years old, there were already portables accommodating some classes. The growing community of students was also diverse; according to the school profile found on the School Board’s Website, the students spoke 40 different languages.

The School sought to encourage an inclusive and positive school climate, both through its actions and the physical space itself. Intentionally modeled after another school in the Region with an award-winning design, the School was spacious and filled with natural light. Many of the classrooms were clustered around a shared workspace where both students and teachers were encouraged to work collaboratively. Two teachers I interviewed mentioned the physical layout as contributing to a sense of community within the school; they felt a shared responsibility for each other’s classroom.

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

All teachers at the School had been trained in the Tribes Learning Communities program. Tribes is a program that began in the 1970s and, according to the Tribes' Website, is a "research-based process that creates a culture that maximizes learning and human development" (home page). It is a step-by-step process that teachers implement in their classrooms to teach students skills to enable them to work collaboratively in long-term groups called Tribes. The process is intended to teach democratic groups skills, integrate academic concepts into cooperative learning and build and sustain a positive culture in the classroom. The founder of Tribes cited research showing that implementing the process decreased student behaviour problems by an average of 75%, improved teacher collegiality, and increased students' interest in academics, among several other benefits (Gibbs, 2003, p.2). Staff in the School I studied strongly believed that Tribes has had a positive influence on their school environment. Every teacher and administrator interviewed mentioned Tribes as a significant feature of the school, and most felt the philosophy of Tribes connected well with the philosophy of restorative justice.

In contrast to the very public affirmation of Tribes, there was little articulated by the School about restorative justice. There was no mention of the practice in the school profile, even within the section on Safe Schools. One year the Safe Schools section detailed a program called the *Walking School Bus* to help ensure safe routes to and from school for all children, and the next year only Tribes received mention. It was also a little unclear how many staff were trained in restorative justice at the School. As the School Administrator said:

Any new staff that I bring on, I send for the training for the Tribes program. If restorative justice training is available—and it's not as available at our Board as it

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

used to be since they don't have the funding anymore—I would encourage people to go to that as well.

While it was encouraged, restorative justice simply was not the priority of the School, nor was it easily accessible. Of the 14 questionnaires returned to me by teachers and administrators, nine (including the two administrators) had received training in restorative justice and five teachers had not. Since 22 teachers did not respond to the questionnaire, I am not able to say whether the majority of teachers at the School have received training.

Despite the lack of specific reference to restorative justice in its publications and its stronger emphasis on Tribes, the School I studied was still considered to be a model restorative justice school by the School Board. Overall, the School supported the philosophy and practice of restorative justice and had more staff trained than most other schools in the Region. According to the questionnaires I received, in general, regardless of whether they had obtained training in restorative justice, teachers and administrators at the School used some restorative justice practices and viewed it favourably. The questionnaire responses were not meant to provide a comprehensive overview of the School, but to assist in a characterization of the context within which the teachers and administrators I interviewed were operating. The questionnaire asked for responses around three themes: actual use of restorative justice, knowledge of how to use restorative justice and/or confidence in own use, and beliefs regarding restorative justice. I will detail briefly what each section revealed about the School. Full results can be found in Appendix D.

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

A small majority (64 percent) of all respondents used restorative justice practices on a daily basis, with having had or not had training making little difference in the numbers. It seemed that respondents found restorative justice the most useful for dealing with minor incidents of conflict or harm. Of those respondents who had received training, 100 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they used it with minor incidents, while only 40 percent of respondents without training used it in those situations. Training also made a difference in the use of restorative justice for dealing with severe incidents of harm: 89 percent of those with training agreed or strongly agreed that they would use restorative justice compared to 40 percent of those without training.

In terms of a person's knowledge and confidence, training understandably made a significant difference. Respondents were asked whether they felt confident in their own skill level to utilize restorative justice approaches. Of those with training, 78 percent agreed or strongly agreed compared to 40 percent of those without. Neither group felt remarkably confident about initiating a restorative justice conference or circle: 55 percent and 20 percent respectively. Both groups, however, were very aware (86 percent of all respondents) of whom to call if they needed assistance.

Regarding beliefs, 86 percent of all respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that restorative justice was an effective way to deal with conflict and harm, and the same percentage felt it was worth the time and energy to learn how to use it. The numbers increased slightly when looking only at those who had received training: 89 percent for both questions. A bigger difference existed between the two groups when looking at the question of whether restorative justice emphasized values they felt were important. 100

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

percent of those with training agreed or strongly agreed compared to 80 percent of those without training.

Extrapolating from the questionnaire, those teachers and administrators who had been trained in restorative justice were most apt to use restorative justice practices to deal with minor and/or severe incidents of harm, much more than on a regular, daily basis in their classrooms. They had a moderate amount of confidence in their own skills, but were somewhat hesitant to initiate a process themselves. Overwhelmingly, however, they supported the values and philosophy of restorative justice and felt it to be an effective process. Those teachers at the School who had not received restorative justice training were unlikely to use restorative justice practices to deal with incidents of harm, whether minor or severe, but did incorporate some practices into their daily routines. They had very little confidence in their own ability to utilize restorative justice practices, but still supported the general idea of it. The difference between the two groups in terms of use, knowledge and confidence seemed quite logical; having not received any training in how to use restorative justice, teachers would not be expected to do so with ease. Interestingly, while support for restorative justice was highest amongst teachers with training, support still hovered around 80 percent for those who had never received training and possibly never used any of the techniques. It was difficult to cast any generalizations over the School based on questionnaires from less than half of the staff members, but judging from these responses, there existed a favourable attitude toward restorative justice within the School.

Of course, there are always exceptions to the generalization. One individual who had not received training and who remained anonymous wrote in the margins of the

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

questionnaire, voicing several complaints about his or her understanding of restorative justice. The individual wrote that the process took too much time and he or she felt that victims should never be exposed to their peers in a circle. This individual concluded by stating “simple and direct consequences for behaviour are more effective and realistic.” Indeed, even in what was considered to be a model restorative justice school, individuals will come to very different conclusions about the same practice. While the School may generally support restorative justice, it was not completely homogeneous in its support.

Chapter Six: Findings

My research began as an exploration of how teachers and administrators within one school understood and enacted restorative justice. I wanted to gather data on individuals' experiences, as well as gain an understanding of the influence of the contextual factors of structure and culture in which these individuals were operating. To frame this pursuit, my research asked the following three related questions: How do teachers and administrators perceive restorative justice and its implementation in their school; how do teachers and administrators perceive their own roles in enacting restorative justice practices; and, how do the teachers' and administrators' perspectives fit with the School Board's understanding of restorative justice?

Attending to these research concerns and their focus on the experience of individuals, I analyzed my data as described in the methodology section of this paper, utilizing Auerbach and Silverstein's (2003) method of identifying repeating ideas in the text and arranging them into themes, which are in turn organized into theoretical constructs. While the focus was on the thoughts that emerged from the interview data, when appropriate, themes were triangulated with data emerging from questionnaires and the documents given me by the Board Administrator. The 15 themes that emerged from the repeating ideas will be presented in this section of the paper and the four overriding theoretical constructs will frame the discussion section. To be clear, themes emerged out of the participants' own repeating phrases and ideas. Therefore, the intention of this next section is to reflect the participants' thoughts as unfiltered as possible, yet grouped under coherent themes. A theme such as "benefits for students" is intended not as uncritical support for restorative justice but as a grouping of all statements referring to such

benefits. Other groupings examine critical views of restorative justice, such as “inappropriate use.” My organization of the themes, which will be explained more fully in the discussion section reflected the theory and literature upon which my study was based, as well as the triangulating data of structure and culture.

Table 1 illustrates the organization of the text into themes (those phrases with letters) under italicized titles of theoretical constructs. In the explanation of themes that follows, participants’ exact words are used, selected to capture the essence of each theme. Percentages refer to the proportion of the six participants who referenced each theme in their interviews. The teachers will be identified with numbers so as to ensure anonymity.

Table 1

Theoretical Constructs, Themes and Repeating Ideas

Theoretical Constructs and Themes	Percentage of Participants who Referenced Theme
<i>I. Constructing personal understandings of restorative justice</i>	
A. Definition of restorative justice	100%
B. Enactment of restorative justice	100%
C. Inappropriate use	33%
D. Transmission	83%
<i>II. Facilitating adoption of new personal practical theories</i>	
A. Benefits for students	100%
B. Benefits for school community	83%
C. Positively fits with past theories	83%

<i>III. Complicating contextual factors of structure and culture</i>	
A. Obstacles to overcome	83%
B. Restorative justice requires strong community	100%
C. Working against mainstream culture	67%
D. Collegial collaboration	67%
E. Community connections	17%
<i>IV. Inconsistent support from gatekeepers of change</i>	
A. Top-down support	100%
B. Feeling out of the loop	33%
C. Lack of sustainability	83%

Theme 1: Definition of Restorative Justice

When asked to define restorative justice, two thirds of the interviewees referred to restorative justice as a process or a set of steps followed in reaction to a harmful incident. It happened after an “offence” had occurred or when “things go wrong.” Teacher 1 stated that “for me it was never a proactive approach, it was a way of approaching a situation after you had used up all the other set of strategies” and described it as being one more “tool” in the toolbox. Teacher 2 appreciated the way restorative justice was able to simply respond to negative incidents, contrasting it to another program entitled Tribes: “We do a lot of the proactive stuff, Tribes stuff and that, but then what do we do when something still goes wrong?” All of the teachers and administrators who viewed restorative justice as a process also focused in on specifics of the practice for their definition, describing the use of a restorative justice circle in terms of who would be

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

involved in the circle, what questions would be asked and how the discussion would proceed.

Half of the participants defined restorative justice as a philosophy. Teacher 3, who initially classified restorative justice as a process, also weaved the idea of the philosophy into his definition, seeing strength in both components. Two other individuals, Teacher 4 and the Board Administrator, who did not define restorative justice as a process were quite adamant that restorative justice was first and foremost a philosophy. The actual word philosophy was repeatedly used by all three, as well as phrases such as “a way of thinking” and “it’s really just about how you are with people.” References were made to the impact that restorative justice has on those involved rather than to the specifics of how it was actually enacted. In contrast to the focus by the previous group on using restorative justice to respond to a harmful incident, the Board Administrator, while describing a training session, stated,

We talk about how to bring it into your classroom so it’s not something that you do when something big happens; you’re using the questions and giving kids an opportunity to use their voice.

Corroborating the Board Administrator’s statement, in an article found in one of the School Board-produced public communications, in its first year of operation, there was the suggestion that restorative justice was about doing the “right thing” and not about the process being “perfect” or “textbook”.

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

Theme 2: Enactment of Restorative Justice

The use of restorative justice differed greatly depending on what role the speaker filled: teacher, School Administrator, or Board Administrator. The severity of the offence, the time spent on the process and the formality of the process increased with each role. For teachers, most of their use of restorative justice centred on dealing with minor incidents of harm or issues that seemed to be disrupting their classroom. Teacher 2 reported that when such issues occurred she would call a classroom meeting to deal with the incident and ensure there was resolution. She described her process as follows:

So the first time around the circle is, what's the problem as you see it; the second time is, how did you feel about that situation; and then the third time round is, what do you need to have happen to resolve this issue.

Teacher 4 used restorative justice mostly on the playground, spontaneously responding to conflicts and fights. She said she utilized a “mini restorative philosophy” in the way she dealt with playground issues. For most of the teachers, there was the sense that it was really best to “try to deal with it initially here in the classroom” rather than allow it to reach a more serious level. None of the teachers had ever convened a restorative justice circle or conference involving participants other than students. If there was a more serious incident in which a larger group of people would need to be involved in a restorative justice conference, the teachers felt it would be the job of the administrator to do so, not the teachers. As Teacher 1 put it: “I’ve certainly never encountered a situation that had the severity involved, because obviously I would’ve passed that off to a principal and gone back to my room to teach math or something.”

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

The administrators both used restorative justice for cases involving more serious incidents of harm. The School Administrator, while reporting that she also used the “basis of restorative justice” for minor incidents between children, acknowledged that administrators are mostly called upon to deal with major disciplinary issues. She had been involved with some more formal restorative justice processes, including one that involved parents of children in the School who were in conflict. For that one, however, she called upon the Board Administrator to facilitate the process. The Board Administrator was requested to facilitate most serious incidents, as well as incidents in schools in which trained facilitators were either unavailable or not yet confident in their skills. She had convened circles for “arson, theft, ... assault, guns, drug issues, knives brought to school.” She characterized her usual request, most commonly from principals or vice-principals, as occurring when:

There’s been a lot of fur flying and a lot of uproar in the community, when parent council is breathing on the principal about why is that kid only suspended, he should’ve been expelled, that type of thing. Those are the ones I, because I’m neutral, I don’t have any affiliation with the school, I don’t work out of their school. I just kind of come in, do it and go, and they see that as fair.

The Board Administrator also utilized a much more formal process when dealing with such offences. She began with the preparation work, meeting with all parties separately to determine the appropriateness of the case and obtain background information. Next she would facilitate a restorative justice conference with whoever was deemed as necessary to the case and finally, a formal contract would be created to which all parties must agree and sign. While someone on staff at the school would normally agree to supervise the

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

contract, “maybe the homeroom teacher, sometimes the CYW [Child and Youth Worker],” the Board Administrator also would check back in with the students after one or two months to ensure the contract was being followed and to receive feedback from the students regarding how they experienced the whole process.

Theme 3: Inappropriate Use

There were two individuals who were clear that judgments must be made regarding which situations are appropriate for restorative justice. The School Administrator questioned the timing of its use, making a case for occasionally using traditional suspensions:

There’s still the need to investigate when an occurrence happens and in some instances, for safety and for the comfort of the victim, to have that person removed for a short period of time, while the investigation is going on and prior to being able to hold a restorative justice circle.

Teacher 1 felt that restorative justice was an effective approach for many students, but cautioned against using it for students “whose issues—behavioural issues, social issues, etc.—run a little deeper than what restorative justice can support.” This teacher felt that the School and the School Board at times applied restorative justice as a “succor or as a band-aid” in cases where counseling might be more helpful, stating:

Sometimes I think that our system just glazes that over and says well, we use restorative justice, we’re a restorative justice believing board, and in saying so we can kind of forget about the kid who, as a result of some serious either mental or

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

social issue, is really incapable of even understanding what restorative justice has to offer them. We apply that as a balm.

He acknowledged that while restorative justice has its function, it very often “fixes the situation and not necessarily fixes the person.”

Theme 4: Transmission

Five out of six participants remarked upon the manner in which the restorative justice approach was transmitted to administrators, teachers, students and parents. The main vehicle for transmission was the training sessions, in which all interviewees had participated. Their remarks divided into comments on the logistics of the training sessions, negative aspects of the training and positive impressions.

The Board Administrator discussed the training of staff as being the first priority once the restorative justice program was in place; between April and June of the first year, six training sessions were conducted. As she recalled, initially the training attracted individuals who had been using similar techniques to restorative justice but who wanted more in-depth instruction, but soon caught the attention of administrators who “wanted to make a change in their school culture” and who asked to send several teachers from their individual schools to the training. The first day of the training session, which began as a three-day session but was modified to two days, focused mostly on philosophy, disrupting traditional notions of punishment, as well as a role-play experience of a restorative justice circle. The Board Administrator reported that most participants would be “pretty much a mess by the time they leave.” The second day was more hands-on training, learning the steps of a restorative process.

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

For two teachers, the training experience was somewhat negative. Teacher 1 found the delivery model to be “alien” and wished for more teachers to be trained as trainers. He also felt that the training was compromised by allowing participants other than school personnel to attend: “We shared the crowd with nurses and RCMP officers and police officers and firemen, so it was a different experience for us. And probably a more adult education style.” Teacher 3 felt that the training session was too long, declaring, “I could’ve known what I know now in half a day.”

Contrary to the experiences of those two teachers, Teacher 2 commented on the power of the training: “Just the training itself was worth it, even if I had never used it. Just what it changed in me.” She praised the training as valuable for all teachers and stated that she did not know “many people that could go through that training without it changing their personal philosophy.” Part of the power for this individual lay in the role-play in which she participated. She described it as a moving experience:

And I don’t even understand myself, it just seemed like a little drama thing, but it took us over. I mean, we’re all professional people, principals and teachers. I played the mother and it was a principal who was playing my son and he was bawling and his nose was running and so you can’t help but feel for that.

The Board Administrator also relayed stories of individuals who had been deeply affected by the training sessions: “I run into people when I’m out and around and they come up and say ‘Oh, man, you know, got that training and it’s right here’ [pointing to heart].” The training sessions motivated people to return to their schools, ready, in the Board Administrator’s words, to “slay dragons.” Interestingly, as indicated earlier, while the questionnaires revealed that support for restorative justice was highest amongst teachers

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

with training, support still hovered around 80 percent for those who had never received training.

While teachers and administrators were exposed to the restorative justice approach through trainings and publications, students and parents did not receive any similar information. The School Administrator speculated that students “wouldn’t know that we’re using restorative justice; if you asked them what that was, they probably wouldn’t know.” Teacher 3 expressed the same idea, musing, “it might be interesting to sit down and ask them what they think it means.” Parents would only be familiar with restorative justice if the School Administrator had “invited either their children or them to be part of something more formal.” Although some information on restorative justice may have been gleaned from newspaper articles, little to no information was actively transmitted to students and parents from the School.

Theme 5: Benefits for Students

All six participants believed that restorative justice provided benefits for students. The benefits were grouped into three loose themes: providing character education for the students; valuing the students’ voices; and assisting in healing. Five out of the six interviewees appreciated that restorative justice had something positive to teach students, most often referring to the learning of empathy and recognition of the need to make better choices. Teacher 3 felt that the approach was an effective way to “put yourself in other people’s shoes” and to understand that “your decisions are affecting a whole lot of other people that maybe you don’t realize.” Teacher 2 expressed surprise at the effectiveness of restorative justice, relating:

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

I think there's been some kids that I really didn't know if it would ever get through to them, the empathy part, and I really did see it make a difference where they had to look the person in the eye and the person was telling them how they felt when they were doing that.

Concurring with this experience, the Board Administrator felt that for some students, going through a restorative justice process is “the only way you're really going to get a change happening in the kid.”

Besides the positive learning that might happen on the part of the student, five of the six interviewees also felt that students benefited from having their own perspectives valued. As Teacher 3 voiced it, “Everybody just wants to be heard.” The Board Administrator has heard from students that “they've liked the opportunity to sit down and talk. Often kids will say that nobody ever asked me for my story.” Teachers 2 and 3 expressed the sense that students were “buying in” to restorative justice because it valued the students as individuals, listened to their voices and gave them ownership of the issue. Interestingly, some teachers had noticed a proactive shift in student behaviour:

I certainly think we've given kids enough voice now that they ask us for resolution and if we haven't provided then they keep at it until they get it. I think we've created good little citizens that way (Teacher 1).

Teacher 2 recalled a group of girls coming to her at recess to request a circle for an issue they were having. She said that sometimes,

I'll just overhear them using that language about how you're going to repair the harm and things like that. And so they really catch on to that language. And I

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

think it's because they take ownership for it rather than just have a teacher solve the problem.

Finally, three teachers (2, 3 and 4) mentioned the ability of restorative justice to assist in the mending of relationships and the healing of inner wounds. Teacher 2 summed it up by saying:

There's something magical about it. I mean, it sounds silly, but I've seen kids that have had all these feelings, they've let all the feelings go in the circle and then they touch each other [referring to shaking hands] and they'll often look each other in the eye and smile for the first time.

Theme 6: Benefits for School Community

The benefits of restorative justice, according to five of the six participants, reach beyond those afforded individual students and actually affect the whole school community: teachers, classrooms, the School as a whole, and parents. Teachers 2 and 3 felt that they had personally gained through the use of restorative justice. Teacher 3 spoke about the "mutual respect" that emerged as students learned, through a restorative justice approach, to view him as "another human being, as a person, rather than an authority figure" and to understand how he, too, can be harmed by negative incidents. He also reported an improvement in his own listening skills. Teacher 2 focused more on the positive change in her personal views toward offenders and "people in general" that grew out of both her training session on restorative justice and her own practice.

There was recognition by all but Teacher 1 that a restorative justice approach positively affects the environment in individual classrooms, as well as in the entire

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

school. The main praise was that restorative justice helps to create a “calm learning environment,” one that the teachers acknowledged cannot exist if students are preoccupied with unresolved issues. Teacher 4 advised, “You do yourself a big service to get this groundwork in place in a school so that learning can take place.” Teachers talked about restorative justice processes minimizing future issues, enabling students to put aside negative thoughts and allowing classrooms to “run smoothly.” In terms of the school as a whole, the School Administrator claimed that restorative justice “maintains the positive relationships within the building—be it staff, students, parents” making it “more effective than other approaches.”

Moving beyond the physical school, the Board Administrator had also seen benefits for parents of students who had been involved in more formal restorative justice processes. She recounted parents—who sometimes believed their own child’s perspective was the only version of the story—reacting appreciatively to the opportunity to hear from others who had been involved in the incident, describing the process as often being an “eye opener for parents.” The Board Administrator expressed that at times restorative justice actually “reconnects the parents with the kids.”

Theme 7: Positively Fits with Past Theories

In looking to Feldman’s (2000) idea of the construction of personal practical theories, questions were asked as to how restorative justice fit with teachers’ and administrators’ former ways of responding to harm and negative behaviour. Five out of six respondents indicated that restorative justice positively connected with previous behaviour. Most of the teachers did not feel that restorative justice was radically different from other

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

strategies they had attempted in the past; however, these same teachers all referred to some way in which learning about restorative justice had strengthened their past ways of acting. Teacher 1 suggested that it “formalized” some of his past beliefs; Teacher 4 reflected that restorative justice “framed it in a much clearer way;” and Teacher 2 remarked that it “extended what I was doing ... made it more purposeful.” Teacher 3 saw restorative justice enhancing his practice in this way:

I’ve always given kids voice. I’ve always had a good rapport with students and always operated under an umbrella of mutual respect but I think now I honour it more in terms of really taking the time to sit down and really delve into the issue in depth.

Only Teacher 2 spoke of any significant dissatisfaction with past ways of dealing with incidents of harm, relating that she “was always searching for something like this.” While acknowledging some growth in his own practice, Teacher 1 scoffed a bit at the idea that restorative justice was much different from other approaches, stating that those who used it well, “probably have been believers in restorative justice, they just didn’t have the manual yet.”

Individuals also connected restorative justice to past theories developed in other areas of their lives; specifically for two respondents, parenthood and past careers. For Teacher 3, it was seeing the effect of traditional school discipline on his own children that caused him to deeply question some of the philosophies behind disciplinary actions. For Teacher 4, it was seeing positive results from raising her children in a very similar philosophy to restorative justice. She also had a past career in the medical field and reflected on specific experiences where restorative justice “might have helped bring some kind of mental

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

healing to people.” All of these past experiences seemed to make individuals more receptive to the idea of restorative justice.

Theme 8: Obstacles to Overcome

Out of the six participants, five of them acknowledged that there are obstacles to overcome in order to utilize restorative justice effectively. The major issue was summarized by Teacher 1: “You just don’t have the time; you can’t take the time.” The School Administrator viewed the lack of time as an issue for herself, and while she had not heard any teachers complaining, thought, by extension, that they would have similar issues. She surmised that “it’s faster for them to ship a child down to the office which would be the equivalent of me shipping a child home for suspension, then to sit down with the parties and use their break time.” This hypothesis was confirmed by almost all of the teachers. Teacher 2 lamented that time spent utilizing a restorative justice approach was time taken away from instruction and, she explained, “We’re really focused on instructional time.” Teacher 1 was unequivocal regarding which aspect of his teaching practice needed to take priority:

It [restorative justice] requires an exceptional amount of time. And in a building where there’s no guidance counselor, I have to take the forefront on that. And sitting for an hour and a quarter in a restorative justice circle is not necessarily going to win me any points in terms of, you know, it’s not very often that someone’s going to come and ask me to be accountable for children’s actions but boy, howdy, when their test scores are dropping, somebody’s going to be knocking at my door.

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

Clearly there is pressure felt from several fronts to focus on instruction rather than time-consuming approaches to deal with behaviour issues.

Despite this pressure, two of the teachers were adamant that the benefits of using a restorative justice approach “far outweigh” the negatives, such as consumption of time. As Teacher 2 discussed the issue of losing instructional time in order to conduct a restorative justice circle, she concluded: “I don’t really see it as a big enough con to not do it.” Teacher 3 was clearer about keeping a restorative justice approach as a priority. He asked himself what was more important, “ending up with the positive, thankful, appreciative citizen or making sure you cover every curriculum expectation? To me, it’s not even a consideration.”

Theme 9: Restorative Justice Requires Strong Community

All six participants discussed the importance of establishing a sense of community within a school setting. For the teachers and administrators, restorative justice helped to maintain a sense of community and was an important aspect of community, but very few participants felt that restorative justice actually created a sense of community in and of itself.

The staff of the School all felt that they were working in a very unique setting and identified their school as possessing a strong sense of community, and thus as fertile ground for a restorative justice approach. There were several factors that seemed to contribute to the establishing of this community feeling: the quality of the staff, the physical layout of the school, the leadership within the school, and the implementation of Tribes. Teacher 3 mentioned that this was a “hand-picked staff” referring to the fact that

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

the School was quite new and the principal was able to choose individuals, interviewing to ensure that teachers were hired who were “into relationships and restoring relationships.” Teacher 3 seemed to think that this hiring approach had resulted in a staff of people committed to providing students with high-quality learning experiences, stating, “People here aren’t kind of necessarily concerned about themselves first and foremost. What’s best for kids, what’s best for the community as a whole.” The physical layout of the school, too, seemed to play a role in the establishment of community. As mentioned previously, many of the classrooms were clustered around a shared workspace where two or three classrooms of students and teachers were able to work collaboratively. Teachers 1 and 3 mentioned this physical aspect as being key to community creation. They also, however, were quick to point out that it is the people that actually brought the workspaces to life. As Teacher 3 stated, “We have that luxury of having that set up, but we’ve also created that for ourselves.” Also identified was another teacher’s willingness to supervise Teacher 1’s classroom when he has needed to conduct a restorative justice process. He identified this collaboration as crucial:

I can assure you if that wasn’t the case, it [restorative justice] would hit the backburner really quickly, because legally I’m responsible for 30 lives in a classroom and if something were to go on and I’m sitting out in the hallway trying to sort something out, I mean, it’s just not a river we want to go down. So unless your principal or teaching partner or someone understands that you need that dedicated time, it won’t happen. It simply will not happen.

Administrative leadership was recognized as highly important to creating a supportive community, both in the quotation above and in other comments by participants. Part of

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

leadership involved institutionalizing practices that encouraged community. In this matter, Teachers 2 and 3 praised the practice at their School of beginning each staff meeting with a community-building activity, suggesting that at the point of the interview the sense of community had become “pretty self-sustaining.”

Tied in with other roots of community creation, and by far the most commonly referenced attributor to community was the program, Tribes. Several teachers referred to the School as a “Tribes school.” As Teacher 4 stated, Tribes “really does build in the philosophy of community into a school.” In the school profile found on the School Board Website, Tribes was affirmed for contributing to the School’s safe environment, as well as serving as a foundation for building positive relationships throughout the school community. Since all the teachers in the school had received training in Tribes, this seemed to facilitate a strong connection among teachers. Tribes was referred to as a philosophy and almost all teachers mentioned beginning each day with a Tribes community circle. There was recognition from participants that restorative justice and Tribes “jive very nicely” but that Tribes was the definite precursor to bringing in a restorative justice approach. Teacher 1 summarized the relationship between Tribes and restorative justice as follows:

I would say that restorative justice does not create community, it’s as a result of community. You need to start with that ideology. We’re lucky here, we kind of tapped into Tribes. Whatever ideology you want to tap into. If you can build community through that, restorative justice is a natural extension of a belief of community, of a belief that everyone has a place here, of a belief of mutual respect and actually teaching what those things look like. Because it’s when you

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

go outside that circle of community that you require restorative justice and you require someone to be pulled back into community. You can't step outside of community unless there is one.

This sentiment was also affirmed by the School Administrator who recommended that schools interested in implementing restorative justice find “some training or program that melds with it” and continued “I know you're not researching the Tribes program but I keep mentioning it because it has been very influential in bringing people on.” To some staff, restorative justice seemed simply to be an enhancement of specific Tribes practices. The teachers had doubts that students would be able to articulate a restorative justice philosophy or process since most restorative justice practices were identified as Tribes practices: “I don't ever actually say restorative justice. I don't say this is a restorative justice circle. I just say this is our class meeting, we're going to have a circle. We have circles for Tribes activities all the time, too. So it's just an extension of that” (Teacher 2). Even the teachers seemed unclear as to how restorative justice was being utilized in the School as a whole. Teacher 2 admitted:

We've never really talked about restorative justice as an actual topic at this school. It's interesting because I know what everyone else does for Tribes because we all do the same monthly goals and the same activities in our classrooms and things like that for those. So I have a better idea about that, but I've never really talked to anyone, I don't even know who's trained in this school.

It seemed that at this model restorative justice school, community had been created through a number of initiatives—hiring of quality staff, intentional physical layout and

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

Tribes—but restorative justice was seen mostly as a product of community, not as one of the key contributors.

Theme 10: Working against Mainstream Culture

Four of the six participants ventured that restorative justice was a “tough sell” in mainstream culture. The school system and those who populate it are immersed in mainstream culture, assigning restorative justice to the periphery of the mainstream school culture. Teacher 3 discussed the difficulty of introducing restorative justice values into the classroom as he found them to be at odds with the students’ own upbringing, saying “It feels like you’re fighting against society with some of those ideals.” Beyond resistance from students, however, he also suggested “There’s a lot of people in this profession who kind of need to open up their minds a bit at times. Again it’s not about power and control, it’s about what’s best for kids.” Teacher 2 cited the importance of “buy-in” from administrators, teachers, students and parents, recognizing that “it takes a lot of work for those few people who are trying to get it going, to get it going.” The School Administrator relayed the experience of hiring teachers who have been teaching in other schools and who, when they first arrive at the School, “don’t understand and they think perhaps I’m not being firm enough with the kids.”

The Board Administrator was particularly cognizant of the difficulty of lauding a counter-cultural approach such as restorative justice within the mainstream school system. She recounted her predecessor’s attempt to begin a restorative justice program in a different district in the early 1990s. Although there was interest from the district, the program was eventually dismissed because “superintendents felt like they would be

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

asking principals to give up their power by using restorative justice” and this idea was too radical. Even more recently, the Board Administrator was encountering resistance and was certain that some people at the trainings were “tapped on the shoulder and told to go” and did very little in terms of restorative practice back in their schools. She lamented the fact that even with all the available restorative justice programs, “they’re still expelling kids. I think if everybody were here [at the program for expelled students] there should probably be about 30 kids here at the moment. 30 kids fully expelled.” She indicated a few of the students present whose situations she believed restorative justice circles could have resolved. There were also systemic issues identified that prevented restorative justice from becoming a common practice. The Board Administrator explained the process administrators must undergo once an incident has occurred. There were certain forms to complete on which administrators indicated details of the incident and the subsequent response such as whether charges were laid or whether the student was suspended; administrators were unable to indicate on the form that “we sat down and did a circle and fixed it, so I’m not going to suspend. Even if that got a tick; but none of that is being recorded.” Two issues arose here: restorative justice actions were not being tracked; and restorative justice was not being systemically considered as a normative practice when a harmful incident had occurred.

Theme 11: Collegial Collaboration

Four out of the six participants referred to the benefits of introducing restorative justice as a school-wide philosophy, rather than as an approach practiced in isolation in individual classrooms. Teachers appreciated the uniformity of the whole-school approach

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

and the knowledge that, as Teacher 3 voiced it, “however I deal with things in here is consistent throughout the school. There’s a whole underlying philosophy.” Teacher 4 felt that a common understanding and practice of restorative justice within the school made the practice more effective since the students know that “everyone is going to have to settle a dispute this way, that I’m going to have to meet face to face with the person.” Citing the case School as an example, the Board Administrator had noticed that in schools in which both administrators were trained along with a significant number of staff “it’s really starting to make a change in their school, for how they do business.” Training a collective of teachers at one school was considered essential since “you kind of get people on the path and then if there’re enough people in the school, they’re all going to help one another” sustain their restorative justice program.

Most of the teachers did not feel it would be effective to practice restorative justice “just as an island unto yourself in your classroom.” Teachers 3 and 4 felt that it could be practiced in isolation, but it would be much more difficult and, as Teacher 3 said, “you’d have to really look at how to set that up and how it’s going to work effectively while still running your classroom.” Yet he insisted that as difficult as it would be, if he were transferred to another school he would practice restorative justice; however, he added that he “would be working on gaining that support. Getting people to move in their ways of thinking.” Teacher 2 who had actually been trained in restorative justice in another school and who had practiced it mostly in isolation before joining this School found that it was “okay to do within my own community, well, just classroom” and had not noticed much difference in her ability to use a restorative justice approach in the different schools. In

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

fact, she felt that when she used it in isolation, her approach was “probably more true to the actual restorative justice that I was trained in.”

Theme 12: Community Connections

While only the Board Administrator mentioned the importance of building and maintaining connections with the community, she cited it frequently enough so as to warrant attention. For her, central to creating a sustainable restorative justice program was the ability to get “everybody in the community on the same page, supporting one another.” The main connections brought forward were with police officers, other restorative justice organizations, community agencies, higher educational institutions and the general public.

Of the 538 individuals trained since the restorative justice program in the School Board began, 32 have been police officers. While many of these are school resource officers who are assigned to specific schools, other officers were also trained. In more formal restorative justice conferences conducted by the Board Administrator she often included the school resource officer and reported two specific benefits from the inclusion of the officer. First, she found their inclusion to be “sobering for parents” as parents recognized the potential seriousness of the incident and the potential ramifications for their child. Second, there was the possibility to actually change the outcome of a situation, in terms of criminal charges:

We’ve had some circles where the officer has been there and he’s really not sure if he’s going to charge or not. So he’s looking in the circle to see what the

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

outcome is and how the offender is behaving. If he shows remorse and willingness to step up to the plate and fix it, then he won't charge.

By involving police officers in restorative justice training and processes, the Board Administrator also found that they were more likely to themselves be supportive of restorative justice.

The Board Administrator attributed the relative ease with which the restorative justice program was introduced into the School Board to the support of other community organizations and residents. She called the support a "huge big bonus" for the School Board, citing problems in other school boards where that support had been lacking. In the second year of the restorative justice program, a celebration was held in recognition of the program's success in the School Board; rather than only focus on the school system, the celebration included such agencies and individuals as the crown attorney, police officers, a group focused on elder abuse, and a conflict resolution organization, among others. The Board Administrator spoke optimistically about the School Board's inclusion in the Region's long-term plan to reduce violence:

They would like to see every student, every custodian, secretary, every support person, teacher, administrator, everybody in public, private and Catholic schools in the region trained in restorative justice. And then they also want every student from JK up to be involved heavily in a character development program ... what a place this would be to live and work, everybody would be on the same page.

The plan clearly endorses the restorative justice program in the School Board and lends support that the Board Administrator found to be relatively unique within the province.

Theme 13: Top-Down Support

All six participants spoke of the significance of support—whether perceived or real—from those in authority. This support was discussed in terms of three groups: school administration, the school board as a system, and those in top positions in the school board, such as the director of education and the board of trustees.

All of the teachers who were interviewed felt as though they were categorically encouraged by their school administration to utilize a restorative justice approach. Teacher 1 declared, “Our principal is a believer in restorative justice and uses that philosophy on a regular basis.” The teachers felt that this was significant for their continued use of restorative justice since, as Teacher 4 expressed it, “your administrator drives your school and if your administrator values something else, then that’s where the emphasis will be.” School administrators were seen as being very influential on the actions of teachers and therefore the life of restorative justice. Teacher 1 stated, “as long as you’ve got a leader in the school, particularly the principal and vice principal who believe in something like this [restorative justice] deeply, it will continue.” The School Administrator also recognized her own influence, stating that for those administrators who wished to encourage restorative justice, “we took it upon ourselves to see if we could get as many of our staff trained as possible.” Yet, even with that interest and influence, the School Administrator was unable to train as many staff as she had wished due to the lack of training available from the School Board, circumstances that were beyond her control.

Although individuals at the School Board were praised for their work, the School Board as a system was seen to have failed somewhat in its handling of the restorative

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

justice program. The School Administrator, for one, thankfully acknowledged the support she had received from the Board Administrator when faced with challenging cases, yet felt that some systemic policies discouraged support of the restorative justice program. For instance, one of the factors used when determining which schools receive vice-principals was the number of suspensions that school records. The School Administrator felt that by withholding a vice-principal from schools that used restorative justice in lieu of suspensions, this policy effectively penalized her, stating “there’s a misfit here and if you want us to do restorative justice, you have to recognize that I need more help, not less.” Some teachers, too, did not feel particularly encouraged by the School Board in their efforts to utilize a restorative justice approach. Despite the School Board’s efforts, Teacher 2 in particular did not seem to have received the message that they were actively supporting restorative justice: “It could be more far reaching than that if the Board was saying this is what we’re going to do now, when we have these issues we’re going to be having restorative justice circles.” She went on to recommend that one way to ensure effective implementation of restorative justice would be with ongoing support, “so once the training is over, it’s not over. Continue to give check-ins and things like that.” Even while acknowledging the existence of some verbal support from the School Board, this teacher indicated that she had not seen action follow the supportive words.

Moving to the next level of power, the Board Administrator expressed frustration with the lack of support she felt from those in authority in the School Board, stating, “I think one of the disappointing pieces of this project has been that there hasn’t been a consistent promotion of it at the top.” While support seemed to initially be present, it eroded as individuals in the roles of trustees were replaced by “ones coming from other

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

places who don't really know much about restorative justice." Four trustees were originally trained in restorative justice, but one was not re-elected and the other chose not to run again, leaving only two people on the board of trustees who had received restorative justice training. The Board Administrator thought that "it would be really helpful to have the top—the director, superintendents, trustees, and the chair—have all of them on board with it. Make it a top-down initiative." While she experienced the support of some individuals, it was the consistency that was lacking.

Theme 14: Feeling out of the Loop

Teacher 2 and the Board Administrator expressed feelings of being disconnected from activity and decisions regarding restorative justice in the School Board. Teacher 2 wondered if restorative justice was more active in other parts of the Region because she had "heard of things that happen," particularly in secondary schools. She stated, "But in my board I really haven't [heard much], and again I'm in elementary and I'm sure they're doing something in secondary, because even when I went to the training, they were kind of presenting it like this is something powerful in secondary." She did not get the same sense for elementary schools.

While the Board Administrator would be assumed to be the person most knowledgeable about the situation of restorative justice in the School Board, she felt as though her knowledge was incomplete. Partly, this was due to a lack of reporting structure; administrators and teachers could be using restorative practices frequently without the Board Administrator being aware of their use. Therefore, she felt that it was "really difficult now for me to keep a beat on it." Besides the reporting structure,

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

however, the Board Administrator also felt a bit disconnected from various restorative justice initiatives and decisions. She mentioned one initiative the School Board had undertaken in conjunction with an area university, which was due to be released one month after our interview took place. She had only recently heard about it and expressed her sentiment that it was “strange that that’s going on and I haven’t been asked anything.” Her physical move from the main School Board office to an auxiliary office was also referenced: “Being here, it’s just a different feel being here. I really don’t know. I’m certainly not in the hub of what’s happening.” While the Board Administrator was by definition deeply connected to the restorative justice program and its activities, her words and the examples given revealed a sense of disconnection.

Theme 15: Lack of Sustainability

Sustainability of the restorative justice program was identified as an issue by five out of the six participants. Some of the teachers interviewed viewed the program as one that was once vibrant, but was now fading away. Teacher 1 called restorative justice a “fad” and described its fate quite vividly:

I think, unfortunately, like many things in education, fads come and fads go and without the funding to continue the training, then you will see restorative justice slowly die out, even here ... where it was really brought in in a big way. Once the funding dried up, teachers stopped getting trained. We’re very busy people, we’re always being inundated with the latest fad, and it could very quickly pass into something that we used to do: ‘I’ve heard about and I think someone here on staff has some training on it.’ But if we don’t continually renew a new generation of

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

teachers and integrate them into that belief it will slowly... It will always be part of what we do, but RJ as a terminology may slip into the way of the dodo.

Teacher 2 remembered the interest there was in restorative justice when the program was first implemented and compared that to the lack of interest she felt currently existed:

I heard a lot more about it in general: teachers talking about it, and postings on [the internal conference file], there were newspaper articles about it at that time, things like that as well. The media really seemed to pick up on it, but I really have seen that dwindle. And there's always a new issue, right? And they picked up on the new issue and left that behind. Which is too bad. It changed a lot of people.

It's not like it's totally gone, but it's certainly not as strong a push as it was.

She expressed frustration that even if teachers are individually interested in continuing on with a program such as restorative justice, they are often not able to resist the influence of better-promoted programs: "It does seem like we just do whatever we're told to do sometimes and so Tribes is the thing right now and people get on board with Tribes."

The Board Administrator also recognized that there had been a shift in momentum. She reported that "we haven't done nearly as much training in the last two years, since we've run out of money. I think last year we trained about 60 people, this year we've only done 20." When our interview took place, there were about 360 people on the waiting list for training and no new funding in sight. She also mentioned the difficulty in utilizing professional development days for restorative justice training since most of them have been mandated for specific purposes. Besides the lack of funding, the Board Administrator offered one other theory for the program's decline:

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

We were so far ahead of the game, and now we're not doing much. Everybody else is kind of catching up to us and I believe that's part of what superintendents feel—we've got a head start so we can just sit low for a bit and then go at it some more, I don't know. But there's not a whole lot of communication around that.

There was a possibility that next year the program would be included in the School Board's budget, contrary to the situation this year, thereby assisting greatly in the program's sustainability; but the Board Administrator was unclear as to whether that would be the case.

Despite the challenges, the Board Administrator had attempted to increase the sustainability of the restorative justice program in several different ways. As mentioned earlier, the second year of the program was launched with a celebration deep with connections to the broader community. Also key were the public communications published three times a year when funding was available and twice or once a year since funding ceased. Connected to these communications was an internal conference file where people could post questions or discuss their own experiences with using restorative justice in their classrooms or schools. Even these efforts, however, were identified by teachers as being important early on in the implementation of restorative justice but the interest and use of them were not sustained.

Two individuals had some recommendations for more effective and sustained implementation of restorative justice in schools. Teacher 4 felt adamant that all teachers needed to be exposed to restorative justice, whether it was the full training or even an introductory session. The Board Administrator agreed, and expressed a desire that all new teachers and new administrators receive training. She went further, calling for support

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

from university Faculties of Education, that they “instead of teaching ‘classroom management’ would do more of a restorative practice piece with new teachers, got them already thinking in that direction.”

Chapter Seven: Discussion

The purpose of this study is to discover and analyze how restorative justice is being experienced and implemented by teachers and administrators in a specific Ontario Public School Board. In order to add meaning to the themes reported in the findings section and bring together the context with the findings, I engaged in what Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) described as a “top down and a bottom up process” (p. 155) to organize the themes into theoretical constructs. Guiding this process is my conceptual framework based on theory (top down); yet the constructs must also be supported by the themes and context discovered in the data (bottom up).

As highlighted earlier, my research is situated within a theoretical orientation based on two models. The orientation merges Woodbury and Gess-Newsome’s (2002) model of educational reform, the Teacher-Centered Systemic Reform (TCSR) model, with Feldman’s (2000) concept of teacher’s personal practical theories (see Appendix A). Woodbury and Gess-Newsome’s model suggested that reform initiatives must take into consideration the contextual factors of structure and culture in which individual teachers and administrators are operating. Though Woodbury and Gess-Newsome provided limited discussion of the development of individual thinking and practice within this context, Feldman (2000) explored the issue further with the description of personal practical theories, complex systems of beliefs. Feldman stated that for educators to modify their personal practical theories, they must view the potential new theory as 1) sensible, 2) as equally beneficial as past theories, and 3) able to enlighten the individual about his or her teaching practice. Interplay between personal practical theories and contextual factors of structure and culture forms the basis for the following discussion of

my study. Building on theory and data, I have developed four theoretical constructs on which I will elaborate in this section: constructing personal understandings of restorative justice, facilitating adoption of new personal practical theories, complicating contextual factors of structure and culture, and inconsistent support from gatekeepers of change. For each category, I will begin by describing the essence of the category as revealed by the breadth of my data. Taken together, the four constructs illustrate the progression of restorative justice in one particular school from introduction to its current limited adoption, highlighting along the way best practices and challenges.

Constructing Personal Understandings of Restorative Justice

As evidenced in the breadth of my data, the School studied contains individuals who appreciate and value restorative justice. While all participants acknowledge and connect with the underlying philosophy that girds restorative justice, the majority of participants see the value of restorative justice in its ability to respond, after the fact, to harm. Therefore, restorative justice is rarely seen as affecting the day-to-day lives of teachers and their classrooms but emerges as an effective tool—being mostly utilized by administrators—for dealing with harm.

As Zehr and Toews (2004) wrote, restorative justice is a concept that inspires a diversity of definitions and understandings. These definitions and understandings, according to Woodbury and Gess-Newsome (2002), are formed by a person's knowledge and beliefs, situated within his or her own personal contextual factors. In other words, the participants in this study created their own understandings of restorative justice built on

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

such factors as past experiences, prior knowledge, experience of restorative justice training sessions, actual use of restorative justice and already established beliefs.

Naturally these personal understandings are unique to the individuals who hold them, but there emerge some patterns in this study worth exploring. The majority of staff members at the School who participated in the study, with the exception of one individual, define restorative justice primarily as a process or as a response to a committed harm. Processes are undeniably discussed in the literature (Raye & Warner Roberts, 2007; Warner Roberts, 2004) but this definition of restorative justice remains incomplete without the addition of restorative values and philosophy (Sawatsky, 2001; Toews, 2007; Zehr, 2002). The Board Administrator, on the other hand, highlights the underlying philosophy of restorative justice and this focus is reiterated in the Board-produced public communications and training manual. Although these documents also describe restorative processes, they do so secondarily, after the establishment of the importance of philosophy. It should be stated that all participants at some point in their interviews connect restorative justice to a set of underlying values; the difference lies in which aspect of restorative justice—preventative (values and philosophy) or responsive (process)—is given priority. There seems to be some discrepancy between the School Board's stance on restorative justice and the understanding that has been constructed by most of the individuals. While the School Board and some teachers emphasize the preventative measures and values restorative justice promotes in individuals and school communities, consistent with the literature on restorative justice in schools (Morrison, 2007; Riestenberg, 2003a), half of the teachers and the School Administrator stress the applicability of restorative justice after a harmful incident has occurred, also consistent

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

with the literature (Arnott, 2007; Chmelynski, 2005). Both are accurate characterizations of restorative justice; yet prioritizing one view over the other can lead to a difference in understanding and eventually in actions.

The construction of an understanding of restorative justice as chiefly a process seems to have restricted teachers in their use of restorative justice. None of the teachers have actually facilitated a circle or conference, most indicating in the interviews and questionnaires a lack of confidence to do so. Their perception of their own role as teachers contributes to this unwillingness: restorative processes are viewed as the responsibility of administrators--first School and then Board--as the severity of the incident grows. By being relegated to a formal process, restorative justice loses its flexibility and applicability for day-to-day use within the classroom. Therefore, since restorative justice is utilized fully only by a few, it is left with a more limited support base.

Interestingly, these understandings are constructed by individuals despite the School Board's efforts to present restorative justice as a broad preventative and responsive approach. The next few sections will explore some of the factors contributing to participants' understanding, use and ultimately the state of restorative justice in the School and School Board as a whole.

Facilitating Adoption of New Personal Practical Theories

All of the participants indicate support for restorative justice, albeit to varying degrees and with varying interpretations of the concept. Based on the data from the interviews and questionnaires, the staff at the School, with a few exceptions, believe

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

restorative justice to be effective and in most cases to connect with and formalize previous or current belief systems. In all, from what participants express both explicitly and implicitly, they feel a personal commitment to restorative justice and have incorporated it into their own personal practical theories.

Since restorative justice, as a term if not entirely as an approach, was new at some point for all participants, participants had to decide whether to adopt it as a new personal practical theory or maintain their existing theories. For change within educators to occur, Gess-Newsome et al (2003) argued that individuals must experience some dissatisfaction with their former ways of being. To reiterate, Feldman (2000) went further, stating that teachers and administrators must view the new theory as 1) sensible, 2) as equally beneficial as past theories, and 3) able to enlighten the individual about his or her teaching practice. Therefore this section examines the data that support the adoption of new personal practical theories.

The data confirm that there are many facilitating factors aiding the participants in the adoption of new personal practical theories of restorative justice, or at the very least, the assimilation of the personal practical theories into existing belief systems. Most of the teachers find the restorative justice approach to fit positively with their past theories, formalizing past theories and providing them with more of a substantial framework. All participants praise restorative justice for the varied benefits it bestows upon students, teachers themselves, the school as a whole, and parents. There is indication from all participants that restorative justice is found to meet Feldman's (2000) three categories: it is deemed to be sensible ("it helps for the classroom to run smoothly"); it is as equally beneficial as past theories ("I think it is more effective than other approaches because, as

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

I said before, it maintains the positive relationships within the building”); and it is able to enlighten the individual about his or her teaching practice (“I’ve learned patience, learned listening, learned that everybody just wants to be heard”). In all, participants express a personal commitment to restorative justice.

If, as Woodbury and Gess-Newsome (2002) stated “school change is ultimately about teacher change” (p. 774), then the acceptance by these teachers of restorative justice bodes well for its future in their School. And yet, restorative justice in the School is characterized by some as “dying.” This characterization will be explored further in the next section entitled *complicating contextual factors of structure and culture*. Woodbury and Gess-Newsome (2002) discussed these contextual factors as having a profound effect on educators’ personal practical theories. In this case study, the participants all appear to adopt restorative justice as a personal practical theory, speaking very favourably of the approach, and yet, they still all express doubts that restorative justice will continue as a significant practice in their Board for much longer. So although personally committed and seeing themselves as personally unaffected by broader contextual factors, those same contextual factors cause a profound effect on a more widespread, substantial commitment to restorative justice, and therefore on individuals beliefs and, ultimately, actions.

Complicating Contextual Factors of Structure and Culture

As evidenced by all the data, the teachers and administrators in this study are situated within a context that both supports and undermines their use of restorative justice. They operate within a community that understands restorative justice, work in a school which values community and feel strongly supportive of and supported by one another. Yet

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

despite this support, the participants also must adhere to broader institutional policies—situated within a retributive culture—that do not encourage the use of restorative justice. The result is a context full of tensions and complexities.

This theoretical concept consists of five themes: obstacles to overcome, restorative justice requires strong community, working against mainstream culture, collegial collaboration and community connections. The themes are indeed complicating, all enrich the context, some creating fertile ground in which restorative justice should be able to flourish and others choking the young shoots of restorative justice as soon as they appear.

The first theme, obstacles to overcome, illustrates the complexity of the factors, providing both obstacles and examples of how to surmount them. Karp and Breslin (2001) in their case study of schools implementing restorative justice approaches highlighted three barriers toward implementation. Their first two barriers are also prominent in the conversations of my participants: restorative justice practices take a lot of time; and broader institutional policies may not support spending that time and energy. Not surprisingly, time emerges as a negative factor in all the interviews conducted. The School Administrator, even though she has not heard any specific complaints, surmises correctly that time would be an obstacle for teachers. Although some teachers may indeed be personally anxious about losing instructional time to restorative justice practice, that anxiety does not occur within a vacuum; there are outside pressures—from parents, administrators, broader policies—making it undesirable to focus precious time on activities other than instruction. For a few teachers, however, their personal commitment

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

to restorative justice prevails over the time pressure, and they continue to practice restorative justice regardless of the time they need to devote to the approach.

One complicating factor fairly unique to this school is the implementation of Tribes alongside restorative justice. Smith (2006) wrote of the possibility of creating a positive school climate through the use of restorative justice in order to better implement anti-bullying programs. These participants, however, have utilized Tribes to create that positive school climate and view Tribes as assisting in the implementation of restorative justice in the School. All the staff members I interviewed see the identity of the School, first and foremost, as a Tribes school. Their reliance on Tribes, in their view, has created a strong community. Restorative justice, in contrast, helps to bring individuals back into community once there has been a negative incident that has caused some separation.

On the one hand, Tribes appears to assist in the adoption of restorative justice. When asked what lessons they can provide to other schools, several individuals advised establishing an underlying philosophy, such as Tribes, before implementing restorative justice. The two approaches overlap and complement each other by reinforcing similar values (respect, valuing difference) and skills (attentive listening, respectful communication). However, on the other hand, Tribes also appears to limit the use of restorative justice. By having already established a healthy community through Tribes, restorative justice is no longer seen as anything other than a response to harm; thus, restorative justice becomes a process, as the teachers indicate, and not a philosophy. In this way, Tribes can be seen as both facilitating acceptance of restorative justice and limiting its implementation and integration into school culture.

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

Despite the possibility that programs like Tribes could constrain the use of restorative justice, they also assist in creating a cooperative and collegial climate (Gibbs, 2003) that is more conducive to restorative justice practices. In Karp and Breslin's (2001) case study, looking at three schools without the benefit of such an underlying philosophy, the third barrier they identified toward implementing restorative justice was internal inertia on the part of the teachers. They attributed this internal inertia to the fact that "every principal, teacher, counselor, and student has been socialized in a culture of retribution, and its language, even veneration, permeates all sanctioning processes" (p. 269). The first study conducted in Australia and reported on by Morrison (2007) also identified some of the philosophical tensions that were apparent between existing practices and those of restorative justice. In the School I have studied, however, most of the discussion centers on the strong fit between restorative justice and the School's underlying philosophy. The disconnection occurs when the view is broadened and other teachers, administrators, the School Board, policies, and society in general are included. Then, restorative justice is described as a "tough sell."

Even though the School may not feel a disconnection between the School's general philosophy and that of restorative justice, the broader entrenched retributive culture still has an effect on them. For example, the School Administrator critiques a policy that rewards schools with high suspension rates by providing them with a vice-principal. The Board Administrator gives several examples of deep-rooted retributive policies prevalent in the school system, one of which is the absence of options for administrators to record the use of restorative justice processes in their mandatory reporting forms. In some key ways, such as the reporting forms, the system does not even acknowledge the existence of

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

restorative justice. For the School, while they may feel somewhat insulated, the ingrained retributive nature of the school system affects them. If restorative justice is not acknowledged as a normal way of behaving or even as a viable alternative, then widespread support for the approach begins to be eroded, thereby making it less likely that more training will be made available within the School Board, for their School or any other.

Adding further complication to the effect of structure and culture are both the collegial collaboration found within the School and the strong connections that the School Board has made with the community. In contrast to the retributive culture so predominant in our communities, those working at the School speak highly of each other and eagerly discuss the benefits of working collaboratively. Ross et al (1997) in their study of teacher efficacy rates found that constructive collaboration with other teachers was a key factor in building teacher efficacy. The teachers in my study seem to support one another in the majority of their efforts, including using a restorative justice approach; they do not feel as though they are working in isolation. The Board Administrator, too, feels very supported by the ethos in the community. While describing occasional examples of resistance, her main comment is that the community is “already set up like this” and ready to offer support. The Board Administrator works hard to ensure that mistakes she has seen in other school boards, where the restorative justice program has operated in isolation, are not repeated in this School Board.

It truly is complicating, how structure and culture, within which are situated individuals’ personal commitments to restorative justice, actually affect the implementation of restorative justice in the School. While time is a common complaint,

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

the School enjoys collegial collaboration and an underlying philosophy that is conducive to using restorative justice. There is widespread support in the community, tempered somewhat by the overarching culture of retribution found in greater society.

Theoretically, this is a School and School Board that should be well poised to sustain a restorative justice approach. The final construct explores the role of gatekeepers of change, those individuals and systems of individuals who influence both personal practical theories and structure and culture.

Inconsistent Support from Gatekeepers of Change

The teachers in this study, as evidenced in interviews and document analysis, enjoy substantial support from the School Administrator and Board Administrator. People in positions of greater authority and policy makers, however, have been inconsistent with their support of restorative justice, leaving the program with no funding, little public encouragement and limited hope for sustainability. Despite personal commitments from teachers and administrators, if there is not support from those in greater power, restorative justice in this School will continue to diminish in importance.

While Berman and McLaughlin (1978) referred to principals as the “gatekeepers of change,” I use the term in this context to identify all those who are in positions of administration and/or those who influence policy: school administrators, school board administrators, director of education, school board trustees, and those within the Ontario Ministry of Education. Based on my literature review, I focused my study on the role that teachers and administrators play in implementing school reform, supposing the role of teachers to be especially critical to reform. After conducting my research, however, the

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

evidence suggests that my thinking was misguided: It is the gatekeepers of change who ultimately create and sustain the culture and structure in which teachers operate, and thereby profoundly affect reform initiatives. Although teachers who are personally committed to a restorative justice approach can ultimately decide if and how to bring it into their own classroom and / or to advocate using it in their school as a whole, actual educational reform cannot be achieved through a commitment by teachers alone. For second-order or transformative change (Romberg & Price, 1983; Woodbury & Gess-Newsome, 2002) to occur, the gatekeepers of change must be consistently supportive.

In this case study, the School Administrator is viewed as being widely supportive of her staff, particularly in their use of Tribes and restorative justice. She encourages teachers to be trained in restorative justice when training is available, and models using the approach herself whenever she deems a situation appropriate. She is, in essence, what Copland (2003) described as one of the “catalysts of change” and “protectors of vision” (p. 392), crucial roles for administrators to embody during the implementation of a reform. Once these roles are filled, however, and in the early stages of reform, Copland (2003) insisted that there must be a shift to distributed leadership among all staff. Fullan (1993) described it as the existence of a “two-way relationship of pressure, support and continuous negotiation” (p. 38). In the School, there does not appear to be distributed leadership on restorative justice; the reasons for this involve a number of factors mentioned previously. For one, the focus is on Tribes for which there does appear to be substantial distributed leadership amongst the teachers and administrators. Although reasons for this difference remain speculative, the focus on Tribes, as already discussed, seems to have confined restorative justice to being seen as a process, not a larger

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

philosophy. As a process, the teachers either handle minor incidents within their own classrooms or send serious incidents to the School Administrator who decides whether a restorative justice process is appropriate. Therefore, besides linking restorative justice with other Tribes activities and occasionally using it to deal with minor incidents, the teachers do not feel much ownership in restorative justice. While committed to the approach personally and in theory, restorative justice does not impact the day-to-day life of teachers in a significant enough manner so as to warrant wider leadership or advocacy.

Although both the School Administrator and the Board Administrator are praised for their individual work and support of restorative justice, the School Board as a whole and those in positions of power within the Board (board of trustees, director of education, etc.) and the Ministry offer inconsistent support. Messages are mixed, with much public support initially, and then little or no support offered in later years. One of the main issues seems to be that support is offered through individuals at the top level, not systemically. When individuals who are vocal about their support of restorative justice leave their positions, the support follows them. On a structural level, the program had no budget once funding from the outside source ended and was very symbolically moved to an auxiliary office. Communication of those in higher positions of authority with the Board Administrator, too, is sporadic. Again, despite personal commitments of both the School Administrator and the Board Administrator, wider issues of structure, culture and apparent lack of knowledge and / or interest from those gatekeepers of change above the two administrators are detrimental to the sustainability of the restorative justice program.

By far, the largest problem identified by teachers and administrators in terms of the sustainability of restorative justice is the lack of funding. Without money, the training of

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

teachers and others has virtually halted and the presence of restorative justice is waning. Riestenberg (2003b) in her study also documented the negative effects on schools once funding disappears: specialists disappear with the money, leaving schools unprepared to deal with incidents themselves. In this case, the Board Administrator has not disappeared with the funding. Yet, it is a difficult position for the Board Administrator to be in, held hostage by the funding situation, unable to grow the program or even to actively sustain it. It is interesting to note that the funding for restorative justice in this School Board did not come from the Ontario Ministry of Education, but from a source not connected to education. Again, although the Ministry of Education seems to be supportive of restorative justice through Bill 212 (2007) and the Safe Schools Action Team report (2006), the ultimate indication of support, funding, does not materialize for this School Board. Similar to teachers and administrators, those in positions of power in the School Board do not act within vacuums and are affected by the priorities put forth by those above them, those within the Ministry of Education.

At the same time, teachers and administrators cannot wait for funding to reappear but must continue in their careers, using what they have learned, perhaps lamenting the fact that restorative justice is not as prevalent as it once was, but ultimately dismissing it as another fad no longer supported by policy makers. As one teacher phrased it, sometimes teachers need to “just do whatever we’re told to do” and right now, broadly speaking, very few people are telling teachers to “do” restorative justice.

Conclusion of Discussion

There are multiple ways in which this School and School Board have been positioned for success in terms of implementing restorative justice. The teachers and administrators I interviewed are all personally committed to restorative justice, believing it to be a sensible, effective and enlightening approach. Restorative justice has become part of their personal practical theories. Culturally and structurally, there are also many best practices to highlight. The School has an underlying philosophy based on Tribes which facilitates the adoption of restorative justice, a practice built on similar values; there is an atmosphere of collegial collaboration within the School; and the School Administrator is highly supportive of using restorative justice. The School Board as a whole has also connected with the community, a community open to the concept of restorative justice; ensured that the Board Administrator not disappear along with the funding; and offered strong initial support.

Yet, despite these strengths, the challenges are many. The School and School Board operate within a system that is ultimately retributive; for transformative change to be sustainable there must be fundamental shifts in key ways of thinking and acting (Romberg & Price, 1983; Woodbury & Gess-Newsome, 2002). These shifts are facilitated through considerable support from the leadership and this support has not been consistent in this School Board, or in the broader Ontario government, in terms of funding, policy changes, internal communication and public expressions of support. The gatekeepers of change, those in leadership, have not sustained their initial support of restorative justice, allowing it to be viewed as a fad, a death knell for any potential reform.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

This study has examined the implementation of restorative justice in one specific school in an Ontario Public School Board. The purpose of this examination was to discover and analyze how restorative justice was experienced and implemented by teachers and administrators within this School. In the first chapter, the research questions that anchor this study were presented and situated within an historical context with regards to gaps in existing restorative justice and educational reform literature. My own position as a restorative justice practitioner and advocate was named, as was my belief that my vested interest in the topic assists me in operating as a critical researcher. Key definitions were explained in full.

The second chapter of this thesis presented a review of literature on the effectiveness of restorative justice, restorative justice in education and educational reform. While much of the data gathered on restorative justice programs is consistent with an intuitive sense that restorative justice offers a more satisfying justice experience (Hayes, 2007; Latimer et al, 2001), the issue of how to measure and prove effectiveness is quite complex. Studies reviewed revealed dramatic decreases in recidivism rates (McGarrell, Olivares, Crawford & Kroovand, 2000; White, 1998; Wiese, 2008) as well as decidedly mixed results (Sherman, Strang & Woods, 2000; Umbreit & Coates, 1992). The discrepancy was attributed to differences in interpretation of restorative justice, practice and measuring of recidivism rates (Bazemore & Elis, 2007; Hayes, 2007; Morris & Young, 2000). Research conducted on restorative justice in schools instead explored change in school climate, attendance records, suspension rates, academic achievement, building emotional intelligence, among many other indicators of success. As well, moving beyond

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

effectiveness, research that focused on implementation issues (Karp & Breslin, 2001; Morrison, 2007; Riestenberg, 2003b) was reviewed. Connected to this, the next section of this chapter examined literature referring to second-order or transformative change (Romberg & Price, 1983; Woodbury & Gess-Newsome, 2002) in educational institutions. Teachers and administrators, influenced by organizational climates, structures and leadership, were identified as critical to ensuring the success of transformative reform measures (Feldman, 2000; Gess-Newsome et al, 2003; Ross et al, 1997).

The conceptual framework chapter of this thesis built upon the theory discussed in the review of the educational reform literature. Merging Woodbury and Gess-Newsome's (2002) model of educational reform, the Teacher-Centered Systemic Reform (TCSR) model, with Feldman's (2000) concept of teacher's personal practical theories (see Appendix A), my theoretical orientation took into consideration the contextual factors of structure and culture in which individual teachers and administrators are operating, as well as their personal practical theories. My approach was situated in a phenomenological and constructivist paradigm.

With this foundation in place, I then presented the methodology used in my study. The general procedure of my study and the selection of participants (Board Administrator, School Administrator, and four teachers) were explained. Data were collected through documents, a questionnaire sent to every staff member at the School and six semi-structured interviews. Data gathered from interviews were analyzed employing Auerbach and Silverstein's (2003) coding method in three stages: making the text manageable, hearing what was said, and developing theory.

The fifth chapter, in the tradition of case studies, set the context for the case. Using data analyzed from the documents given me by the Board Administrator, questionnaire results, the interview with the Board Administrator and other contextual documents, I described the Region, School Board and School in which this case is set. The description assisted in a deeper understanding of the next section, the findings.

The findings, arrived at through the use of the methodology already discussed, identified fifteen themes. Each theme was explained using examples and participants' exact words, selected to capture the essence of the theme. The themes were then organized into theoretical constructs explored in greater detail in the discussions chapter of the thesis.

This exploration of the implementation of restorative justice in one specific School and the experience of it by teachers and administrators finds that restorative justice is both supported and limited. The School and School Board appear to be well positioned to implement and sustain restorative justice successfully, and yet there is a sense of resignation among participants that the time for restorative justice in the School Board may have passed. I do not wish to suggest that its decline is inevitable; restorative justice is still firmly alive in the beliefs and practices of many individuals. I do suggest, however, that next steps are crucial if the School Board wishes restorative justice to be practiced at more than an individual level. Exploring this particular School and School Board, at this particular time in their involvement with restorative justice offers many rich lessons for other schools or school boards looking to implement similar programs.

Contributions / Implications

Restorative justice is still a relatively new concept in Canadian schools. As such, the research conducted on schools implementing it is very limited, and although schools and school boards are interested in learning from the challenges and best practices of others who have gone before them, there are few resources from which to draw. As an in-depth descriptive case study of individuals within a School Board in its fourth year of restorative justice implementation at the time of the study, this study contributes to those limited resources. This study is particularly interesting since it examines a School identified as a model school by the Board Administrator within a School Board recognized as a leader in restorative justice. Despite these distinctions, evidence reveals that restorative justice is not flourishing as it once was. By examining such a school and locating the practices that facilitate the adoption and sustaining of restorative justice, it becomes possible to name some of the larger challenges that other schools, possibly without the benefits of this particular School, might face.

Generally, this study demonstrates the complexity involved in educational reform. The multiple factors interacting with one another create a kaleidoscope of change, with the viewer rarely guessing which factor will emerge dominant. In this case study, the School and School Board have surmounted obstacles which often halt other reform attempts: individuals believe the reform to be sensible; the community offers its general support; two key administrators—School and Board—are actively supportive. The main lesson derived from this study is that personal commitment on the part of teachers and even administrators is not enough. Granted, individuals are crucial components for implementing restorative justice effectively; substantive training in restorative justice and

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

the eventual adoption of new personal practical theories will lead to some individuals using a restorative justice approach. Yet, without a system that can support the approach—through public encouragement, sustained training, and complimentary structural procedures—restorative justice will remain at an individual level and be phased out as individuals themselves relocate. It is the inconsistent support from the gatekeepers of change within both the region and province that has hindered this School Board in its implementation of restorative justice. This case study demonstrates the necessity of a long-term plan, beyond the reach that a funding agency might suggest, that opens the door for fundamental changes in school board policies. For transformative reform to be sustained, the reform must become normative within the culture, not an alternative.

Specifically, it is my hope that this study contributes to the longevity of restorative justice within the case School Board. Many obstacles have already been overcome and the groundwork has been done; if there can be a move toward consistent and substantive support from policy makers and those in positions of authority—many of whom supported the initiative when it first began—the program has the opportunity to combat the retributive culture found within Ontario schools (and society in general) and flourish as in very few other jurisdictions.

Limitations

As a case study based on four teachers and two administrators in one specific School and one specific School Board, it is impossible to generalize my findings and apply them universally to other schools and school boards. Even within the same School Board, the School studied is unique and my results, too, are unique. The fact that the School was

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

considered to be a model school within the School Board suggests that different results would be discovered at most other schools. While it may be possible to transfer some of the more abstract patterns to other contexts, the specific content of those patterns will vary from context to context (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). I can also not claim the teachers to be representative of the entire staff at the School. While I had intended to choose four teachers with varied interest in and support of restorative justice, only five respondents who were teachers indicated an interest in being interviewed, all with relatively similar views, at least on paper. Even with the selected participants, I would need to solicit more feedback to ensure that the interpretations reported connect with their own perceptions. Due to lack of time and a necessity to focus the research, many voices were left out of this study: parents, students, teachers who had not received any training in restorative justice, superintendents, etc. If those voices had been brought into study, the data would have produced a richer portrait of the school community.

This study also did not look at the effectiveness of the restorative justice program in the School Board, however effectiveness may be defined. The focus was purely to discover and analyze how restorative justice was experienced and implemented by teachers and administrators. The issue of effectiveness was raised by individuals in response to various questions, but only the perceptions of teachers and administrators were recorded. In many of the conversations, teachers and administrators voiced the opinion that restorative justice is effective, but I did not gather data on actual visits to the office, perceived change in school climate, bullying activity or any other indicator of success. Again, the possession of such data would add context and richness to this study.

Further Research

This study suggests that in order for restorative justice to be sustained throughout a school board, it is necessary to have consistent support from the gatekeepers of change. Individually, however, several of the participants are utilizing a restorative justice approach. Many of the individuals interviewed voiced the widely held opinion that for restorative justice to be most effective, it must be brought in from the top-down and taught to as many individuals as possible. Given the retributive culture in which we are situated and the difficulty in locating funding and sustainable support, perhaps the top-down approach simply is unworkable. It would be interesting to study the classroom of an individual who is practicing a restorative justice approach of his or her own accord. Compared to classrooms in board-supported programs, is it as effective? Is it sustainable for the individual? Does it have a lasting effect on students or is the effect isolated to the year in which they are in this particular classroom?

Connected to this idea, the Board Administrator recommends that Faculties of Education offer a course in restorative justice. By offering such a course, would restorative justice be seen as normative rather than a fad, and would this contribute to sustainability? It would be interesting to follow teachers who receive this course for several years into their practice. Do they practice a restorative justice approach even if they are doing so in isolation? Does the school climate change at all as a result of their practice?

Based on the literature, my data and my own experience, restorative justice holds many benefits for teachers, students and schools. The exploration of this particular School revealed individuals who are committed at varying levels to a restorative justice

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

approach, but also a great deal of frustration with unyielding issues of structure, culture and leadership. Restorative justice is not another fad; it has roots in rich sources of related knowledge such as peacemaking circles of First Nations' groups in Canada and the United States, biblical interpretations of justice, moral education, emotional literacy, Maori meetings, African village moots, conflict resolution education, among others (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005; Morrison, 2007; Schweigert, 1999;). By studying the way in which it is being implemented and identifying challenges and best practices, there is hope that the ways in which we are implementing restorative justice do not, themselves, force restorative justice falsely into the category of fad.

Reference List

Ahmed, E., Harris, N., Braithwaite, J., & Braithwaite, V. (2001). *Shame management through reintegration*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Amstutz, L.S., & Mullet, J. H. (2005). *The little book of restorative discipline for schools: Teaching responsibility; creating caring climates*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Arnott, K. (2007). Restorative justice: Making brand-new endings. *Education Today*, 19(2), 22-23.

Association for Conflict Resolution. (n.d.). *What is Conflict Resolution Education?*
Retrieved October 2, 2008, from
http://acrnet.org/acrlibrary/more.php?id=18_0_1_0_M

Auerbach, C.F., & Silverstein, L.B. (2003). *Qualitative data: An introduction to coding and analysis*. New York: New York University Press.

Bazemore, G., & Elis, L. (2007). Evaluation of restorative justice. In G. Johnstone & D.W. Van Ness (Eds.), *Handbook of restorative justice* (pp. 397-425). Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.

Beating the bully. (2006). *Xxxxxx*, p. xxx.

Berman, P., & McLaughlin, M.W. (1978). *Federal programs supporting educational change, Vol. VIII: Implementing and sustaining innovations*. Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation.

Braithwaite, J. (1999). Restorative justice: Assessing optimistic and pessimistic accounts. *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research*, 25, 1-127.

Brown, T. (2000). *Is real justice restorative, is restorative justice real?* Dialogue Paper presented to Friends Committee on Restorative Justice, Moscow, ID.

Carvalho, M. (2006). Building relationships across race, ethnic differences: VOMA and PRASI collaborative training restorative justice and anti-racism training work. *Justice Connections*, 1, 13.

Casella, R. (2003). Zero tolerance policy in schools: Rationale, consequences and alternatives. *Teachers College Record*, 105, 872-92.

Chmelynski, C. (2005). Restorative justice for discipline with respect. *The Education Digest*, 71(1), 17-20.

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

Christie, A. (2000). *Restorative injustice?: The boundaries of restorative justice at the intersections of gender, race and class: A Canadian focus*. Master's thesis, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Community Justice Initiative. (n.d.). *About us*. Retrieved September 23, 2008, from <http://www.cjiwr.com/about-us-2.htm>

Community Legal Education Ontario. (2002). *Restorative justice: A different option for victims of youth crime*. [Brochure]. Ontario. Available from <http://www.cleo.on.ca>

Copland, M.A. (2003). Leadership of inquiry: Building and sustaining capacity for school improvement. *American Educational Research Association, 25*, 375-395.

Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Cuban, L. (1988). Constancy and change in schools (1880s to the present). In P.W. Jackson (Ed.), *Contributing to educational change: Perspectives on research and practice* (pp. 85-106). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

Daniel, Y. & Bondy, K. (2008). Safe schools and zero tolerance: Policy, program and practice in Ontario. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 70, 1-20.

Doolin, K. (2008). Translating restorative justice into practice: Lessons from New Zealand's Family Group Conferencing approach to youth offending. *International Journal of Restorative Justice*, 4(1), 1-24.

Drewery, W. (2004). Conferencing in schools: Punishment, restorative justice, and the productive importance of the process of conversation. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 14, 332-344.

Feldman, A. (2000). Decision making in the practical domain: A model of practical conceptual change. *Science Education*, 84, 606-623.

Fullan, M. (1993). *Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform*. Bristol, PA: Falmer Press.

Fullan, M. (1995). The school as a learning organization: Distant dreams. *Theory into Practice*, 34, 230-235.

Fullan, M., & Newton, E.E. (1988). School principals and change processes in the secondary school. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 13, 404-422.

Gess-Newsome, J., Southerland, S.A., Johnston, A., & Woodbury, S. (2003). Educational reform, personal practical theories, and dissatisfaction: The anatomy of change in college science teaching. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40, 731-767.

Gibbs, J. (2003). The research-based components of Tribes Learning Communities.

Retrieved July 29, 2009, from <http://www.tribes.com/about/>

Hall, G. E., & Hord, S. M. (1987). *Change in schools: Facilitating the process*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Hayes, H. (2007). Reoffending and restorative justice. In G. Johnstone, & D.W. Van Ness (Eds.), *Handbook of restorative justice* (pp. 426-444). Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.

Lewis, S. (2009). *Findings from schools implementing restorative practices*. Bethlehem, PA: International Institute of Restorative Practice Graduate School.

Johnstone, G. (2002). *Restorative justice: Ideas, values, debates*. Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

Johnstone, G. (2004). How, and in what terms, should restorative justice be conceived? In H. Zehr, & B. Toews (Eds.), *Critical issues in restorative justice* (pp. 5-15). Monsey, NY: Criminal Justice Press.

Johnstone, G., & Van Ness, D.W. (2007). The idea of restorative justice. In G. Johnstone, & D.W. Van Ness (Eds.), *Handbook of restorative justice* (pp. 1-23). Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.

Church Council on Justice and Corrections. (n.d.). *Justice for the soul*. [Brochure]. Ontario: Berzins, L., Coward, S. Prashaw, R. & Wills, A.

Karp, D.R., & Breslin, B. (2001). Restorative justice in school communities. *Youth & Society*, 33, 249-272.

Latimer, J., Dowden, C., & Muise, D. (2001). *The effectiveness of restorative justice practices: A meta-analysis*. Ottawa: Department of Justice.

Lockhart, A. & Zammit, L. (2005). *Restorative justice: Transforming society*. Toronto, ON: Inclusion Press.

Lofton, B.P. (2004). Does restorative justice challenge systemic injustices? In H. Zehr, & B. Toews (Eds.), *Critical issues in restorative justice* (pp. 381-389). Monsey, NY: Criminal Justice Press.

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

Martinez, S. (2009). A system gone berserk: How are zero-tolerance policies really affecting schools? *Preventing School Failure*, 53, 153-7.

McCullough, M. (2007, December). Restorative justice for safer schools. *Professionally Speaking*, 55-57.

McGarrell, E., Olivares, K., Crawford, K., & Kroovand, N. (2000). *Returning justice to the community: The Indianapolis juvenile restorative justice experiment*. Indianapolis, IN: Hudson Institute Crime Control Policy Center.

Mennonite Central Committee. (n.d.). *A restorative response to harm in schools*.

Retrieved October 2, 2007, from

<http://www.mcc.org/canada/restorativejustice/resources/articles/bullying.html>

Ministry of Education. (n.d.). *Making our schools safer: Improving learning and teaching environments. For students. (Strict Discipline Programs)*. Retrieved July 28, 2009, from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/safeschl/eng/student.html>

Ministry of Education. (2000). *Bill 81 (Chapter 12 Statutes of Ontario, 2000)*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

Ministry of Education. (2007). *Bill 212* (Chapter 14 Statutes of Ontario, 2007). Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Ministry of Education. (January 30, 2008). *Safe Schools Amendments Come into Effect February 1*. Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Retrieved July 29, 2009 from http://ogov.newswire.ca/ontario/GPOE/2008/01/30/c5273.html?lmatch=&lang=_e.html

Ministry of Education, Safe Schools Action Team. (2006). *Safe schools policy and practice: An agenda for action*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Morris, A., & Young, W. (2000). Reforming criminal justice: The potential of restorative justice. In H. Strang, & J. Braithwaite (Eds.), *Restorative justice: Philosophy to practice* (pp. 11-31). Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing.

Morrison, B.E., & Martinez, M. (2001). *Restorative justice through social and emotional skills training: An evaluation of primary school students*. Honours thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.

Morrison, B.E. (2007). Schools and restorative justice. In G. Johnstone, & D.W. Van Ness (Eds.), *Handbook of restorative justice* (pp. 325-350). Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.

Public Communications of Xxxxxx School Board. (2005-2009). *Restorative justice*.

Peachey, D. (1989). The Kitchener experiment. In M. Wright, & B. Galaway (Eds.),
Mediation and criminal justice: Victims, offenders and community. London: Sage.

Porter, A.J. (2005, April 19). Restorative practices at Queanbeyan South, an Australian
Primary School. *Restorative Practices EForum*. Retrieved from
<http://www.safersanerschools.org/library/queanbeyan.html>

Porter, A.J. (2007, June 6). Restorative practices in schools: Research reveals power of
restorative approach, part II. *Restorative Practices EForum*. Retrieved July 20, 2009,
from <http://www.safersanerschools.org/library/schoolresearch2.html>

Pranis, K. (2007). Restorative values. In G. Johnstone, & D.W. Van Ness (Eds.),
Handbook of restorative justice (pp. 59-74). Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.

Raye, B.E., & Warner Roberts, A. (2007). Restorative processes. In G. Johnstone, &
D.W. Van Ness (Eds.), *Handbook of restorative justice* (pp. 211-227). Portland, OR:
Willan Publishing.

Region of xxxxxx. (n.d.). *About the region*. Retrieved July 27, 2009, from
<http://www.xxxx.xxx>

Restorative justice circles in the school system. (2006). *Xxxxxx*, p. xxx.

Restorative Justice of xxxxxx. (n.d.).[Brochure]. Ontario.

Riestenberg, N. (2003a). Aides, administrators and all the teachers you can get. *VOMA Connections*, 13(1), 7.

Riestenberg, N. (2003b). *Restorative schools grants final report, January 2002-June 2003: A summary of the grantees' evaluation*. Minnesota Department of Education. Retrieved July 22, 2009 from http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Learning_Support/Safe_and_Healthy_Learners/Safe_Learners/Violence_Prevention_Restorative_Measures/index.html

Romberg, T.A., & Price, G.G. (1983). Curriculum development and staff development as cultural change. In G.A. Griffin (Ed.), *Staff development: Eighty-second yearbook of the national society for the study of education* (pp.154-184). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ross, J.A., McKeiver, S., & Hogaboam-Gray, A. (1997). Fluctuations in teacher efficacy during implementation of destreaming. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 22, 283-296.

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

Sawatsky, J. (2001). A shared justpeace ethic: Uncovering restorative values.

Conciliation Quarterly, 20(3), 2-4.

Sawin, J.L., & Zehr, H. (2007). The ideas of engagement and empowerment. In G.

Johnstone, & D.W. Van Ness (Eds.), *Handbook of restorative justice* (pp. 41-58).

Portland, OR: Willan Publishing.

Schweigert, F.J. (1999). Learning the common good: Principles of community-based

moral education in restorative justice. *Journal of Moral Education*, 28(2), 163-183.

Sherman, L.W., Strang, H., & Woods, D. (2000). Recidivism patterns in the Canberra

reintegrative shaming experiments. Retrieved October 15, 2007, from Australian

Institute of Criminology Web site: <http://www.aic.gov.au/rjustice/rise/recidivism/>

Smith, J.D. (2006). Solutions for bullying: Restorative practices for classrooms and

schools. *Contact—TESL Ontario Newsletter*, 32(2), 42-51.

Snyder, S. (2003, November 17). Discipline idea is making grade in local schools. *The*

Philadelphia Inquirer, pp. B1, B4.

Statistics Canada. (2006). *2006 community profile: xxxxxx, Ontario*. Retrieved August 8,

2009 from <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/xxxxx>

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

Steenkamp, P. (July 17, 2007). *Minutes of settlement between the Ministry of Education and the Ontario Human Rights Commission*. Memorandum to: directors of education, supervisory officers and secretary-treasurers of school authorities.

Retrieved August 2, 2009 from <http://cal2.edu.gov.on.ca/DMSettlementJuly1207.pdf>

Stinchcomb, J.B., Bazemore, G., & Riesentberg, N. (2006). Beyond zero tolerance: Restoring justice in secondary schools. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 4, 123-147.

Talking it out. (2007). *Xxxxxx*, p. xxx.

Toews, B. (2007). Restorative justice lessons from offenders. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Umbreit, M.S., & Coates, R.B. (1992). Victim offender mediation: An analysis of programs in four states of the U.S. Retrieved July 19, 2009, from University of Minnesota's Center for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking Web site: <http://www.cehd.umn.edu/ssw/rjp/Resources/Research/default.asp>

Wachtel, T., & McCold, T. (2001). Restorative justice in everyday life: Beyond the formal ritual. In H. Strang, & J. Braithwaite (Eds.), *Restorative justice and civil society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

Warner Roberts, A. (2004). Is restorative justice tied to specific models of practice? In H.

Zehr, & B. Toews (Eds.), *Critical issues in restorative justice* (pp. 241-252).

Monsey, NY: Criminal Justice Press.

White, V. (1998). *Restorative justice: Resolution of criminal conflicts*. Unpublished

master's thesis, Royal Roads University, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

Wiese, K. (December, 2008). Why restorative justice programs are thriving in Mo.

Missouri Lawyers Weekly. Retrieved July 19, 2009 from

<http://www.correctionsone.com/news/1843475-Why-restorative-justice-programs-are-thriving-in-Mo/>

Woodbury, S., & Gess-Newsome, J. (2002). Overcoming the paradox of change without difference: A model of change in the arena of fundamental school reform.

Educational Policy, 16, 763-782.

Xxxxxx Region. (2006). *Violence Prevention Plan*. [Brochure]. Ontario.

Youth justice xxxxxx. (2001). *Toronto Star*.

Zehr, H. (2002). *The little book of restorative justice*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

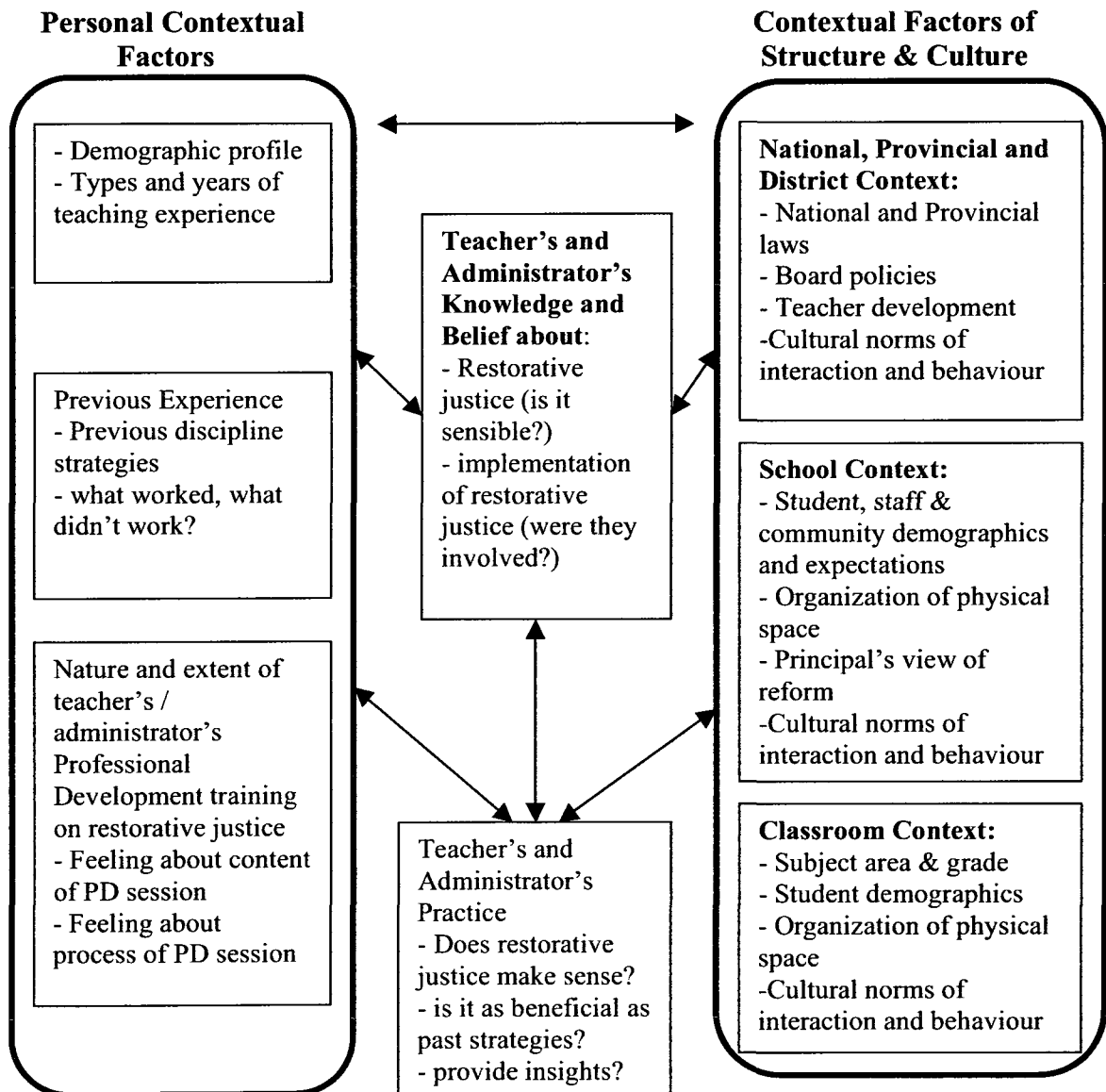
Zehr, H. (1990). *Changing lenses: A new focus for crime and justice*. Scottsdale, PA:
Herald Press.

Zehr, H. & Toews, B. (Eds.). (2004). *Critical issues in restorative justice*. Monsey, NY:
Criminal Justice Press.

Appendix A

Adaptation of Woodbury and Gess-Newsome's (2002) Teacher-Centered Systemic Reform (TCSR) Model of Educational Reform

**Factors Involved in Educational Reform
Restorative Justice**



Appendix B

Questionnaire:

Teachers' and Administrators' Views on Restorative Justice

*Thank you for taking the time to provide the information requested.
All responses will be kept confidential. Once complete, use the pre-addressed
envelope to mail the questionnaire to the University of Ottawa.*

- 1. Your Information.** (*Complete this section only if interested in being interviewed.*) If you are willing to be contacted for a follow-up interview, please provide your contact information. You may or may not be selected to participate in an interview. Interviews will generally last about one hour. All interviews will be confidential.

Name: _____

Email Address: _____ Telephone Number: _____

I have received training on restorative justice: Yes No

I am employed as a: Teacher Administrator Both

- 2. Your Thoughts.** With respect to the statements below, thinking of your own experience with restorative justice in your classroom and school, rate your response as 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (neither agree nor disagree), 2 (disagree), or 1 (strongly disagree).

a. I use restorative justice practices on a day-to-day basis in the classroom and/or school.
 5 4 3 2 1

b. I use restorative justice practices to deal with minor incidents of conflict or harm.
 5 4 3 2 1

c. I use restorative justice practices to deal with severe incidents of conflict or harm.
 5 4 3 2 1

d. I feel confident in my own skill level to utilize restorative justice approaches.
 5 4 3 2 1

e. I feel confident initiating a restorative justice circle or conference.
 5 4 3 2 1

f. I know who to call if I need assistance when using a restorative justice approach.
 5 4 3 2 1

g. I believe restorative justice is an effective way to deal with conflict and harm.
 5 4 3 2 1

h. I believe restorative justice emphasizes values that I feel are important.
 5 4 3 2 1

i. I believe restorative justice is worth the time and energy to learn how to use it.
 5 4 3 2 1

Appendix C

Interview Questions

1. Could you explain how you use restorative justice practices in your classroom or school?
2. How would you define restorative justice?
3. What do you like about restorative justice?
4. What problems or concerns do you have about it?
5. How is it different from approaches you may have used in the past? Is it as effective, better, or worse?
6. How does it affect you and your classroom? The rest of the school?
7. How do you feel about the way it has been implemented in your school? Can you explain a bit about how it was implemented?
8. What have you learned by using it?
9. What questions do you have about it?
10. Overall, what is working / not working?

Appendix D

Questionnaire Results

Questionnaires were sent to 34 teachers and 2 administrators. I received 14 back.

I have received training on restorative justice

Yes	9	64%
No	5	36%
Total	14	

I am employed as a:

Teacher	12	86%
Administrator	2	14%

2. Your thoughts. With respect to the statements below, thinking of your own experience with restorative justice in your classroom and school, rate your response as 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (neither agree nor disagree), 2 (disagree), or 1 (strongly disagree).

a. I use restorative justice practices on a day-to-day basis in the classroom and/or school.

5 strongly agree	3	21%
4 agree	6	43%
3 neither agree nor disagree	2	14%
2 disagree	2	14%
1 strongly disagree	1	7%

b. I use restorative justice practices to deal with minor incidents of conflict or harm.

5 strongly agree	3	21%
4 agree	8	57%
3 neither agree nor disagree	2	14%
2 disagree	0	
1 strongly disagree	1	7%

c. I use restorative justice practices to deal with severe incidents of conflict or harm.

5 strongly agree	4	29%
4 agree	6	43%
3 neither agree nor disagree	2	14%
2 disagree	0	
1 strongly disagree	1	7%
No answer	1	7%

Comment from individual who did not answer: I haven't really had a formal opportunity, but I wouldn't hesitate

d. I feel confident in my own skill level to utilize restorative justice approaches.

5 strongly agree	2	14%
4 agree	7	50%

Teachers, Administrators and Gatekeepers

3 neither agree nor disagree	3	21%
2 disagree	1	7%
1 strongly disagree	1	7%

e. I feel confident initiating a restorative justice circle or conference.

5 strongly agree	2	14%
4 agree	4	29%
3 neither agree nor disagree	4	29%
2 disagree	2	14%
1 strongly disagree	2	14%

f. I know who to call if I need assistance when using a restorative justice approach.

5 strongly agree	7	50%
4 agree	5	36%
3 neither agree nor disagree	2	14%
2 disagree	0	
1 strongly disagree	0	

g. I believe restorative justice is an effective way to deal with conflict and harm.

5 strongly agree	6	43%
4 agree	6	43%
3 neither agree nor disagree	1	7%
2 disagree	0	
1 strongly disagree	1	7%

h. I believe restorative justice emphasizes values that I feel are important.

5 strongly agree	6	43%
4 agree	7	50%
3 neither agree nor disagree	0	
2 disagree	0	
1 strongly disagree	1	7%

i. I believe restorative justice is worth the time and energy to learn how to use it.

5 strongly agree	6	43%
4 agree	6	43%
3 neither agree nor disagree	1	7%
2 disagree	0	
1 strongly disagree	1	7%

Comments: I have seen it work effectively in the school setting.

Overall Comments: (from one respondent)

- Takes too much time
 - Victims should not have to face their peers in a circle
- Simple and direct consequences for behaviour are more effective and realistic regarding time