



## The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia

**Report by**

**LYN DOPPLER**

**CHURCHILL FELLOW - 2006**

**To study the effects on student achievement in schools where restorative practices have been embedded as a way of learning and being together – UK, USA and Canada**

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Signed:

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## INTRODUCTION

### HOPE

***It's not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless, of how it turns out. It is hope, above all, that gives us strength to live and to continually try new things, even in conditions that seem hopeless***

***Havel, 1990***

### Background

Rozelle Public School is a growing school in the inner western suburbs of Sydney Australia and I have been principal of this vibrant and diverse community for five years. The school has a strong foundation built on Restorative Practices as a way of being and learning together and not just as a strategy for handling difficult students or problematic situations. Restorative practices have translated into a paradigm shift for all stakeholders. The process is not just another program or 'tool in the toolbox'. This foundation has provided the solid relational basis on which sound pedagogy is built and contributes to the development of self-directed learners who are responsible for both their learning and behaviour.

This restorative way of teaching and learning is aligned with the NSW Quality Teaching Framework and has resulted in positive and sustained student achievement for us. Our emphasis on doing things 'with' the children as opposed to 'to', 'not' or 'for' them, (Ted Wachtel 2000) has seen a change in culture and climate and a building of capacity so that our school is a positive, welcoming and inclusive environment in which all stakeholders are empowered to play their part in a thriving learning community. Rozelle School was the recipient of the Outstanding Achievement Award by a primary school in the Sydney Region in 2006 and the Director-General's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Being and Learning.

The emphasis on building healthy relationships has translated into active participation by students who are always raising the bar to compete with themselves and cooperate with others respectfully. The Rozelle journey has been one incorporating our own action research and involves collaboration with a cluster of local schools.

Our restorative classroom setting is one that values dialogue through an inclusive approach where everyone expects to be heard. Through this participatory process students develop the capacity to learn that emotions are an important and legitimate expression of healthy dialogue. This learning helps students to deal with conflict, tensions and difference in respectful ways that engender trust and foster healthy relationships.

As a result of our own action learning I was interested in investigating student achievement in schools around the world where Restorative Practices have been embedded as a way of being and learning. The Churchill Fellowship has enabled me to pursue that interest and passion and seek to provide through the restorative framework a way of dealing with all the initiatives and individual demands with which schools and teachers deal on a daily basis.....

***'Our best contribution in the lives of others is to help them make sense and meaning of what has happened, to clarify what is important, to identify what needs to change and to challenge them about what their part will be.'***

***Terry O'Connell, 2006***

## **Project Information**

Restorative Practices in the Australian context can tend to have the focus on the process as an anti-bullying or reactive intervention to be used with difficult students or problematic situations. The process can be seen as a means of reducing behavioural incidents and indeed school suspensions.

There may be a sense that the practice is another tool or program in the welfare toolbox rather than a paradigm shift and an integrated way of teaching that involves conversations, problem-based learning and thinking tools. This project aimed to examine a number of issues around culture change and innovative teaching and learning. These include:

- Student achievement in schools where restorative teaching occurs
- Restorative values/practices as a way of being rather than merely an add-on or reactive strategy for difficult situations and students
- Whole school approaches to relationship-building with restorative practices as the relational basis for sound pedagogy, resilience and wellbeing
- Development of self-directed learners who are responsible for their actions in both behaviour and learning
- Connections between innovative, Socratic and problem-based practices and teacher and student empowerment
- School networking and connectedness for capacity building
- Transference of knowledge between teachers, across schools and systems

It was hoped to critically evaluate student achievement and the wellbeing of all stakeholders where approaches and structures in schools support restorative values and pedagogy as the strong foundation within a culture and climate of accountability and school improvement so as to:

- Build positive and respectful relationships within a supportive environment
- Improve the development of innovative thinking skills and practice by teachers to improve student learning
- Enhance trust and collegiality between teachers and between students within individual classes and playgrounds
- Promote the sharing of knowledge, skills and support between teachers to enhance professional practice and build capacity

## **Specific outcomes**

- Identify if improved learning outcomes are achieved in schools where all stakeholders are trained in the restorative approach and feel respected, valued, included and empowered
- Identify if explicit Socratic questioning forms a framework aligned with other critical thinking tools by which children can become self directed and engaged learners
- Develop a set of principles that describes approaches to support the student, staff, parent empowerment required to build social capital and capacity to be resilient and strong communities
- Put the myriad of initiatives and demands upon teachers into perspective using the Restorative Practices foundation

## **Acknowledgements**

The Churchill Fellowship has provided me with the opportunity to travel to amazing places and to be enriched by the friendship and support of wonderful people along the way. The growth of the restorative philosophy around the world and its implications for teacher practice are huge.

- I am grateful to the Churchill Memorial Trust for the opportunity to follow my dreams and grow personally and professionally.
- Thank you to my caring family and especially my four wonderful children whose love and encouragement made it all possible.
- Gratitude to my friends, professional colleagues within and outside DET and restorative practitioners whose interest, time, commitment and respectful challenge kept me focused as I pursued my passion.
- I am indebted to the kind and talented folk around the world who willingly opened their hearts, minds and organisations and shared their expertise for my benefit and ultimately the children in our schools.
- Thank you to all the amazing children in different schools around the world who welcomed me into their hearts with their openness and kindness.
- A special thank you to the incredible staff and children of Rozelle Public School and to the inclusive community that embraced this restorative way of being and learning so wholeheartedly.
- A special thank you to Terry O'Connell a friend and mentor whose pioneering work in the restorative practices field in Australia and around the world has inspired me and challenged me.

## **Implementation and Dissemination**

In my role as principal and as a member of the Department of Education & Training I will disseminate my findings, conclusions and recommendations widely within all sectors of the education field. I welcome the opportunity to present my findings at meetings, leadership seminars and conferences on enhancing student achievement.

My passion and insights in this philosophy as a way of being and learning will continue to inform and affirm my current practice and support others to begin and continue their journeys. Information will be disseminated via various forms of media, on the IIRP and Churchill Trust websites and via presentations locally, nationally and internationally. It was an absolute pleasure to present at the International Conference on Restorative Practices in Bethlehem Pennsylvania and to educators in two school districts of Canada.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lyn Doppler  
Principal Rozelle Public School, PO Box 300 Rozelle 2039 NSW  
Sydney Region of NSW Department of Education and Training  
Phone Wk: 02 9810 2347                      Mobile: 0412 058 487  
Email: [lyn.doppler@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:lyn.doppler@det.nsw.edu.au) or [lyndoppler@dodo.com.au](mailto:lyndoppler@dodo.com.au)

**To study the effects on student achievement in schools where restorative practices have been embedded as a way of learning and being together – UK, USA and Canada**

### Highlights

- Meeting with restorative practitioners and visiting selected schools, Eng, UK.
- Meeting with Scottish Research Team in Edinburgh and visiting selected schools in Scottish pilot study in 3 districts, Scotland, UK.
- Experiencing the IIRP's conference on Restorative Practices including the opportunity to be a presenter, meet others, visit schools including the Buxmont Academies and build networks around the world, Bethlehem & Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Baltimore, Maryland, USA.
- Having the opportunity to attend the Safe and Healthy Learners' Conference as well as experiencing first hand the American elections for Congress, St Cloud, MN, USA; visiting the PEASE Academy and CAAP Program.
- Invitation to address superintendents, principals, consultants and teachers and visit selected schools in York and Kawartha Pine School Districts, Toronto, Peterborough, Canada.
- Attending International Conference: The Quest for Increased Student Achievement in Toronto.

### Recommendations

***Restorative practices can be the catalyst to help educators reflect upon and clarify existing practice especially around assumptions, beliefs and values which in turn can lead to a change in practice at a whole school, teacher, student and even district, societal and global level. This change cycle continues to build and add value to each individual level leading to enhanced student achievement and it is important to:***

#### **1. Culture:**

Seek culture change at a whole school level with the focus on building healthy relationships via a common language, explicit framework and within a climate of trust, support and empowerment. Training of all stakeholders including parents is preferred.

#### **2. Leadership:**

Provide structured opportunities via the principal/leadership team for staff dialogue including reflection, rigorous discussion and respectful challenge that may clarify beliefs and rationale for teaching and student learning and in turn influence practice.

#### **3. Teacher Practice:**

Allow for individual teachers to focus on the big picture and be explicit in rationale and teaching practice rather than work intuitively and be susceptible to feeling overwhelmed by the myriad of expectations, programs and accountability constraints.

#### **4. Curriculum & Student Learning:**

Embed Restorative Practices within the Quality Teaching framework (NSW) as they provide a perfect alignment to support student-centred learning, constructivist pedagogy and inquiry based participatory approaches to learning via an explicit framework.

#### **5. Capacity:**

**Use the restorative framework as the catalyst for sustainable student achievement by focusing on:**

- quality teaching and learning practice (as opposed to a narrow test focus) supported by quality professional learning opportunities
- building healthy, respectful relationships (as opposed to building more programs)

## Program Summary from 18 September to 18 November 2006

Date Place	Organisation Contacts	Focus and <i>Key Learnings (in italics)</i>
21-22 Sept Cape Town S. Africa	<b>Conference:</b> 'Restorative Justice in Post Conflict South Africa and Beyond'	Restorative Justice & Reconciliation. Despite terrible experiences the gentleness and calm displayed by indigenous South Africans have inspired others.  <i>They are empowered to tell their stories and display them through the creative and performing arts, in museums and via technological means.</i>
23 Sept- 3 Oct England UK	Meeting with Graham Robb form Youth Justice Board Behaviour & Attendance UK DET 11 Carteret St, London SW 1H9DL	View Restorative Practices as a way of life and link to the government's preventive agenda. Graham, a former principal has written documents to support schools. The Lewisham Action on Mediation Project has produced manuals (Restoring the Balance) to assist schools and communities that are interested in adopting the restorative philosophy. <i>Behavioural incidents have declined and generally engagement in learning is enhanced through this philosophy. Attendance and participation rates amongst all stakeholders have improved. Graham's 'Trojan Mouse' strategy has seen the positive word spread re RP. A valuable link with Bristol University involves the formulation of a self-evaluation matrix for schools.</i>  The Restorative Justice Consortium is a national body which brings together a range of organisations with an interest in Restorative Justice. It aims to promote RJ as a means of resolving conflict and promoting reconciliation by developing standards, advancing education and research and promoting its use in the criminal justice system, schools, workplaces and the community.154 YOTs (Youth Offending Teams) are working together in England and Wales.
	Nicola Preston & Les Davey (IIRP UK Director)	Les Davey has been actively involved in the development of 'Good Practice Guidelines'.  <i>The resultant UK national Occupational Standards for Restorative Practices have been developed. Nicola an IIRP UK trainer has developed accreditation systems for IIRP courses.</i>
	Bessels Leigh School (ED/BD) Bessels Leigh, Abingdon Oxfordshire;  Pr John Boulton	A residential alternative school where principal John Boulton has based the restorative process on the Buxmont academies in PA. A Churchill fellow, he visited Bethlehem, Pennsylvania to see how the process is working successfully in the Buxmont Academies.  <i>This school provides almost the last opportunity for boys who have exhausted the mainstream school system and the RP philosophy has turned the place around from an institution that was near to closing to one that is flourishing.</i>
	The Sefton Centre for Restorative Practice  Paul Moran, Mark Finnis	Discussion with Mark and Paul in Bethlehem. Change in culture has occurred in Sefton schools.  <i>A happier, more relaxed atmosphere has resulted from the building of wider restorative communities-schools, juvenile justice, families.</i>
4 Oct York UK	Transforming Conflict Ph: 00 44(0)118 9331520 Belinda Hopkins	UK based organisation Transforming Conflict has introduced teachers in Nth Lanarkshire to the principles of Restorative Practices.  <i>Belinda's book brings together the jig-saw pieces for a whole school approach to RP. She has now completed her PHD in this field. There are networks of restorative practitioners in the UK who offer slightly different training methods but who possess and reflect strong mutual respect.</i>
5 Oct Scotland UK	Meeting with Sheila Riddell, Gwynedd Lloyd, Joan Stead coordinating Scottish Schools' Pilot study from Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities	The whole school approach in the primary schools has resulted in networks of restorative practitioners and an increase in student achievement levels at most schools and an attitude from all of 'can do'. Contacts, literature reviews around pilot initiatives and results of action research have all been collated and presented in one site for the benefit of all teachers:  <a href="http://www.betterbehavioursotland.gov.uk">www.betterbehavioursotland.gov.uk</a> for all teachers to access. Lorraine Hunter Head Teacher seconded to the Scottish Executive to oversee the initiatives in pilot schools to improve teaching & learning.

<p>6-10 Oct Scotland UK</p>	<p>School Visits: Tulliallan PS in Fife H:Eleanor Mc Gregor Pathhead PS Fife Talk with Ken Keighren Ed Psych Fife Lawmuir PS Nth Lanarkshire Rel H: Liz Wells Stepps PS Nth Lanarkshire H: Anne Douse  Our Lady's HS Cumbernauld Dep Head: Marie Reid</p>	<p>A functionalist approach to restorative approaches has been adopted in Scotland drawing less on criminological perspectives around harm/shame and more on person-centred and cognitive perspectives. Thus the restorative approaches recognise the human wish to feel safe, to belong, to be respected and to be understood and have positive relationships. <i>Practices in the pilot schools include restorative ethos-building, curriculum focus on relationship development, restorative language, restorative conversations, checking-in circles, problem-solving circles, peer mediation, small conferences, few formal conferences, Playground activities and the 'Cool in School' social skill program have also been implemented.</i></p> <p>The 18 schools progressed at different rates, with the elementary schools finding it easier to develop whole school approaches than the secondary which have tended to have one committed staff member who has coordinated the heavy end of conferences in the schools. <i>Most schools have achieved pleasing results and secondary schools are exploring how they can adopt a whole school approach as well.</i></p> <p><i>There seems to have been less emphasis on the parent training but some schools are working hard to involve them in this important process.</i> <i>Children are willing to accept responsibility for their actions cognisant of the fact there will be a fair, firm process.</i> <i>Blame is taken out of the equation as the school focuses on a system based on acknowledgement and logical consequences as opposed to one based on rewards and punishment.</i> <i>Children develop the ability to be self-directed in regards to their learning and behaviour. They do not feel the need to fabricate lies as they know they will have the chance to tell their story, be able to make things right, repair any harm done and rebuild relationships. Mistakes can be viewed as opportunities for insight.</i></p>
<p>16/17 Oct Bethlehem Pennsylvania</p>	<p>CSF Buxmont Academy-Lansdale Immersion in alternative setting for 2 days</p>	<p>Restorative Practices are an emerging social science that enables people to restore and build community in an increasingly disconnected world.</p> <p>The CSF Buxmont schools utilize "restorative practices" within strong structures which emphasize doing things WITH youth, rather than TO them (punitive) or FOR them (permissive).</p> <p><i>CSF Buxmont creates an environment in which the youth actively problem-solve and take responsibility, not only for their own behaviour, but for the well-being of the whole school community.</i></p>
<p>18/20 Oct Bethlehem Pennsylvania</p>	<p>Presenter at International Conference on Restorative Practices: The Next Step, Developing Restorative Communities Part 2  Many international presenters included: Brenda Morrison Katy Hutchinson Nancy Riestenberg Gwynedd Lloyd Mark Finnis, Paul Moran Anat Goldstein Gail Ryan &amp; Christopher Hey Laura Rush Nicola Preston &amp; Les Davey Peta Blood Belinda Hopkins Daniel Van Ness</p>	<p>I presented the Rozelle journey of enhanced student achievement in a restorative practices school culture.</p> <p><i>Restorative Practices are embraced as a way of being and learning together and not as an intervention for difficult situations or students. A very positive response was received and I was asked to present to administrators and school staff in Canada.</i></p> <p>Brenda Morrison was concerned with building coherence in a whole school approach. She posed questions that dealt with the different approaches being used in different schools and around the world. <i>There are many approaches to building coherence in a whole school approach. Some are more effective than others. Frameworks for moving ahead will include reporting of successes and failures in order to grow the movement around the world.</i></p> <p>Katy Hutchinson has written a book, 'Walking after Midnight' about her journey of healing and reconciliation since the tragic death of her husband. <i>She has developed a speaking program on social responsibility and restorative justice for schools and community groups and now employs the man responsible for her husband's death.</i></p> <p>Gwynedd Lloyd spoke of the Scottish pilot study and Paul Moran and Mark Finnis of the Sefton Centre for Restorative practice (see earlier). Anat Goldstein addressed the Restorative Practices philosophy in Israel and Laura Rush on Family Group Decision-making. Gail Ryan &amp; Christopher Hey presented the journey of Restorative Practices in the Souderton Area School District.</p> <p>Daniel Van Ness has conducted a design and research project to consider the possibilities and potential limits of restorative justice theory. <i>Its purpose is to design a model justice system capable of handling all crimes, all offenders and all victims.</i></p>



	<p>Presenters cont. Terry O'Connell</p> <p>Lesley Oliver</p> <p>Paul McCold</p>	<p>Terry O'Connell explored how restorative justice has evolved over the past 15 years from its initial focus on restorative conferences to a broad set of explicit practices that have relevance to each of us in our daily lives.</p> <p><i>Raising awareness and genuine interest in restorative practice is generally straightforward. Getting practitioners and others to adopt restorative practice as normative practice is the challenge-as a way of being.</i></p> <p><i>Terry implements a whole school approach to training (staff, students and parents) and via the restorative script facilitates conversations to allow people to come to insights about their day to day living and practice.</i></p> <p>Lesley Oliver from the South Western District of Adelaide, South Australia has coordinated the implementation of Restorative Practices in 42 schools with Terry O'Connell as the expert facilitator.</p> <p><i>The journey included both the personal challenges and the successful cascading of the restorative experiences as a catalyst for systemic change with authentic sponsorship from the regional director. The compilation of restorative stories indicated the richness of this model which provided networking, trust and high levels of support.</i></p> <p>IIRP graduate School founding member Paul McCold is chairman of the Alliance of NGOs for Crime prevention and Criminal Justice at the United Nations and a member of the working party on Restorative Justice.</p> <p><i>He discussed the possibilities of restorative practices for the work of the International Criminal Court and other UN efforts in the wake of mass violations of human rights.</i></p>
<p>23/24 Oct</p>	<p>CSF Buxmont Academy Palisades HS</p> <p>Immersion in alternative setting for 2 days</p> <p>Monica Losinno-counsellor</p>	<p>The Academy is part of the mainstream high school and supports students who are in danger of dropping out or who are disengaging with school. Classes often open with a circle, incorporating lesson content. For a class on employment contracts, a business studies teacher might ask: "What was the most unreasonable—or—reasonable treatment you've witnessed by an employer with an employee?" This method can introduce the legal concept of reasonable treatment by an employer, while exploring restorative philosophy.</p> <p><i>There is a strong emphasis on integrating technology into all the key learning areas and on making the learning significant for the students who were very happy and engaged in this type of milieu. Computer engineering teacher Rich was able to motivate the students and all teachers had built a strong relationship with them.</i></p> <p><i>There has been a sea change in behaviour in this sprawling, rural school district. Palisades High School has cut out-of-school suspensions in half in the last four years.</i></p> <p><i>Disciplinary referrals at both the high school and middle school have plummeted.</i></p> <p>David Piperato (formerly at Palisades HS now at Lower Merion HS, Pennsylvania) and Joseph Roy have been principals at the forefront of restorative practices in their schools and districts.</p> <p><i>Palisades Schools consistently achieve above state and national averages since introducing the Restorative Practices philosophy Monica Losinno the school counsellor has played a large part in strengthening the school's restorative philosophy.</i></p>
<p>25 Oct Bethlehem Pennsylvania</p>	<p>Holy Innocents School 1312 E. Bristol St Philadelphia</p>	<p>A K-8 school which has built a real sense of community after having to amalgamate 4 parishes into one school in this middle-low socioeconomic area of Philadelphia.</p> <p><i>Circles are part of the daily practice in the school with the restorative questions used when interacting with students and between staff.</i></p> <p><b>Circle acronym: <u>C</u>aring <u>I</u>ndividuals <u>R</u>especting <u>C</u>elebrating <u>L</u>oving <u>E</u>ach Other</b></p>
<p>30 Oct Baltimore Maryland</p>	<p>Meeting with Tonya Featherstone</p> <p>Discussion with Lauren Abramson</p>	<p>A former school principal Tonya has run a school founded on strength-based processes and has now moved into building not only restorative schools but restorative communities.</p> <p><i>Her focus is on embedding RP into quality pedagogy and bridging the achievement gap for students via science/technology.</i></p> <p>The CCC (Community Conferencing Centre) was the first multi-sector program to be conducted in a large American inner-city, offering services in Juvenile Justice, Schools and Neighbourhoods, Re-entry from prison, Case management &amp; Organizations in conflict.</p> <p><i>A process that helps neighbourhoods, schools, government agencies, faith communities, organizations and families uncover their natural wisdom for responding to destructive behaviour in constructive ways, and to build connections that serve the well-being of all.</i></p>

3/6 Nov Minneapolis Minnesota	Discussion with Laura Wakefield from Highland Park Junior H S	<p>Mainly African/American Peace Circles are conducted weekly by Laura who also works restoratively with students who are suspended.</p> <p><i>An enhanced school climate has resulted and it's hoped funding continues to grow the practice throughout the school.</i></p>
7 Nov Minneapolis	PEASE ( Peers enjoying a Sober Education) Academy Pr: John Howitz	<p>Alternative co-ed setting incorporating a variety of teaching strategies in a restorative philosophy to empower students to overcome their alcohol addiction and prepare themselves for life-long learning.</p> <p><i>Resolution to suspension meetings ensure that any shame felt in the process is reintegrative as opposed to stigmatising as children are welcomed back into their school community.</i></p>
8 Nov St Cloud Minnesota	Minnesota Dept of Education Nancy Riestenberg Nancy Streng Project Reconnect/CAAP Program	<p>An alternative to suspension program for primary students that focuses on academic assistance and instruction, mental health/social skills and community service.</p> <p><i>Principals have described the project as making the biggest difference in helping students change their behaviour, giving them a more productive experience than home suspension.</i></p>
8/10 Nov	<p>Safe and Healthy Learners' Conference- Making Connections, Integrated Strategies for Supporting Youth</p> <p>Presenters included:</p> <p>Roger Weissberg</p> <p>Terri Rose</p> <p>Donald Vereen</p> <p>Roberto Dansie</p>	<p>Great body of research from CASEL which supports social/emotional learning with children and its strong direct and proven link with academic achievement.</p> <p><i>Bridging the gap according to President Roger Weissberg and the large body of research is dependent on the social/emotional connection. Adults in the schools also benefit greatly when they begin working with children in this way. Their own wellbeing is enhanced.</i></p> <p>'Responsive Classroom' is an evidence-based social and emotional learning program that builds community and responds to different learning styles via daily morning circle meetings, Nancy Riestenberg has overseen this successful program study &amp; development in 3 Minnesotan schools including one with a high population of indigenous students. Outcomes have included greater attendance rates and improved learning and behaviour.</p> <p>Psychologist Terri Rose highlighted the influences of environmental, experiential and relationship factors on learning and mental health.</p> <p><i>Strategies for kids must be 'consistent, reliable and predictable'.</i></p> <p>Psychiatrist Donald Vereen provided an overview of addiction as a brain and developmental disease.</p> <p><i>There are multiple genetic and environmental factors involved.</i></p> <p>Psychologist Roberto Dansie suggested that we don't need an abundance of programs-we have enough.</p> <p><i>However we do need strong philosophies and must develop and empower people rather than build more programs. He provided a paradigm to understand the dynamics between culture, health and education and to build rapport across diverse cultural practices.</i></p>
11 Nov Minneapolis Minnesota	Discussion with Dr Mark Umbreit from the Centre for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking University of Minnesota, Ph : 651 226 9525	<p>Dr Umbreit and his colleagues have initiated a Community Peacemaking Project to promote sustained dialogue among diverse communities in response to hate crimes, intolerance, and political violence. Mark Umbreit is committed to restorative practices in his work both at a global and more personal institutional level in his relationships with students and colleagues at the university of Minnesota. He teaches peacemaking and spirituality and trains students at the university.</p> <p><i>To him the circle process is so powerful because it puts people on an authentic equal level so that it is less threatening as we all have different gifts to contribute to the circle process.</i></p> <p>Umbreit uses the process when teaching and is aware when he gives the time to it and is not rushed then the learning is far more in-depth through Socratic questions like 'What did you think? After a film or keynote speaker he elicits more in depth responses when he follows the process.</p>

		<p><i>The depth of response is noticeably different when he tries to rush the classes. If he uses the talking piece students respond at an even deeper level. In schools or universities he believes a real culture change occurs when all parties engage in the process but this is very difficult and sometimes threatening in more traditional academic institutions that follow a more formal approach. He believes in Law Schools the students hunger for the process and describes it as being 'like an island of tranquillity' in the midst of their studies when they are not being judged by their professors.</i></p> <p>Milwaukee has moved forward in this process in that the school of Law has begun a major restorative practices initiative with students and schools.</p> <p>A conference in Milwaukee in Nov brought together victims of political violence from countries such as Northern Ireland and South Africa.</p> <p><i>In the end it's not about politics or politicians at all but about understanding each others' stories-the essence of restorative practices.</i></p>
13 Nov Toronto Canada	Toronto District School Board  Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board	<p>A dynamic school board/university partnership dedicated to affecting change in public education by creating innovative opportunities for educators to learn, share, and celebrate success in the classroom. Closing the achievement gap between students is paramount.</p> <p><i>Research by Trent University is exploring the link between emotional intelligence and Restorative Practices. A strong partnership with the university has been developed.</i></p> <p>Kawartha Pine folk were presenters at the International Conference in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Bruce Schenk has been appointed as a specialist to oversee the training and implementation of RP in schools in Kawartha Pine Ridge.</p>
	Meeting with Bruce Schenk	<p>Bruce has been involved in Restorative Justice Conferencing with Young Offenders at Brookside Youth Centre and Secondary School, Cobourg, Ontario, Can.</p> <p><i>Their vision: 'We aspire to the achievement of a society where the natural response to conflict and harm is more restorative than punitive, more relational than isolating, and more healing than productive of further harm.'</i></p> <p><i>In the USA and Canada where restorative prevention specialists oversee the training and implementation of strategies to enhance a restorative philosophy in schools, then a support person is always available.</i></p>
13/15 Nov  Peterborough Ontario Canada	School visits and presentations to staff at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West Mount PS</li> <li>• Prince of Wales PS</li> <li>• Highland Heights PS</li> </ul>	<p>Changes are starting to happen through Restorative Practices as a way of being and learning in 100 schools in Kawartha Pine Region. Terry O'Connell trained all stakeholders and also worked with leadership teams using the same model he adopted with South Australian schools.</p> <p>Following Terry's training I was invited to offer a principal's perspective to some of these schools involving the Rozelle journey to culture change.</p> <p><i>The systemic approach provides collegial support networks. Leadership teams provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on existing practice in teaching and learning.</i></p> <p><i>I saw various types of restorative interactions and very committed staff which bodes well for the journey of Restorative Practices in these schools.</i></p>
York School District Toronto Canada	Presentation to Superintendents of York School District and to principals and consultants	<p>After my presentation at the International Conference in Bethlehem, Helen Fox a superintendent from the York Region invited me to present to 40 Superintendents and 50 principals and consultants.</p> <p>York Region is just embarking on the restorative journey and I attempted to put the pieces together regarding all the expectations in schools-Transition, circle programs, gifted and talented education, cooperative learning and assessment etc.</p> <p><i>In Australia and at Rozelle we have taken the process to a higher level to encompass a restorative way of teaching &amp; learning. I believe we may be leading the world in this greater paradigm shift although many schools were working with the idea of putting all the pieces together, including the various imposed demands of Education Departments.</i></p> <p><i>Terry O'Connell's method of training of parents is quite unique and powerful.</i></p>

	<p>School visits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bakersfield PS</li> <li>• Stephen Lewis HS</li> </ul>	<p><i>York District schools are in the early stages of awareness-raising and training but I witnessed some positive restorative conversations between staff and between staff and students.</i></p>
	<p>Meeting with Angela Dornai and Helen Fox</p>	<p>Angie Dornai has been appointed as specialist restorative coordinator for the York District School Board.</p> <p><i>She assists schools with implementation of Restorative Practices after the initial training and facilitates specific conferences of a more serious nature.</i></p> <p><i>Helen encourages schools to look at the big picture-putting all the pieces together including new demands and initiatives.</i></p>
<p>16/17 Nov Richmond Hill Toronto</p>	<p>Attendance at International Conference Quest for Increased Student Achievement-Educational Systems that are Working Presenters included:</p> <p>Avis Glaze</p> <p>Andy Hargreaves</p> <p>Roberto Dansie</p> <p>Michael Fullan</p> <p>Carmel Crevola</p> <p>Peter Hill</p> <p>Asa Hilliard</p>	<p>Closing the achievement gap between students is paramount. Children have one resource and that is time which can't be wasted. Excellence and equity are 2 sides of the same coin. <i>Educators can't contribute to an urban/rural underclass and must look at education of the whole child with character education and social/emotional learning playing a huge part. (Glaze). Closing the learning gap is important but focusing on learning and support for teachers is preferable to focusing on tests (Hargreaves).</i></p> <p><i>Education must be within a climate of trust, support and empowerment and this is the case in Finland where there are no externally imposed demands or league tables. In Finland the focus is on teaching the human being not the subject and finding out how to motivate the student. This reminded me of what Roberto Dansie had emphasised in Minnesota-that the word education means 'to bring out' and more and more programs and initiatives are not needed.</i></p> <p><i>In the UK and USA there is a danger in focusing on tests and league tables with the 'No child left behind' strategy although impressive gains have been made to close the gap in learning for disadvantaged groups. There was professional respect yet some debate between Andy Hargreaves and Avis Glaze on the value of targets which are externally set.</i></p> <p><i>Personalising the learning for every child: Personalisation, Precision, Professional Learning with Moral Purpose at the Centre-(Crevola, Fullan, Hill)</i></p> <p>Groups do better than individuals as we are social beings. All children can learn-from good or bad models. If presented with perfect models (implications for teachers) they can learn almost anything as children are hardwired to learn within a loving environment.</p> <p><i>3 elements are common to teachers in an achieving school: love the children, love yourselves, patience. Technique and knowledge will come (Hilliard).</i></p> <p>Finland is recognised world-wide for its successful education system and particularly for its ability to sustain student achievement levels as indicated in PISA results.</p> <p><i>The climate of trust, support and empowerment indicates Finland has a very restorative system based on the fact that teachers have a strong methodological autonomy and there is no strong bureaucracy imposing external demands on them. Teachers are well trained and have an abundance of professional development. Bureaucracy works 'with' teachers and doesn't do things 'to' them.</i></p> <p><i>The Finns believe in shared leadership or as Hargreaves puts it sustainable leadership so people don't burn out.</i></p> <p>Teaching is a highly regarded profession in Finland with all teachers having a Masters degree and continuing professional learning once they graduate.</p> <p><i>A panel of experts agreed that more freedom and autonomy is required in schools-the licence to release the creative talents of the teachers to empower the students. Hargreaves thinks that Canada and the USA are being killed by a narrow focus and the 'first past the post' mentality. He believes that long term and short term goals should come together within a culture of high trust not overarching surveillance for sustainable student achievement. He concluded that patience is indeed a virtue in the quest for enhanced and sustainable student achievement</i></p>

## CONCLUSIONS

Restorative Practices offer more than the occasional conference for difficult situations but a way of life sustained by culture change.

*Restorative Practices can be the catalyst to help educators reflect upon and clarify existing practice especially around assumptions, beliefs and values which in turn can lead to a change in practice at a whole school, teacher, student and even district, societal and global level. This change cycle builds and adds value to each part in a continuous spiral of school improvement:*

- At a whole school level leading to **culture change** through visionary **leadership**
- At a teacher level leading to **classroom change** in relation to teaching and learning
- At a student level leading to **student responsibility and achievement**

Ultimately change via a paradigm shift occurs within individuals first, then the whole school and then the community. It can occur in the district, and even at societal and at a global level leading to new levels of collective commitment (Fullan).

### **Culture:**

- Culture change occurs at a whole school level via Restorative Practices where the focus is on building healthy relationships which in turn builds capacity for all stakeholders to make responsible choices.
- Culture change is best achieved via a whole school approach to training of teachers, children and parents in Restorative Practices by expert facilitators so that all stakeholders are effectively 'singing from the same book' and modelling restorative behaviours.
- The explicit nature of Restorative Practices provides a common and easily understood language for critical discussion and reflection in order to develop a shared purpose and values that provide a foundation for teaching and learning.

### **Leadership:**

- The restorative principal/leadership team is responsible for providing structured opportunities for staff dialogue including reflection, rigorous discussion and respectful challenge that may clarify beliefs and rationale for teaching and student learning and in turn influence practice. The team models the restorative way of being through Socratic questioning techniques and supportive collegial networks mirroring the relationship-building occurring within the classrooms.
- The school principal has the responsibility to support teachers so they are confident to deal with student issues themselves in a non-blaming re-integrative way rather than defer to a higher authority.

### **Teacher Practice:**

- At an individual teacher level Restorative Practices allows teachers to focus on the big picture and be explicit in rationale and teaching practice rather than work intuitively and be susceptible to feeling overwhelmed by the myriad of expectations, programs and accountability constraints. There are so many anti-bullying, discipline programs bombarding schools but none of these will have any effect if the relational foundation and statement of purpose is not at the centre.

‘...we don’t need to build any more programs but must start to build people....’ Roberto Dansie, at the Safe and Happy Learners’ Conference in St Cloud, Minnesota 2006 and ‘... we teach the human being not the subject, motivate, personalize...’ representatives from the Finnish Centre for Professional Development, the Quest for Enhanced Student Achievement, Toronto, 2006.

- The restorative classroom is one that values dialogue through an inclusive and equitable approach and promotes responsibility for what occurs in that class. All children have an individual and collective responsibility for the wellbeing of others. Restorative Practices empower teachers to manage student matters at a classroom level rather than defer to someone else.
- There is a strong focus on how we teach and harness creativity and innovation despite accountability constraints by using curriculum wisely and not being a slave to it or test scores (Hargreaves, 2006 and Kohn, 2000).
- Schools without any obvious behavioural issues can look towards the philosophy as being particularly useful for those quiet, compliant or ‘invisible’ students who internalize behaviours and never get the chance to vocalize opinions or tell their stories. These students, particularly high-achieving girls, may be more susceptible to suffering from depression.
- Teachers and peers become transition people who take children from the thinking of the past to the present and give them hope for the future in both curriculum and behavioural areas. E.g. What happened? What were you thinking at the time? What have you thought about since? Who’s been affected by what you’ve done? What do you need to do to make things right? Similar conversations are conducted in the academic area. E.g. What were you thinking when you solved the equation that way? What are you thinking now about that approach? What will you do when you are faced with a similar mathematical problem next time?
- The explicit framework provides a common language for staff to engage in professional dialogue and consistency of teacher judgment.
- Time spent on social / emotional learning will enhance relationships and trust and encourage collaboration and risk taking in students (Weissberg, 2006).
- Liaising with universities is valuable to ensure undergraduate and post graduate courses in this philosophy are made available around the world especially in teacher education.

### **Curriculum & Student Learning:**

- Restorative Practices are aligned with the Quality Teaching framework (NSW) and supports student-centred learning, constructivist pedagogy and inquiry approaches to learning with its intellectual rigour and explicit Socratic framework. The Restorative Practices framework provides explicit ways to cater to differing learning styles by personalizing the learning and assists students to develop responsibility, self-direction and accountability for their learning.
- The elements of the Restorative Practices framework align perfectly with the Quality Teaching framework. Both frameworks are dependent on a rigorous conceptual base, deep understanding, serious engagement and accepting responsibility.

To encapsulate the similarities in the following ways the three dimensions of the Quality Teaching Framework including all its subsets have been explored along with the conceptual framework of Restorative Practices:

<b>Restorative Framework</b>	<b>Quality Teaching Framework</b>
Explicit framework for dialogue & reflection	Explicit framework for dialogue & reflection
Consistency of teacher judgment	Consistency of teacher judgment
Scaffolding-visuals & a range of restorative interactions along a continuum	Scaffolding-visuals & patterns on which to hang learning
Values	Values
Develop empathy	Problematic understanding
Listening, explicit thought and deep understanding	Substantive conversations, oral language skills, deep understanding
Socratic questioning	Higher order thinking
Maximises affect or emotion	Why & how-empathy
Respectful challenge, risk-taking	High expectations
Working 'with'	Negotiated curriculum and assessment; student self-direction
Respectful relationships	Social support; models respect for others
Goal oriented, personalized responses to learning	Purposeful activities, task orientation, motivation of the individual
Accountability & self governance	Student self-direction
Background knowledge	Significance
No blame approach, circles	Risk-taking approach, cooperative
Scaffolds, participatory	Quality learning environment
Empowerment	Responsibility, engagement, leadership for all
Telling one's story	Narrative and the use of story
Knowledge integration & generalisation	Transference, connectedness
Inclusivity	Inclusivity

- Circle programs and other strength-based practices around emotional literacy cement the restorative foundation. These circle programs provide listening time, checking-in time, reflection on teaching & learning, problem-solving, cooperative learning and fun. The circles promote conversations, values, respect, relationships and the life-long love of learning. They build trust and collaboration.
- The strong body of research evidence from CASEL, the Collaborative for Academic and Social/Emotional Learning, confirms the strong link between SEL (social and emotional learning) and student academic achievement.
- More intrinsic motivation and greater student engagement develops through restorative teaching styles and problem-based learning.
- There is a focus on individuals' strengths and interests as a starting point within a climate of collegiality and acknowledgement. The learning for all is personalized.

- The Restorative Practices Framework enhances student self-reflection and accountability in student-led three way conferences instead of via the more normal manner of conducting parent/teacher interviews where the child is excluded from the equation.

### **Capacity:**

- Capacity-building enhances the school community's collective effectiveness to handle its own issues and to sustain the approach when key individuals move on.
- Visionary and distributive leadership styles empower all stakeholders to build capacity, be leaders themselves and be accountable for their decisions. Leadership teams provide the opportunity for reflective dialogue by working 'with' individuals rather than doing things 'to', 'not' or 'for' them within a climate of trust and acknowledgement (Wachtel 2000).
- When the focus is on quality teaching and learning supported by professional learning (as opposed to a narrow test focus) and the emphasis is on building healthy, respectful relationships (as opposed to building more programs) then effective and sustainable student achievement will be the outcome.
- Schools that have a degree of autonomy within a climate of empowerment, trust and support are more able to enhance student achievement by developing a personalized approach to motivating and teaching the person rather than delivering content via a 'one size fits all' approach to mass education.

### **Student Achievement:**

- Restorative Practices allows for a personalizing of the learning for each individual. By finding out what motivates each child and starting from where they're at we can truly empower them to be responsible for what and how they are learning by building trust and challenging them respectfully rather than having a content-driven and limited focus of education. The Restorative style is particularly effective with indigenous children around the world.
- A narrow focus on tests, targets and information that is data *driven* instead of data *informed* will result in gains but only in the short term. When the focus is on quality teaching and learning and building relationships the results will be long term and will sustain.
- Andy Hargreaves reminded educators that when each new demand or initiative is imposed teachers must draw on their past knowledge to sift through the demands and know they possess the ability to cope.

The important focus sequence must ensure the emphasis is in the right place:

quality teaching and learning focus→achievement→test results (long term gains in student achievement) **NOT**

tests or narrow data driven focus→achievement→quality teaching and learning (short term gains in student achievement)

The journey is as important as the destination and this has implications for what we do about targets and time constraints. When the emphasis is on quality restorative teaching via quality professional learning rather than on a narrow focus of tests and accountability constraints then sustainable improvements are produced.



## **Challenges and Recommendations**

My learnings and conclusions from international investigations confirm a culture change which occurs in schools where Restorative Practices are embedded as a way of being and learning. This change affects the various levels in a school and each level is connected and adds value to the other within a cycle of continuous school improvement leading to enhanced student achievement.

### **Culture:**

- Seek culture change at a whole school level where the focus is on building healthy relationships via a common language and framework and within a climate of trust and empowerment.

### **Leadership:**

- Provide structured opportunities via the principal/leadership team for staff dialogue including reflection, rigorous discussion and respectful challenge that may clarify beliefs and rationale for teaching and student learning and in turn influence practice.

### **Teacher Practice:**

- Allow for individual teachers to focus on the big picture and be explicit in rationale and teaching practice rather than work intuitively and be susceptible to feeling overwhelmed by the myriad of expectations, programs and external accountability constraints.

### **Curriculum & Student Learning:**

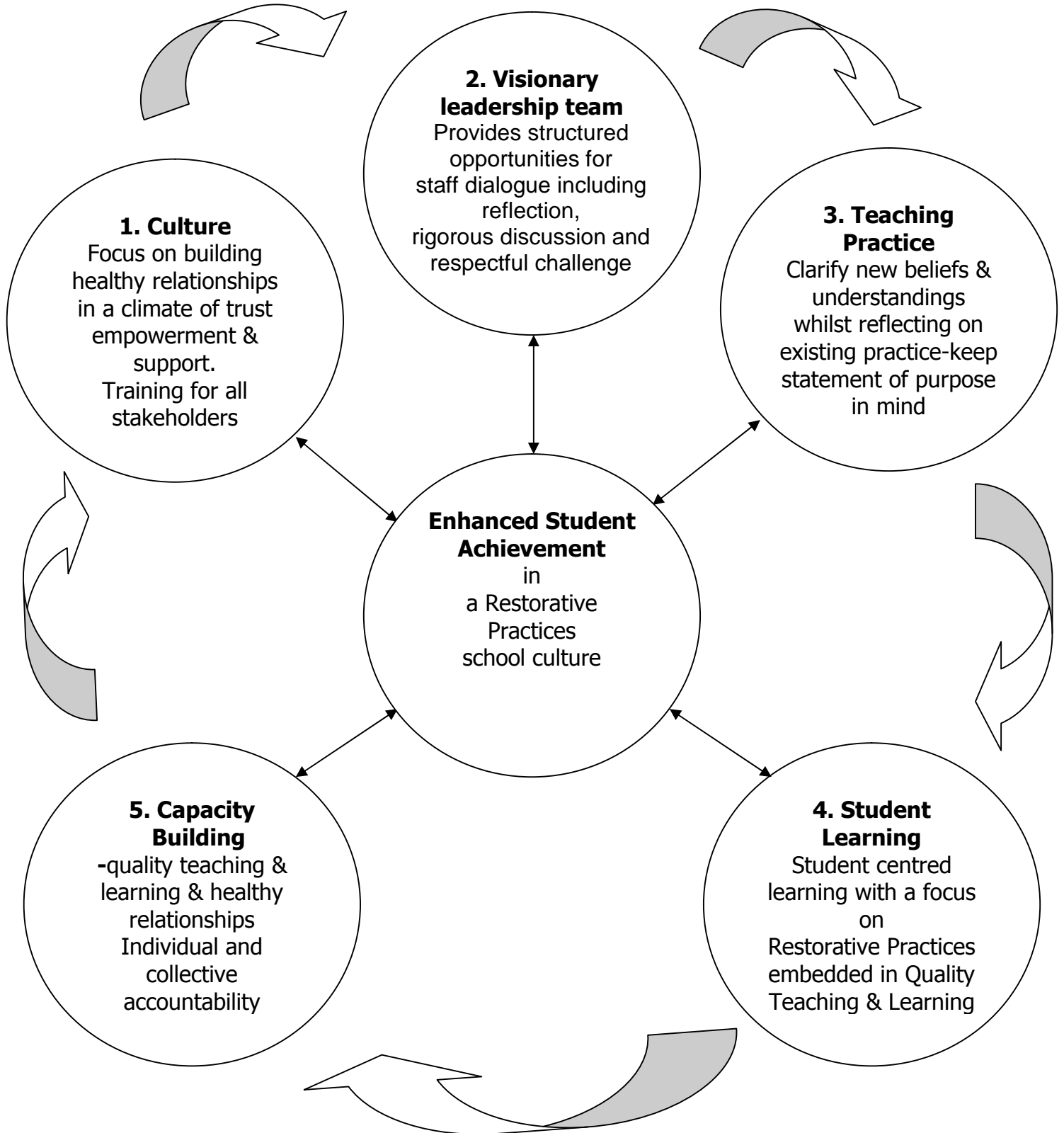
- Embed Restorative Practices within the Quality Teaching framework (NSW) as they provide a perfect alignment to support student-centred learning, constructivist pedagogy and inquiry-based participatory approaches to learning via an explicit framework.

### **Capacity:**

- Use the restorative framework as the catalyst for sustainable student achievement by focusing on:
  - quality teaching and learning practice (as opposed to a narrow test focus) combined with quality professional development and within a climate of empowerment, trust and support.
  - building healthy, respectful relationships (as opposed to building more programs).
- Create specialist positions at school and district level to oversee the training and ongoing support for schools in the restorative philosophy.
- Develop clusters of schools or entire districts willing to embark upon the Restorative Practices journey so that a collegial support network is formed. These networks are invaluable during times of stress when it's natural to revert to learned behaviours especially in the early days of the implementation dip and cycle.
- Provide accreditation for teachers completing modules in this philosophy at conferences and professional development sessions.
- Provide a manual which complements the initial Restorative Practices training and acts as a scaffold for teachers along with professional dialogue to enable them to grow their practice.

The capacity building around the world in Restorative Practices will continue if we provide opportunities to have reflective conversations by celebrating successes and critically evaluating failures. Many schools seem to find the transition from a way of being to a way of teaching and learning a little more challenging. In schools this premise has important implications for leadership teams in keeping the big picture in focus and the restorative foundations healthy by filtering the minutiae of things with which schools and teachers are buffeted.

## The Continuous Cycle of School Improvement with Each Level Adding Value to the Other



## Resources and References

*NB These are only some of the publications available. Most of the authors/researchers have written papers which have been delivered at International Conferences on Restorative Practices which can be downloaded from the IIRP website. It is possible to receive e-learning articles on developments around the world from this organization. [www.IIRP.org](http://www.IIRP.org)*

### Circle Programs

*There are many and varied circle programs which enhance social/emotional learning (SEL) relationship building, communication, cooperation, trust-building, problem-solving and creative conflict resolution. For maximum and sustained effect they are more successful when embraced on a whole school basis and cement a restorative foundation or way of being. See the CASEL (Illinois) website for research on programs. [www.CASEL.org](http://www.CASEL.org)*

*Some used in Australia include:*

**Circle Time for Emotional Literacy:** Sue Roffey, 2006

**The Little Book of Circle Processes:** Kay Pranis, 2005

**Bounce Back!** A Resiliency Program: Dr Helen McGrath, Toni Noble

**Different Kids, Same Classroom:** Helen McGrath, Toni Noble

**Tribes:** A New Way of Learning and Being Together: Jeanne Gibbs

**Help Increase Peace (HIP):** Contact Julei Korner (Port Jackson Network Behaviour Team, NSW, AUS) or AVP (Alternative to Violence Project in your own state and country)

**APEEL:** A Partnership Encouraging Effective Learning; DET publication in all schools and includes parent training module. NSW, AUS

**Seasons for Growth:** For those suffering Grief and/or Loss. Contact Julei Korner (Port Jackson Network)

**Klever Kids:** Wannabe Foundation, Judith Schultz, NSW

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## Websites and Contacts

### **INTERNATIONAL**

International Institute for Restorative Practices – a plethora of resources including an e-Forum, a valuable source of ongoing information on RP across the globe [www.iirp.org](http://www.iirp.org)

A Whole-school Approach to Restorative Practices – aligned with Real Justice [www.safersanerschools.org](http://www.safersanerschools.org)

### **AUSTRALIA**

Terry O'Connell, Real Justice Australia [terryoconnell@realjustice.org](mailto:terryoconnell@realjustice.org)  
[www.realjustice.org](http://www.realjustice.org)

Dr Heather Strang-Director of Restorative Justice at ANU  
[Heather.strang@anu.edu.au](mailto:Heather.strang@anu.edu.au)

Prof John Braithwaite at ANU Canberra [John.braithwaite@anu.edu.au](mailto:John.braithwaite@anu.edu.au)

Margaret Thorsborne & Associates in Queensland [www.thorsburn.com.au](http://www.thorsburn.com.au) and  
[marg@thorsborne.com.au](mailto:marg@thorsborne.com.au)

Peta Blood, RP Consultant NSW - [www.circlespeak.com.au](http://www.circlespeak.com.au) and  
[circlespeak@optusnet.com.au](mailto:circlespeak@optusnet.com.au)

Margaret Armstrong Southern Region, DE&T Victoria, Churchill Fellow  
[armstrong.marg.a@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:armstrong.marg.a@edumail.vic.gov.au)

The Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at Sydney University  
[cpacs@arts.usyd.edu.au](mailto:cpacs@arts.usyd.edu.au)

Australian Principals' Centre <http://www.apcentre.edu.au>

Victorian Association of Restorative Justice – Peter Condliffe, President, Barrister  
[pc@vicbar.com.au](mailto:pc@vicbar.com.au)

Lesley Oliver, Student Inclusion & Wellbeing South Western District, South Australia  
[oliver.lesley@saugov.sa.gov.au](mailto:oliver.lesley@saugov.sa.gov.au) and [www.decs.sa.gov.au/southwest](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/southwest)

### **UNITED KINGDOM**

Real Justice UK [www.realjustice.org](http://www.realjustice.org)

Les Davey and Nicola Preston in UK, Real Justice  
[lesdavey@goodcompanyonline.org](mailto:lesdavey@goodcompanyonline.org) and [nicolapreston@realjustice.org](mailto:nicolapreston@realjustice.org)

DEMOS [www.demos.co.uk](http://www.demos.co.uk)

**Protective Behaviours UK** [www.protectivebehaviours.com](http://www.protectivebehaviours.com)

**Youth Justice Board for England and Wales** [www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk](http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk)

**Transforming Conflict, Belinda Hopkins, UK** [www.transformingconflict.co.uk](http://www.transformingconflict.co.uk)

**Sefton Centre for Restorative Practice** [Paul.moran@sefton.gov](mailto:Paul.moran@sefton.gov) or  
[Mark.finnis@sefton.gov](mailto:Mark.finnis@sefton.gov)

**Restorative Justice Consortium, UK** [www.restorativejustice.org.uk/](http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk/)

**Restorative Practices Pilot Evaluation Scotland**  
<http://www.creid.ed.ac.uk/projects/restprac.html>

**Prof. Gwynedd Lloyd at Edinburgh University** [Gwynedd.Lloyd@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Gwynedd.Lloyd@ed.ac.uk)

**Better Behaviours Scotland** [www.betterbehaviourscotland.gov.uk](http://www.betterbehaviourscotland.gov.uk)

**Learning Teaching Scotland** [www.ltscotland.org.uk](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk)

## **UNITED STATES**

**International Institute for Restorative Practices** – a plethora of resources including an **e-Forum**, a valuable source of ongoing information on RP across the globe [www.iirp.org](http://www.iirp.org)

**A Whole-school Approach to Restorative Practices** – aligned with **Real Justice**  
[www.safersanerschools.org](http://www.safersanerschools.org)

**CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning)**  
[www.CASEL.org](http://www.CASEL.org)

**Community Conferencing Centre, Baltimore Maryland**  
[www.communityconferencingcentre.org](http://www.communityconferencingcentre.org)

**Nancy Riestenberg** [Nancy.riestenberg@state.mu.us](mailto:Nancy.riestenberg@state.mu.us)

**PEASE (Peers Enjoying a Sober Education) Academy** [info@peaseacademy.org](mailto:info@peaseacademy.org)  
[jhowitz@peaseacademy.org](mailto:jhowitz@peaseacademy.org)

**Minnesota Department of Education** [www.education.state.mn.us](http://www.education.state.mn.us)

**Dr Mark Umbreit, Centre for Restorative Justice & Peacemaking, University of Minnesota** [www.rjp.umn.edu](http://www.rjp.umn.edu) and [mumbreit@tc.umn.edu](mailto:mumbreit@tc.umn.edu)



**Dr Tom Scullen, Appleton Superintendent, Wisconsin Dept of Ed**  
[scullenthomas@asds.k12.wi.us](mailto:scullenthomas@asds.k12.wi.us)

**The Silvan Tomkins Institute** <http://www.tomkins.org>

### **CANADA**

**Ontario Ministry of Education, Toronto**  
[info@edu.gov.on.ca](mailto:info@edu.gov.on.ca)

**Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board, Peterborough**  
[www.kpr.edu.on.ca](http://www.kpr.edu.on.ca)

**Bruce Schenk, Restorative Justice Advisor**  
[Bruce\\_Schenk@kprdsb.ca](mailto:Bruce_Schenk@kprdsb.ca)

**Maureen Maloney, Superintendent of Student Achievement**  
[Maureen\\_Moloney@kprdsb.ca](mailto:Maureen_Moloney@kprdsb.ca)

**York region District School Board, Aurora**  
[www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca](http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca)

**Helen Fox, Superintendent** [cec.secondary@yrdsb.edu.on.ca](mailto:cec.secondary@yrdsb.edu.on.ca)

**Angie Dornai, Restorative Approaches Facilitator**  
**Integration Team, Richmond Green Secondary School**  
[angela.dornai@yrdsb.edu.on.ca](mailto:angela.dornai@yrdsb.edu.on.ca)

**Toronto Principals' Centre** <http://www.torontoprincipalscentre.com/>

**The Learning Consortium** <http://fcis.oise.utoronto.ca/~learning>

**Brookside Youth Centre, chaplain** [bruce.schenk@jus.gov.on.ca](mailto:bruce.schenk@jus.gov.on.ca)

**Centre for Restorative Justice, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver**  
[www.sfu.ca](http://www.sfu.ca)

**Dr Brenda Morrison, Research Fellow at Centre for Restorative Justice at**  
**Simon Fraser University, Vancouver**  
[cfrj@sfu.ca](mailto:cfrj@sfu.ca)

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**The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust** [www.churchilltrust.com.au](http://www.churchilltrust.com.au)

**Winston Churchill Memorial Trust in the UK** [www.cmt.org.uk](http://www.cmt.org.uk)