Introducing and Sustaining Restorative Practice in Schools: Findings from international Research and Practice

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In this presentation I will:

- Present the iPEACE model - a framework for introducing restorative practice into schools
- Share recent research findings on the outcomes of restorative practice in schools
- Discuss issues of sustainability, leadership, governance and school change
- Suggest a framework for future research
The iPEACE Conflict Resolution Model

• Identify conflict
• Pick the right strategy
• Enable voices to be heard
• Attack problems not people
• Create options
• Evaluate
To support teachers, pastoral staff, support workers, students, parents and community members to:

• develop a better understanding of conflict in schools, the home and the community;

• identify appropriate conflict resolution strategies;

• use conflict resolution strategies effectively;

• evaluate and reflect on their practice in relation to conflict resolution in various settings;

• work towards more peaceful and productive learning environments, homes and communities.
## iPEACE Conflict Resolution Spectrum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Legal procedures</th>
<th>Punishment</th>
<th>Restorative Approach</th>
<th>Mediation</th>
<th>Negotiation</th>
<th>Avoidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background</strong></td>
<td>The Law has been broken</td>
<td>Clear infringement of school rules</td>
<td>Someone has been harmed</td>
<td>Dispute between two people needing a mediator</td>
<td>Two people don’t need a mediator</td>
<td>The problem may be solved naturally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wider implications</strong></td>
<td>Need to comply with the Law</td>
<td>Need to reinforce school rules</td>
<td>Need to restore good relationships and achievement</td>
<td>Need to reach resolution and repair relationships</td>
<td>Need to reach resolution</td>
<td>Need to resolve the problem indirectly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Needs of the school</strong></td>
<td>Legal redress</td>
<td>Fairness and consistency</td>
<td>Restoration of good relationships and achievement</td>
<td>Creative problem-solving and achievement</td>
<td>Compromise</td>
<td>Discretion, avoidance of confrontation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power</strong></td>
<td>Power with the State and legal institutions</td>
<td>Power with the school</td>
<td>Power re-balanced to support the person harmed</td>
<td>Power shared with all people in dispute</td>
<td>Power shared</td>
<td>Power issues avoided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timescale</strong></td>
<td>Can be lengthy and messy</td>
<td>Can be messy and counterproductive</td>
<td>Groundwork can take time, but quick resolution possible</td>
<td>Groundwork can take time, but quick resolution possible</td>
<td>Can be lengthy without mediator support</td>
<td>Can take time if issues are not addressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conflicting People</strong></td>
<td>Victim and offender</td>
<td>Someone in the wrong and (often) a victim</td>
<td>Someone in the wrong and someone who has been harmed</td>
<td>Disputing people</td>
<td>Disputing people</td>
<td>May or may not be aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accountability</strong></td>
<td>To the courts</td>
<td>To the school</td>
<td>To the school and the person harmed</td>
<td>To each other</td>
<td>To each other</td>
<td>N /A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong></td>
<td>Decided by courts</td>
<td>Decided by someone in authority</td>
<td>Decided by people in dispute</td>
<td>Decided by people in dispute</td>
<td>Decided by people in dispute</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# iPEACE Peace-Building Spectrum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inner Peace</th>
<th>Conflict Resolution / Prevention</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Peace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respect for the Law</td>
<td>Legal procedures</td>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>Peace-keeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for school rules</td>
<td>Punishment</td>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>Peace-keeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding destructive thoughts</td>
<td>Strategic avoidance</td>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>Peace-keeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healing / repairing relationships</td>
<td>Restorative approaches</td>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>Peace-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution, empowerment</td>
<td>Peer mediation</td>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>Peace-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness, inner dialogue</td>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>Peace-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing non-violent responses to conflict</td>
<td>Prevention of conflict and violence in School</td>
<td>Proactive</td>
<td>Peace-building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes and skills for communication, cooperation and problem solving</td>
<td>Circle pedagogy</td>
<td>Proactive</td>
<td>Peace-building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of belonging, desire for positive change</td>
<td>Community Building</td>
<td>Proactive</td>
<td>Peace-building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of global inter-connectedness, desire for equity and justice</td>
<td>Education for Global Citizenship</td>
<td>Proactive</td>
<td>Peace-building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
So Where Does iPEACE Come From?

• From research showing the strengths of RP in schools
• From research showing its limitations
• From personal and professional experience as a practitioner
A number of studies (below) have shown that RP gives school leaders:

- A framework for culture change;
- A ‘glue’ to bind a number of initiatives aimed at developing school ethos and values.

  

  

- Tranforming Conflict (2008) *Restorative Approaches in Primary Schools: An evaluation of the Project co-ordinated by the Barnet Youth Offending Team*
  

  
Skinns, Du Rose and Hough (2009)

The evaluation of the Restorative Approaches in Schools (RAiS) programme in Bristol found that in two of the six schools:

• RAs had a positive impact on some pupils who were confronted for the first time with the consequences of their actions.

• Teachers gained insight into the complexity of conflicts between peers.

• RA improved communication, both between peers and between teachers and pupils.

• Pupils benefitted from hearing the perspectives of teachers, and learnt to respect those who were prepared to listen to them.

• Friendships were restored, or even created, and some young people simply learnt to live with each other better, or keep out of each others’ way.
But……

A senior manager interviewed in one of the main RA project schools in Bristol spoke of concern from some staff in his school following the implementation of RA.

“It’s caused some issues, you know, particularly in November, December, in the end of the Autumn term, you know, when staff are tired, you know, ‘Nothing’s being done about these children’, ‘There are no sanctions’, ‘The children are in charge’, you know, type thing”
There was evidence in the Bristol RAiS research project that some staff, although well-intentioned, had misunderstood principles and practice of RAiS and had, for example, not given young people the choice of whether or not to participate in a conference or had gone ahead with a conference when a young person had not admitted to causing harm.

One 15 year-old pupil described how he was shouted at during a conference, “they say they’re conferences, but they are just going to sit you down and shout at you”
But…

A head of year said that it didn’t work for students who deny the harm they have caused, or who don’t care.

A 13-year-old pupil felt that, “If the people actually don’t care about what the other person is thinking, and don’t really care if they’re being horrible to someone, and if they’re sort of winning, in a way, then it doesn’t work, maybe they should get in trouble”

A 15-year-old pupil admitted to engaging in the process in a tokenistic way, “Me writing on a piece of paper isn’t going to stop me from hitting her again, it’s just making them shut up basically”
This project was funded for 4 years by the Joseph Rowntree Foundations. We were the evaluators. The aims of the Peacemakers Whole School Approach are to:

• Create a safer school with better conditions for learning.

• Develop skills for life in the area of conflict resolution.

• Encourage every member of the school community to be better equipped to make, maintain and repair relationships.

• Explore ways to help schools build and maintain peaceful relationships at all levels.
This is achieved through:

• The full support of the headteacher from the outset.

• A WSA coordinator investing one or two days a week over two years in each school helping them to achieve these aims.

• An audit of relationships carried out at the start and again each term to inform planning

• A Champions’ Group in each school to promote and develop the work.

• As many people as possible over two years being trained in the techniques of Circle Time (including check-in check-out circles) peer mediation and restorative discipline.

• Both formal training sessions (e.g. teacher days) and informal work in classrooms, staffrooms, offices and playgrounds.
The WMQPEP Research

- A pre-post test design.
- Both quantitative and qualitative data
- A Life-in-schools survey with students and teachers
- A mini ethnographic study based on two periods of five days in each school
- Observations
- Interviews with senior managers, class teachers, pupils and lunchtime supervisors.
WMQPEP Findings

- Pupils taking more responsibility for resolving conflict
- Pupils more able to express emotion verbally
- Improved adult relationships
- Teachers reflecting deeply on important issues that affect their professional and personal lives
- Reductions in teasing, name-calling and some forms of negative peer pressure amongst pupils
- Reductions in pupils being told off
- Strong improvements in pupil relationships in the school with the lowest starting points
- Greater feelings of fairness and justice amongst pupils
- Greater confidence amongst staff in resolving conflict with pupils.
- Older pupils offering more positive role models for younger pupils.
- Changes in school policy, systems and practice
- Improved communication and use of restorative language
- Feelings of ownership amongst many of the teachers
But….

- Certain children did not benefit
- Parents were not involved as much as they could have been
- Some pupils reported increases in negative experiences, and no change in positive experiences
- Lack of time / prioritisation of these approaches
- Loss of expertise through staff leaving or not receiving refresher training
- Staff not suited to these approaches
- Reluctance to engage with conflict between adults
- Threats to the programme through the departure of the headteacher
- Threats from alternative programmes, especially those associated with new leaders
- Lack of whole school ethos, with the project seen as a set of tools rather than values-driven
- Conflicts that remained unresolved despite the programme
- Lack of resources for on-going monitoring, evaluation, training and development.
Counter Forces

- Increases in traditional and academic ways of learning
- Constant change and unpredictability in the education system
- Pressure on school leaders
- Systems of accountability, testing and Ofsted
- The role of the media and international politics
- Recruitment and retention of staff
- Societal attitudes towards authority, discipline, rewards and sanctions
- Low status and pay of lunchtime supervisors
- Peaks, troughs and fads in education
- Fear and experience of crime in the locality
# A Model of School Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumptions</th>
<th>Whole School Approach</th>
<th>Sustainable Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The school is a machine whose parts can be re-engineered to make a better whole.</td>
<td>The school is an eco-system with complex internal and external connections and dynamics. It evolves over time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metaphors</th>
<th>Taken from physics and engineering.</th>
<th>Taken from biology.</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Terms</th>
<th>Drivers, levers, leadership, impact, improvement, saturation, benchmarking, integration</th>
<th>Eco-systems, adaptation, fitness for purpose, evolution, connectedness, influence, support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>View of Time</th>
<th>Change occurs during the intervention, after which the school is permanently improved in predictable ways.</th>
<th>Schools are continually changing, before and after the intervention. Change is unpredictable, complex and reversible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>View of Place</th>
<th>The school (and perhaps its immediate community) is a unit that can be improved in isolation of other factors</th>
<th>The school has porous walls and is influenced by micro and macro-systems. These can be at local, national or global levels.</th>
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</thead>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Methods</th>
<th>Presentations, statistics, training, workshops, cascading, leadership, audit, accountability, working group</th>
<th>Circles, encounter, theatre, art, facilitation, groups, collaboration, criticality, visioning, sharing, support.</th>
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<tr>
<th>Intended Outcomes</th>
<th>The school is improved in ways that reflect the aims and purposes of the intervention. This school can be ‘badged’.</th>
<th>The intervention takes on a unique characteristic in each school. Outcomes vary.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Unfortunately, in our research practices we often fail to operate under principles that are consistent with our beliefs in restorative justice and instead mirror the values of the dominant justice system. Like justice professionals, as researchers we view ourselves as objective experts in the field, assuming responsibility for the stories of the people we study. We collect data and stories, interpreting the meaning without consulting or giving benefit to our subjects.

Toews and Zehr (2003: 257-88)
A Final Word from Howard Zehr

Transformative inquiry:

• Aims at social action more than ‘pure’ knowledge

• Recognises the complex and limited nature of research findings and takes full account of the power dynamics inherent in all research.

• Respects participants in the study, and defines the researcher as facilitator, collaborator and learner, rather than neutral expert.

• Values process as much as product, and acknowledges that the researcher is open to being affected personally by interaction with others.

• Is attuned to potential harms and unintended consequences for subjects and others, and avoids co-option by funders, clients, colleagues or others.

• Invites participants to tell their personal stories and creates space for their voices.

Toews and Zehr, 2003:269