Transforming primary education through restorative justice: Insights from case studies

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Abstract

Restorative justice is an aspirational social movement with Indigenous roots. Around the world, an increasing number of schools are implementing restorative justice as a behaviour management mechanism and in some cases, as a means of transforming everyday interaction and relationships. Correspondingly, there is an expanding body of literature on the potential positive effects of restorative justice in education (Brown, 2018; Cameron and Thorsborne, 1999; Hendry 2009; Hopkins, 2002; Karp and Breslin, 2001; McCluskey et al., 2011; Morrison, 2006; Thorsborne and Blood, 2013). However, amidst this optimism, there are considerable gaps in our knowledge of how restorative justice is "characterised and operationalised" in the everyday operation of schools (Morrison and Vaandering, 2012, p.148). To gain a better understanding of restorative justice in schools, I negotiated access to three primary schools in Ontario, Canada where significant time was spent observing, interviewing and collecting documentary information. The primary research question was: How is restorative justice constructed, and embedded within primary schools? And the sub-question: How does restorative justice interact with the school's educational mission? The findings illustrate the complexities of restorative justice in schools. The three schools had different histories with restorative justice and were at different stages of implementation. In an established whole school approach, restorative justice was largely viewed relationally, whereas in two schools with a new commitment it was most commonly described as a behaviour management technique used by staff. However, there were significant similarities across sites. In all three schools, leaders were essential to the construction and embedment of restorative justice. Gaining buy-in was a process that took time and continued far beyond implementation, yet what occurred was not overtly called or labelled "restorative justice," and students in all three schools were unfamiliar with the terminology. However, questions and dialogue were essential to how restorative justice was constructed and embedded. Circles were the most visible practice, and while punishment was

understood as oppositional to restorative justice, it was still utilised. By considering restorative justice with educational theories on social control and radical change, I was able to explore how and to what extent restorative justice represented a change. This interaction was complex and multidimensional. However, when restorative justice was viewed as a relational ethos, it was seen as transforming the entire school.

Dedication

Before I applied for doctoral studies, I imagined what my thesis would look like, and I began to mentally compose this dedication. This was the very first thing I wrote after being accepted into the PhD programme at the University of Hull, and the recipients were never questioned. Paulette and Ernie, I visualised you both holding the leather-bound thesis, and reading your names. I hoped you would feel my love for you, recognise the difference you made in my life, and that you would be proud. My dream always seemed so real, and I never considered another outcome. I am heartbroken that it was not meant to be. Ernie, I hope somehow this makes its way to you in Heaven. I love you and miss you so much.

For my Ma and Pa, Paulette and Ernie Hannah,

Who have always loved and encouraged me, no matter what I do, where I live, or how many post-nominal letters I acquire. Thank you for your unconditional and unwavering love, laughter, encouragement and support. I am blessed to have you in my life.

This is dedicated to you.

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> If you are a poet, you will see clearly that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper. Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain, the trees cannot grow; and without trees, we cannot make paper. The cloud is essential for the paper to exist. If the cloud is not here, the sheet of paper cannot be here either… If we look into this sheet of paper even more deeply, we can see the sunshine in it. Without sunshine, the forest cannot grow. In fact, nothing can grow without sunshine. And so, we know that the sunshine is also in this sheet of paper. The paper and the sunshine inter-are (Thich Nhat Hanh, 1991, p.95).

In the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation, I would like to acknowledge this research took place on land traditionally inhabited, and still home to Indigenous peoples. I also recognise that restorative justice is deeply rooted in this land and within Indigenous philosophies and practices.

In the interest of confidentiality, many people who participated, supported and encouraged this study cannot be named. Thank you, Mallard School Board, for approving my research and allowing me the opportunity to spend time in three wonderful schools. Thank you to the principals, students, staff, parents and community members who welcomed me, and shared their stories. Special thanks to the students and staff who kindly gave their time to be interviewed. Many staff members arrived early, stayed late or missed their break time to speak to me, and for that, I am incredibly grateful.

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To my Mom, who started her PhD journey when I was a young child but was robbed of her chance to complete so much by cancer. Your example has inspired me in everything I do.

When I started this PhD, my boys, Noah and Julian were just four and six years old. They have shared every part of this journey with me and cannot remember a time when mommy was not "doing her university." Julian and Noah, thank you for your love, patience, encouragement, and wonderful distractions. I hope you know that your dreams, whatever they may be, can come true. Lots of Love, Dr Mom.

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List of Abbreviations

AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

BERA: British Educational Research Association

CIHR: The Canadian Institutes of Health Research

CYW: Child and Youth Work

EQAO: Education Quality and Accountability Office

FGC: Family Group Conference

GSA: Gender and Sexuality Alliance

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

IIRP: International Institute for Restorative Practices

LGBTQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning/Queer

MCC: Mennonite Central Committee

NHL: National Hockey League

NSERC: The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council

OSSA: Ontario Safe Schools Act

PA: Public Address System

PD Day: Professional Development Day

PS: Public School

RA: Restorative Approach

RJ: Restorative Justice

RP: Restorative Practice

SSHRC: The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

TCPS: Tri-Council Policy Statement

TDSB: Toronto District School Board

TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission

VOM: Victim-Offender Mediation

VORP: Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program

List of Figures, Tables, and Charts

Key Terms

This list serves to give the reader a brief description of key terms that are utilised throughout this thesis. There is a lack of consensus on the meaning of many restorative terms. Therefore, these descriptions reflect my conceptualisations, and I acknowledge other individuals may have different understandings.

An administrator is another word for a school principal.

Affirmative restorative justice is a responsive, practice-based approach that focuses on behaviour modification (Reimer, 2015).

Circles originated in Indigenous communities and are a gathering where participants sit in circle formation and take turns speaking. They can be either responsive (healing) or proactive (talking).

A conference is a type of encounter that originated in New Zealand and brings key stakeholders together to discuss an incident.

Conferencing was inspired by conferences and involves a gathering of stakeholders to discuss an incident and uses a scripted format.

Crockpot is an electrical appliance used for slow cooking meals, such as chillies, stews and pot roast.

Education is used synonymously with schooling. I recognise that education is a broad concept comprising learning in many forms and contexts. However, the focus of this research is on publicly funded education (schools) and reflecting the wider literature, I use the terms interchangeably.

Elder is a role of distinction made in Indigenous communities recognising an individual's wisdom and knowledge. Elder is capitalised as a sign of respect and as an acknowledgement of the role's importance.

Encounter conception is a view of restorative justice that emphasises a responsive gathering such as mediation, conference or circle (Johnstone and Van Ness, 2007).

Ethos is a reflection of values and beliefs.

A facilitator is a person who guides or facilitates a restorative encounter.

First Nations refers to the many Indigenous peoples in Canada, and it does not include Inuit or Métis peoples.

Inclusive education is concerned with incorporating all learners irrespective of their "race, ethnicity, language, gender, sexual orientation, income or ability" (Evans and Vaandering, 2016, p.55).

Indigenous peoples is utilised throughout this research as a collective term for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. Within this term, I recognise the diversity of languages and cultures among the many nations.

Intermediate classes are also known as intermediate division and include grades 7 and 8, which is comparable to years 8 and 9 in England and Wales

Inuit are Indigenous peoples who live in Northern Canada.

Junior classes are also known as junior division and include grades 4 to 6, which is comparable to years 5 to 7 in England and Wales.

Métis are peoples with have both Indigenous and European ancestry.

Mindfulness is a practice of being conscious and aware in the moment, and "observing without criticism" (Williams and Penman, 2012, p.5).

Non-teaching staff include cafeteria staff, school computer technicians, custodians, security staff, office and clerical staff, and bus drivers. In this study, principals are not included in this group.

Pow Wow is an Indigenous gathering and celebration that combines music and dance.

Primary classes comprise junior and senior kindergarten to grade three. This is comparable to reception to grade 4 in England and Wales. Primary classes or grade divisions should not be confused with primary school.

Primary school in Ontario contains primary, junior and often intermediate classes. The case study schools in this research contained all three divisions, which is comparable to reception through to year 9 in in England and Wales.

A principal is a school manager, akin to a head teacher or the head of the school.

Private schools in Ontario are typically fee-based and are not operated by the province. Private schools are comparable to independent schools in England.

Public schools in Ontario are publicly funded institutions, run by the province. Public schools are comparable to state schools in England.

A restorative approach a subset of restorative justice, meaning a responsive encounter, method or technique.

Restorative justice is a complex concept that includes both affirmative (justice mechanism) and transformative understanding (relational ethos).

Restorative language in line with Kane et al. (2007, p.59), I understand restorative language as "promoting effective listening, open-ended questioning, empathy and using non-judgemental words." Please note, restorative language is distinct from restorative terminology.

Restorative practice is akin to restorative approach, a subset of restorative justice, meaning responsive encounter, method or technique.

Restorative terminology includes the wide variety of restorative terms, including (but not limited to) restorative justice, restorative practice and restorative approach. Please note, restorative terminology is distinct from restorative language.

Stakeholder is a term I use to collectively identify members of the school community, including teachers, non-teaching staff, volunteers, principals and students.

Transformative restorative justice is a relational ethos that emphasises community and interconnected relationships (Reimer, 2015).

Zero-tolerance is a policy or act of no tolerance for even minor acts of wrongdoing. Undesirable behaviour is typically met with strict punishment in order to reinforce the importance of following the rules (Collins English Dictionary, 2019).

List of Appendices

Chapter One: Introduction

> What makes schools such a key setting for restorative approaches is that such experiences train students for a lifetime of seeking equity and fairness in their relationships. Schools have the power and the opportunity to make restorative approaches a habit and a way of life (Johnson and Johnson, 2013, p. 159).

1.1 Introduction

An important and exciting development is occurring in education. Restorative justice has been hailed as a radical alternative and a paradigm shift that is said to "see things differently" in schools (Morrison and Vaandering, 2012; Vaandering, 2010; Varnham, 2005, p.87). Restorative justice is viewed as transforming schools, as a behaviour management mechanism and in some cases, as a means of informing everyday interaction and relationships. Proponents claim that restorative justice "works" in education and a mounting body of literature shows the potential positive effects of implementing restorative justice (Brown, 2018; Hendry 2009; Hopkins, 2002; Cameron and Thorsborne, 1999; Thorsborne and Blood, 2013; Karp and Breslin, 2001; McCluskey et al., 2011; Morrison, 2006). As a result, a growing number of schools around the world are implementing restorative justice. However, there is not a comprehensive definition of restorative justice, and early research indicates that school context is influential in its construction and embedment. As Morrison and Vaandering, (2012, p.148) stated, there remains a lack of conceptual clarity on how restorative justice is "characterised and operationalised" in the everyday operation of schools. Through a multi-site case study, this research makes a significant contribution to deepening knowledge on the construction and embedment of restorative justice. My original contribution to knowledge is to address these gaps in the literature and advance the understanding of the role of restorative justice in education.

This chapter provides an overview of the study and its aims. Then, I will outline the research questions, approach and the significance of this research. To establish the broad context in which

this research is situated, I will then provide a brief overview of the history of education in Ontario. Then, I will discuss the current geography and demographics of the province. Afterwards, I will provide a summary of the preceding chapters and the thesis structure.

1.2 Research questions, approach and significance

Restorative justice in education is now the fastest developing area of practice (Morrison, 2015). However, research has been "gradual" and "disappointingly" lacking (Reimer, 2015 p.4; Ortega et al., 2016 p.467). Historically, most research has focused upon the effectiveness of restorative justice (Adams, 2016; Anyon et al., 2016; Brown-Kersey, 2011; Lewis, 2009; McCluskey et al., 2008) or implementation and embedment (Cavanagh, 2010; Hopkins, 2002; Karp and Breslin, 2001; Morrison, 2007; Reimer, 2009; Vaandering, 2009). Thus, there are significant gaps in our understanding of how restorative justice is "characterised and operationalised" in schools (Morrison and Vaandering, 2012, p.148). This study responds to calls for research to build conceptual clarity on what restorative justice looks like in everyday practice, and how it is experienced by stakeholders (Anfara et al., 2013; Hurley et al., 2015; Lillard, 2017; Morrison and Vaandering, 2012; Ortega et al., 2016; Reimer, 2011). Furthermore, this study responds to Reimer's (2011) call for more research on the use of restorative justice within the Canadian context.

Restorative justice has been used in Ontario schools for over twenty years, and several qualitative studies have focused on the province. As an illustration, Vaandering (2009), used critical theory to explore two case studies in different school boards, Reimer (2009) considered the views and experiences of teachers and administrators in one primary school, and Webb (2018) explored the role of leadership in one middle school. I am inspired by these studies and seek to build upon their contributions. As over 93% of Ontario school children are educated in public schools (Van Pelt and MacLeod, 2017), like Vaandering (2009), Reimer (2009) and Webb (2018), I also focused

upon public education. However, my research differs as I explored three schools at different stages of implementation within one Board, which provided a depth and breadth of understandings and experiences of restorative justice in schools. I also explored student voices alongside those of teaching and non-teaching staff to gather a comprehensive understanding. In comparison, Vaandering (2009) and Reimer (2009) did not include student voices, and while Webb (2018) noted the importance of students, he acknowledged the number involved in his research was limited.

Restorative justice developed as an alternative response to crime and has been called a paradigm shift in education (Eyler, 2014; Morrison and Vaandering 2012; Vaandering, 2010; Zehr, 2013). Research is only slowly beginning to consider how restorative justice may be used to support social control. As McCluskey et al. (2008) noted there is a dearth of literature in this area. To date, only a few studies have explored the politics of restorative justice in education (for example, McCluskey et al., 2008a; Reimer, 2015; Vaandering, 2009, Woolford, 2009). By exploring how restorative justice interacts with the schools' mission, I was able to explore how and to what extent restorative justice represented a change. In addition, this paper adds to the understanding of how restorative justice relates to social control and radical change.

My aim in pursuing this research was to build conceptual clarity on restorative justice in education. To achieve this objective, I sought to answer the primary research question: How is restorative justice constructed, and embedded within primary schools? And the secondary question: How does restorative justice interact with the school's educational mission? To obtain the "thick description" needed to properly explore the phenomenon (Geertz, 1973), my research involved a multi-site case study of primary schools committed to restorative justice in Ontario, Canada. Using a multi-site case study approach, I selected three primary schools within one school board. The schools had differing histories with restorative justice and were at different stages of

implementation. As a social construction, restorative justice is built through interaction. In this study I was interested in how restorative justice was built within the different school contexts and the associated changes[1] in practices, language, and relationships. A qualitative research approach was selected as it was interactive, exploratory, and elucidated the subjective realities while connecting with the school context and its members. Data were obtained through participant observation, interviews and documentary information, and themes were analysed manually.

1.3 Ontario context

Covering over 9.9 million square kilometres, Canada is the second largest country in the world (United Nations Statistics Division, 2018). It is home to over 36 million people in ten provinces and three territories, spanning from the Atlantic to the Pacific and to the north the Arctic Ocean. Each province or territory has a distinct makeup with its unique geography, history, demographics, economy, politics, and culture. Significantly, education in Canada is a provincial responsibility, and each province has its own structure, policies, curriculum and means of assessment. As a result, for this study, it is more fitting to focus upon the provincial context rather than the country broadly. To establish the broad context in which this research is situated, I will provide a brief overview of the history of education in Ontario. Then, I will discuss the current geography and demographics of the province.

The land that is now called Ontario has been inhabited for over 11,000 years and is situated on the traditional territory of the Ojibwa, Odawa, Potawatomi, Algonquin, Mississauga, Haudenosaunee, Neutral, Wendat, Cree, Oji-Cree and Métis (Hillmer and Bothwell, 2018). As Neegan (2005, p.4) noted, "Long before Europeans came to North America, Indigenous peoples

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[1] By changes, I include both changes in action and understanding. As an illustration, a change occurs when existing practices come to be considered as restorative.

had a highly developed system of education". Elders, parents and other community members passed

learning to younger generations. Education was mainly experiential and connected to economic

conditions (learning as preparation for life and survival) (Ibid). Children were taught to respect the

environment from a young age. Indigenous education was often multidisciplinary. As an illustration,

learning about fish spawning was not restricted to a biology lesson, but taught through fishing,

storytelling, and other activities (Lafrance, 2000).

Ontario was largely unsettled by colonists until after the American War of Independence

(1783) when Loyalists resettled northwards (Putman, 1912). In 1792, General Simcoe, established

schools for children of the elite in Upper Canada (what is now Southern Ontario) (Putman, 1912).

Around the same time, Christian churches introduced the first form of residential schools (Ibid).

Residential schools were initially day schools then boarding schools aimed to assimilate Indigenous

children. In contrast with the interactive, experiential learning before European settlement,

residential schools were based upon a British model of education and involved schooling within a

structured classroom format. The year 1867 brought Canadian confederacy and the Constitution Act

which dictated that "in and for each province, the legislature may exclusively make Laws in relation

to Education" (Government of Canada, 2016). This meant that provinces, such as Ontario where

this research is situated managed their education. However, at that time, the education of Indigenous

children continued as a federal responsibility.

While residential schools existed before confederation, Davin's "Report on Industrial

Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds" in 1879, laid the foundation for the formalisation of

residential schools. The report concluded (Ibid, p.12), "...[I]f anything is to be done with the Indian,

we must catch him very young. The children must be kept constantly within the circle of civilized

[Sic] conditions." By the 1880s, residential schools were the official method of education of

Indigenous children in Canada. It is estimated that more than 150,000 First Nation, Inuit and Métis children were forced to attend residential schools (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). Residential schools were the source of cultural genocide in Canada. Indigenous children were taken from their families, forbidden from speaking their Indigenous languages or practising their culture; in exchange, they were taught reading, writing, mathematics, British history and geography, and forced to play sports such as soccer (Haig-Brown, 1998, p.146). Thousands of children died in the schools, and many endured physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Residential schools have left lasting damage on survivors, their children, communities and Indigenous culture (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). The last school was closed in 1996 in Saskatchewan (Ibid). I turned twenty that year, and throughout my education, residential schools were never discussed. In 2008, Prime Minister Steven Harper issued a formal apology on behalf of the government and established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (hereafter TRC). The TRC has been called a form of restorative justice as it sought to respond to violence through truth-telling and reconciliation (Angel, 2012). The aim of the TRC was "to transform our country and restore mutual respect between peoples and nations" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015, p.183). Correspondingly, Llewellyn (2008, p.187) called restorative justice "the missing piece along the road toward reconciliation" in Canada. I have detailed the history of education in Ontario as I think it is essential to acknowledge the past, and how it has influenced where we are today. In addition, I think this has clear significance for this study and for restorative justice in education in Ontario.

I will now explore the province's geography and demographics. Ontario is Canada's second largest province, covering more than 1 million square kilometres (Government of Ontario, 2016). It is roughly 8.5 times the size of England. Ontario is also the most densely populated province in the country with over 13 million residents (Hillmer and Bothwell, 2018). The median age of Ontarians is 40.4 years, which is comparable to the national average (Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2011). A

quarter of Ontario's total population self identifies as a visible minority. However, almost all (98.3%)

of minority populations live in urban areas (Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2016). Today, less than 3%

of the provincial population self identifies as Indigenous (Ibid). Education remains under provincial

authority, and unlike, England and the United States of America there is no national department of

education. So, the Ontario Ministry of Education, has its own structure, policies, curriculum and

means of assessment. The federal government's involvement in education is "limited, and

sometimes non-existent" (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010, p.3).

In its mission statement, the ministry stated, "Ontario is committed to the success and well-being of

every student and child. Learners in the province's education system will develop the knowledge,

skills and characteristics that will lead them to become personally successful, economically

productive and actively engaged citizens" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2018[b], online). In 2015-

2016, there were nearly two million students in public (provincially funded) primary and secondary

schools in Ontario. Approximately 70% of adults in Ontario (aged between 25 and 64) have

completed some form of post-secondary education (Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2017).

Ontario's climate is variable, with summer temperatures in excess of 30°C and winter

temperatures reaching -40°C (Hillmer and Bothwell, 2018). The province also has a diverse

landscape. To the south, along the shores of the Great Lakes are large metropolitan areas where

over 85% of the provincial population lives (Government of Ontario, 2016). However, Ontario is

also abundant in natural resources, and over half of the province is forested. In addition, Ontario

contains approximately 20% of the fresh water in the world in over 250,000 lakes. The name

Ontario derives from the Iroquois word *kanadario* for beautiful water, beautiful lake or big body of

water (Ibid).

1.4 Thesis structure

This chapter has introduced the study, outlined the research questions, approach and significance, and the Ontario context. To provide the reader with an overview of this thesis, I will also provide a summary of the subsequent chapters. In Chapter Two, I begin by exploring the Indigenous origins of restorative justice, and the contemporary developments in criminal justice. Then I consider the expansion of restorative justice in schools, the meaning of restorative justice and developing terminology. Chapter Three explores the literature on how restorative justice is constructed and embedded in education. In Chapter Four, I consider education in relation to social control and radical change. Then I explore how restorative justice interacts with these functions. Chapter Five contains the research methodology, where I discuss the qualitative research approach, the researcher as a multicultural subject, constructionist paradigm, research strategy, methods of data collection, data analysis, interpretation and evaluation, and the research ethics. Chapters Six through Eight contain the individual case studies. The three schools, Hummingbird, Kingfisher, and Sycamore Public Schools[2] are all discussed in relation to observations, interviews and documentary information. Chapter Nine contains the overall discussion, in which the three case studies are considered in relation to the research questions. In Chapter Ten, the findings are summarised, and final conclusions are made. Here, I also note the contribution the study has made, illustrate the trustworthiness of the findings, note the research limitations, and suggest areas of future research.

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[2] In order to ensure confidentiality, all school boards, schools and participants were given pseudonyms.

Chapter Two: The concept of restorative justice

We must realize that many of the problems in the way we do justice today are rooted in our understanding of justice, and that this particular understanding is only one possible way, one paradigm. Others are possible, others have been lived out, others have actually dominated most of our history (Zehr, 2013, p.32).

My aim in pursuing this research was to build conceptual clarity on how restorative justice in education is characterised and operationalised. Restorative justice has a long history. So, I will begin by exploring the Indigenous and contemporary origins that have been influential on the concept. Next, I will examine the expansion of restorative justice into educational settings. Then I will critically examine the developing meaning and terminology to explore what they have to say about the concept.

2.1 The origins of restorative justice

The Indigenous origins of restorative justice are frequently acknowledged. As an illustration, Mulligan (2009) suggested that hunter-gatherer societies used restorative justice. Braithwaite (2002, p.5) argued that "restorative justice has been the dominant model of criminal justice throughout most of history for perhaps all the world's peoples." In addition, Consedine (1995: 12) claimed that,

Biblical justice was restorative. So too was justice in most Indigenous cultures. In pre-colonial New Zealand, Maori had a fully integrated system of restorative justice . . . It was the traditional philosophy of Pacific nations such as Tonga, Fiji and Samoa . . . In pre-Norman Ireland, restorative justice was interwoven . . . with the fabric of daily life.

Furthermore, in Canada, where this research is situated, the Indigenous roots of restorative justice also are documented (Pranis, 2005; Woolford, 2009; Zehr, 2008).

However, the origins of restorative justice are contested. As an illustration, Sylvester (2003, p.522) suggested that proponents of restorative justice have created a "false context about how 'it used to be.'" Furthermore, Daly (2002, p.62) argued that the Indigenous roots of restorative justice are a "romanticization," and restorative justice is described as Indigenous to acclaim it as an anti-

colonial practice. To fulfil this objective, "specific histories and practices of justice in premodern societies are smoothed over and are lumped together as one justice form" (Ibid, p.63). Daly (Ibid) also noted that the modern administration of practices differs from traditional approaches (she cited conferencing in New Zealand as an example). Daly's (Ibid) arguments are noteworthy, as clearly practices are being combined and altered, and unique and complex Indigenous histories are being generalised. However, in an effort to illustrate complexities she ultimately denied an important history. As Johnstone (2011, p.40) noted, "there is a significant historical truth, confirmed by 'professional historians'… that there was once a mode of life in which some part of the law belonged to the community." In addition, as Woolford (2009, p.45) noted, Indigenous justice in what is now Canada, did not simply fade away, "it was forcibly replaced".

> The world of Aboriginal dispute resolution was not simply forgotten or lost; instead, it was colonized. It was forcibly replaced through the imperial march of Canadian laws. Therefore, to simply claim to be renewing Aboriginal justice traditions, without serious consideration of the colonial acts that disrupted the social conditions that made these traditions possible, is to risk performing new acts of colonial appropriation and erasure (Ibid, pp.45-46).

Colonisation has existed in Canada for several hundred years and is still present today. This study aims to build conceptual clarity, and I firmly believe, that if restorative justice is to progress respectfully and inclusively, we must first acknowledge that the ideas and practices are not new. As we seek to build conceptual clarity, the complexities of the Indigenous roots of restorative justice need to be honoured, while not "romanticizing it or losing the original meaning of restorative justice" (Wonshé, 2004, p.257). As Wonshé (Ibid) noted at its roots restorative justice, "was not a program they went to or a model they followed. Rather, it was a thread woven into the fabric of their lives and an expression of values shared by and maintained by community." Wonshé's (Ibid) description is significant as she provided important insight into the original meaning of restorative justice. "Restorative justice is not only a way of work; it is a way of life" (Ibid, p.254). As such, restorative justice exists within us, as much as it informs our interactions, language, and

relationships. Howard Zehr (2002) who is frequently called the grandfather of modern restorative justice (Cremin, 2016; Hopkins, 2011; Morrison, 2003; Reimer, 2015; Toews, 2013), suggested this relational ethos is rooted within the Hebrew concept of *shalom*, the Maori principle of *whakapapa*, the Navajo *hozho* and the African *ubuntu*. While all these terms vary in precise meaning, they all contain the same underlying idea that all things are interconnected (Zehr, 2002). Moving forward, I will illustrate how the concept of restorative justice has changed and developed over time. While change has occurred, it is important to be conscious that restorative justice is rooted in Indigenous practices and philosophies (it is not new) and the original meaning emphasised interconnected relationships.

2.2 Contemporary restorative justice

As Wonshé (2004, p.257) noted, "When we follow the roots of restorative justice back to First Nations people, we see that 'restorative justice' was not named as such." So, while restorative practices and philosophies are rooted in Indigenous communities, restorative terminology (as it is now utilised[3]) is relatively new. Albert Eglash (1957a, 1957b, 1959) is frequently regarded as the first person to coin the term restorative justice in a series of publications in the 1950s (Daly, 2013; Van Ness and Heetderks Strong, 2015; Gavrielides, 2011; Mirsky, 2003). Contemporary restorative justice was born out of dissatisfaction with the criminal justice system and developed as an alternative response to crime. Modern restorative justice practices originated with a victim-offender mediation (VOM) programme in 1974 in Elmira, Ontario (Van Ness, Morris and Maxwell, 2001), as this study is also located in Ontario this is an ideal starting point for this discussion.

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[3] The etymology of the term restorative shows it has been used in different contexts (health, building, and politics), and these meanings are very different from the current usage. The word restore comes from the Latin "restaurare". "Re" meaning again and "staurare" to establish or make firm (Skeat, 1888, p.505). The term restorative came into the English language in the Middle Ages from the old French for "restauratif" (restore) (Ibid). During the late 14th century restorative meant a means of healing, such as "restoring health" or renewal. In the 15th century, the meaning became aligned with repairing, such as fixing a building. Then Restoration (capitalised) became synonymous with the reinstatement of the British monarchy in 1660 (Harper, 2014).

On a Saturday night in 1974, two intoxicated teens went on a drunken rampage in the small

town of Elmira, Ontario. The two young men pleaded guilty to 22 counts of wilful damage. At the

time Mark Yantzi, the probation officer assigned to the cases attended a gathering on the criminal

justice system hosted by the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Coming from a pacifist

tradition, Yantzi raised the idea of the teens meeting their victims and arranging restitution.

Encouraged by his colleagues, the idea was presented in an addendum to the pre-sentence report.

The judge Gordon McConnell ultimately supported the idea and the teens were sentenced to

probation and restitution was part of the order. The young men met their victims, and financially

compensated losses not covered by insurance (Peachey, 2013). Subsequently, Yantzi produced a

report for the Mennonite Central Committee. The success of the initiative and high levels of victim

satisfaction produced excitement. The news of the case spread throughout Mennonite communities

in Canada and the United States, where additional programmes were developed (Van Ness, 2009;

Butler, 2004). The Elmira case led to the victim-offender reconciliation programme (VORP), and in

1977-1978 the first VORP's were introduced in the United States, in Elkhart, Indiana (Zehr, 2005).

Notably, the Elmira case and the subsequent programmes were not created or designed as

restorative justice, instead over time they were recognised as restorative. From the late 1970s into the

1980s and 1990s restorative justice practice slowly developed and expanded beyond North America

into Europe, with England's first programmes being initiated in 1979 with a reparation programme

in Devon (Marshall, 1992). Significantly for this study, restorative justice was synonymous with

VOMs until 1989 when the concept began to expand (Raye and Roberts, 2007).

The VOMs and VORPs that began in Ontario in the 1970s are commonly identified as the

precursor for other restorative practices (Peachey, 2013). The Children, Young Persons, and Their

Families Act was passed in 1989 in New Zealand. The family group conference (FGC) was a crucial

part of the act. FGC was developed as an alternative to the courts after many Maori children were

removed from their homes. Its initial intention was that of an "empowerment process" for families (Doolan, 2003). Like VORPs, conferences are a type of restorative encounter that brings key stakeholders together to discuss an incident, its impact and the way forward. However, conferences include a much larger group of participants (Zehr, 2008; Johnstone, 2011).

Inspired by the conferences in New Zealand, Police Sergeant Terry O'Connell (1998) and his colleagues brought conferencing to Wagga Wagga, Australia as a measure to improve the police cautioning process. This adapted version became recognised as the "scripted conferencing model" as it used a set framework. Centrally, the framework included the central questions:

- What happened?

- Who has been affected and how?

- How can we put right the harm done? (Hopkins, 2009, p.22)

O'Connell travelled to the United Kingdom during the 1990s influencing the police services and other agencies and increasing interest in restorative justice there and beyond (Ibid). Significantly, for this study, the scripted model and key questions have been influential in schools.

Subsequently, peacemaking or healing circles from Canadian Indigenous communities also came to be seen as part of restorative justice (Zehr, 2008). Circles usually involve a much larger group including community members. Typically, circles were assisted by a "circle keeper," include a talking piece such as a feather, stick or stone and use the circle method of interaction (Ibid). The role of circle keeper is not to control interaction but to guide it (Pranis, Stuart and Wedge, 2003). Woolford (2009, p.63) noted that "in the most basic terms, a circle is an occasion where a community is assembled to discuss matters related to and a possible resolution for an injustice that took place in their midst." In addition, there are many different types of a circle, and a facilitator is not always required. Circles emphasise the collective, all participants are included, and have an equal voice.

In summary, contemporary restorative justice began as VOMs and expanded to include other key practices from the 1970-1990s. Throughout this time restorative justice was focused upon criminal justice. Correspondingly, from my own experience, when I was first introduced to restorative justice in the late 1990s (see section 5.1 for a full description), the concept was described as responsive encounters for criminal behaviour. I was initially drawn to restorative justice because it was described as an alternative to retributive justice. Restorative justice meant practices, and those practices (mediation, conferences, conferencing and circles) are still the most visible and widely known forms of restorative justice. They all developed within criminal justice contexts, as an alternative response to crime, and were different forms of encounter that brought victims and offenders together in the aftermath of crime. Hopkins (2009, p. 23-24), noted multiple themes across the different practices, including, "a chance for all sides to tell their story," "an opportunity for gaining clarity and understanding and for developing empathy," "recognition that all those affected have needs which must be acknowledged and addressed for healing to take place," "ownership of the conflict by those immediately affected," and "an opportunity for those in the wrong to put things right."

Van Ness (2002), Braithwaite (2002) and Pranis (2009) all detailed the values that underline encounters. Van Ness (2002) distinguished between process and outcome values. He suggested processes can be considered in relation to their commitment to restorative values of inclusion, balanced interests, voluntary nature and problem-solving, whereas outcomes can be examined in relation to their encounter, amends, integration and the whole truth. Braithwaite (2002) discussed three categories of restorative values; constraining values (equal concern for stakeholders, quality listening and dialogue, and respect for fundamental human rights), standard values (restoration of dignity, property, compassion and caring, peace, and empowerment), and outcome values (accepting responsibility, remorse and apology). Pranis (2009) distinguished between process and individual

values. Process values speak directly to restorative processes or practices and can include inclusion, honesty, accountability, reconciliation, equality, and humility. Individual values are those that the processes encourage within participants. Pranis (Ibid, p.63) related these values to participants being their "best selves" and include respect, honesty, taking responsibility, compassion, and patience. Braithwaite (2002), Van Ness (2002) and Pranis (2009) all discussed process orientated values. These values were focused upon practices and their outcomes, rather than everyday interaction and relationships. It is evident these values are "not new or unique" to restorative justice, but are shared with numerous religions, Indigenous cultures and "diverse fields of inquiry" (such as conflict transformation, feminist social ethics) (Sawatsky, 2002).

Within the literature, it has been suggested that practice has guided theory (Morrison, 2015, p.448), or as Van Ness, Morris and Maxwell (2001, p.4) noted "theory…grew out of experience." However, restorative practices were each underpinned by theories and objectives. Thus, as Pranis (2009, p.59) suggested it is best to consider, "restorative justice as a field [that] flows back and forth between practice that informs philosophy and philosophy that informs practice." At the same time, the first restorative practices were developed, influential theories were advanced by Nils Christie (1977), Howard Zehr (1986, a copy is reproduced under Zehr, 2013), and John Braithwaite (1989) that also were ultimately regarded as restorative. Nils Christie's (1977) article 'Conflicts as Property' in the *British Journal of Criminology* was called the "most influential" restorative text (Braithwaite, 2002, p.11). Christie (1977) suggested conflicts were an important part of life and as such should be visible and nurtured. He (Ibid, p.1) claimed that "Conflicts ought to be used, not only left in erosion. And they ought to be used, and become useful, for those originally involved in the conflict." Christie (Ibid) argued that society did not have too much conflict, it had too little. The problem was that conflicts were like stolen property, taken from those directly involved. As an illustration, the state takes ownership of conflicts, and those directly involved are frequently left without an outlet to

express their thoughts and feelings, which could ultimately lead to further victimisation. Christie (Ibid) highlighted the failings of the criminal justice system, and he proposed a victim-centred alternative with a strong community focus. He argued that those directly involved should take ownership of the conflict. The ownership of one's conflict could act as a source of empowerment and provide opportunities for healing and resolution.

In 1986, Howard Zehr produced a pamphlet called *Retributive Justice, Restorative Justice* (a copy is reproduced under Zehr, 2013) in which he argued that the problem with justice is the way it is understood. Justice is commonly viewed through a retributive lens. Under retributive justice crime is viewed as an act against the state, the state takes ownership, the focus is upon the past and blameworthiness, the process is dependent on professionals, relationships are adversarial, values are competitive and individualistic, and crime is stigmatised. Zehr (Ibid), argued that other ways of understanding are possible, and have existed in history. While acknowledging the oversimplification, Zehr (Ibid, p.29) claimed that state justice and community justice have been in a "dialectic" throughout history. Community justice typically involved restitution and informal encounters such as mediation. In contrast, the state was a central figure in state justice, and it was typically more formal and punitive. While state justice currently has a monopolisation, this is a recent phenomenon, as throughout history community justice has been the dominant understanding. Zehr (Ibid) also discussed a third model, covenant justice. Covenant justice is a problem-solving approach that seeks to restore. In the Old Testament, justice relates to Shalom, "making things right, of living in peace and harmony with one another in right relationship" (Ibid, p.31). Like Christie (1977), Zehr (2013) viewed conflict as valuable, people and relationships are central to justice, and he emphasised the importance of dialogue and problem-solving. However, Zehr (2013) discussed restorative justice as a concept that combines community justice, covenant justice and developing practices such as

VORPs. He suggested that given the failings of the retributive model, restorative justice might

represent a new paradigm (Ibid).

Like Christie (1977) and Zehr (2013), Braithwaite (1989) advocated for community response

to crime. He argued that the professionalisation of crime control was problematic.

> Professional criminology, in all its variants, can be unhelpful in maintaining a social climate
> appropriate to crime control because in different ways its thrust is to professionalize,
> systematize, scientize and de-communitize justice. To the extent that the community
> genuinely comes to believe that the 'experts' can scientifically prescribe solutions to the
> crime problem, there is a risk that citizens cease to look to preventative obligations which are
> fundamentally in their own hands (Braithwaite, Ibid, p.6).

Thus, the professionalisation of crime control has led to a dependence on experts, and

systematisation at the expense of community competency. He claimed that the criminal justice

system labelled offenders in a stigmatising manner so that they are outcast and drawn further

towards criminal subcultures. In contrast, Braithwaite (1989) advocated for a communitization of

justice that was moralising. Justice should make wrongdoers feel strong disapproval for the

wrongdoing while, preserving loving or respectful bonds. Thus, reintegrative shaming wrongdoers

are valued, loved and respected while their actions are strongly criticised.

Christie (1977), Zehr (2013), and Braithwaite (1989) produced important theories which over

time formed the foundations of modern restorative justice. Significantly for this study, their theories

of restorative justice like the key practices were focused upon criminal justice. In arguing for

alternatives to the state-run criminal justice, Christie (1977), Zehr (2013), and Braithwaite (1989) all

contrasted formal, professional, state, processes, with a community approach, where conflicts were

productive and owned by those directly involved, participants are empowered, and accountability

was encouraged.

2.3 Restorative justice in schools

Thus far, I have illustrated the changing meaning of restorative justice. Rooted in Indigenous

practices and philosophies, the contemporary concept developed from VOMs to include other

encounters within the criminal justice system. As restorative justice grew in popularity within the

criminal justice system, proponents began exploring its suitability in other areas, and restorative

justice expanded in both upward and downward directions (Johnstone 2011). The upward expansion

moved restorative justice into areas such as human rights abuses and genocide, such as in the Truth

and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Canada. The downward expansion brought restorative

justice into community settings such as schools, religious groups and the workplace (Ibid).

I have illustrated how modern restorative justice developed as an alternative response to

crime. Correspondingly, restorative justice was initially implemented in schools as an alternative to

exclusionary practices (Johnstone, 2011). Restorative justice expanded into schools in Australia in

the early 1990s (Suvall, 2009, Wachtel, 2013). One of the earliest examples of restorative justice in

education was in 1994, when conferencing was used after a serious assault at a Queensland high

school dance. Restorative justice was seen as the answer to the,

> Search for a non-punitive intervention for serious misconduct…In particular, an
> intervention for serious cases of bullying which did not put the victim at further risk and
> involved parents of both the offender and the victim…[C]onferencing seemed to fit the
> bill of the ultimate intervention which increased empathy and lowered impulsivity on
> the part of the bully (Cameron and Thorsborne, 2001, p.181)

Cameron and Thorsborne (Ibid) detailed restorative justice as a process, while using language from

the criminal justice system, such as "victim" and "offender." This example illustrates how early

restorative justice in schools mirrored the responsive practices in the criminal justice system. There

are many factors which have influenced the development of restorative justice in schools and my

aim here is not to provide a comprehensive overview. Rather, I have highlighted several key events

that were particularly significant. There is a large body of literature that has explored factors that

have advanced the thinking on restorative justice in schools, (see for example:; Bickmore, 2008, 2011; Cremin and Bevington, 2017; Liebmann, 2007; McCluskey, 2013; Morrison, 2002, 2011; Vaandering, 2011).

By the late 1990s, other countries including the UK, New Zealand and the USA also began to implement restorative justice in schools (Carruthers, 2013; Hopkins, 2006; Riesentenberg, 2003). In Ontario, where this study was situated, restorative justice expanded because of the failures of the Ontario Safe Schools Act (2000; hereafter OSSA). The OSSA brought mandatory suspensions and expulsions and led to substantial increases in student exclusions. During its first two years, the number of students suspended across the province increased by 50,000 (Rankin and Contenta, 2009). While the OSSA aimed to increase the values of "respect and responsibility in schools" (Ibid), the Ontario Human Rights Commission found that the zero-tolerance policies disproportionately impacted students with disabilities, and students from racial minorities, particularly Black students (Bhattacharjee, 2003). This finding is consistent with other research which has found that zero-tolerance initiatives are discriminatory. As an illustration, McCluskey, (2013) found that in the UK, boys were more frequently excluded than girls (ratio 4:1), and these rates were higher amongst ethnic minorities. Significantly, in Ontario, the failures of OSSA acted as a catalyst for the increased use of restorative justices in schools. In 2007, Ontario Education Minister, Kathleen Wynne, denounced the OSSA and called for a move from the zero-tolerance approach (CBC, 2007). Bill 212, Education Amendment Act-Progressive Discipline and School Safety Act, was introduced in 2008 to amend OSSA. The bill repealed the mandatory suspensions and expulsions and was seen to encourage alternative discipline approaches such as restorative justice (Ibid), and as a result, restorative justice has been increasingly implemented in schools across the province. While restorative justice began in Ontario schools as responsive practices, many proponents argue for a transformative approach, that

seeks to *change* the structures which create injustice, rather than improve upon them (Woolford, 2009; Reimer, 2015).

Restorative justice expanded in Ontario because of the failures of the Ontario Safe Schools Act (2000) and several areas began to implement restorative justice in schools in the mid-2000s (for example Toronto District, Waterloo, York, and Kawartha School Boards) (Evans and Vaandering, 2016; Reimer, 2015; Zheng, and De Jesus, 2018). However, it is important also to acknowledge that during the 1980s and 1990s there were a host of other initiatives that were operating in schools that sought to resolve conflicts, improve relationships and encourage peacebuilding in schools, such as peace education, peer mediation, and conflict resolution. As restorative justice developed in schools, it merged with these existing programmes, and they helped facilitate its growth (Evans and Vaandering, 2016, p.18).

2.4 The meaning of restorative justice

Daly (2016, p.13) argued that "without a definition of RJ…we are bobbling on a raft in a sea of hopes and dreams". However, I do not believe that a comprehensive definition of restorative justice is possible. As Zehr (2002, p.44) noted, "restorative justice is becoming too diverse to capture it in any simple classification". In addition, as "a contested concept" (Johnstone and Van Ness, 2007, p.6-8), it is improbable that there can be a single universally accepted definition (Sellman, Cremin, and McCluskey, 2013). As an illustration, Tony Marshall's (1999, p.5) definition has been amongst the most commonly cited (Ashworth, 2001; Braithwaite, 2000; Gavrielides, 2007; Hopkins, 2006, 2015; Kane et al., 2007; McCold, 2008; Raye and Roberts, 2007; Woolford, 2009; Zernova, 2007).

> Restorative justice is a process whereby all the parties with a stake in a particular offence come together to resolve collectively how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future.

Marshall (1999) understood restorative justice as a responsive process for (criminal) offences. Thus, excluding restorative justice from non-criminal wrongdoing or conflict, as well as relational understandings. In addition, there is no mention of how an offence might be "dealt with". Critically, Marshall (Ibid) failed to acknowledge the importance of values in restorative justice. This is significant as in 2002, Braithwaite (p.160) discussed a conference where it was collectively agreed that a young wrongdoer should wear a shirt declaring, "I am a thief". This practice contradicts the respectful, caring and considerate process values discussed by Braithwaite (2002), Van Ness (2002) and Pranis (2009). Should such a degrading and stigmatising outcome be considered restorative? Correspondingly, if collectively agreed upon should corporal or capital punishment be considered restorative? While widely cited, Marshall's (1999) definition fails to capture the complexities of restorative justice.

My understanding of restorative justice is heavily influenced by Johnstone and Van Ness's (2007) description of the concept. Using Gallie's (1956) framework, Johnstone and Van Ness (2007, p. 6-8) suggested that restorative justice is "essentially contested"; a concept that is appraisive, internally complex, and open. An appraisive concept is one which suggests a sort of esteemed accomplishment (Gallie, 1956). This is evidenced by the passion and positivity about the concept. It is something people are proud to be a part of, it offers hope of something different, of a productive alternative. The values associated with restorative justice are positive such as "respect", "equality", "interconnectedness" so much so that it "can feel utopian" (Zehr, 2005, p.228). An internally complex concept is one that is multi-dimensional (Connolly, 1994). As I have illustrated, different encounters and theories have come to be associated with restorative justice as the contemporary concept has developed. As Johnstone and Van Ness (2007, pp.7) noted various "ingredients" can be attributed to restorative justice, such as "an emphasis on empowering" in a process that involves key stakeholders in the discussion and resolution after a crime. However, not all the ingredients are

necessary to define restorative justice accurately. Differing perspectives or initiatives may emphasise different ingredients. An open concept is one which can develop and alter in an unpredictable fashion (Gallie, 1956). As this paper has illustrated, restorative justice expanded from its initial focus upon criminal justice to human rights and community settings. The scope of practices and ideas have also expanded from responsive encounters for criminality to social engagement and community building. Thus, restorative justice can be considered an essentially contested concept that has developed unpredictably, is multi-dimensional and appraisive.

Although it might be useful to provide a fixed definition, along the lines of "restorative justice is understood as..." I embrace the "rich diversity of understandings" of restorative justice (Sullivan and Tifft, 2008, p.17), and like Johnstone and Van Ness (2007, p.19) I think we should work to gain "a deeper understanding of the richness of the concept". Furthermore, I believe this approach is consistent with restorative values of inclusion, respect and appreciating diversity. One way to find the meaning of restorative justice is to consider, "what those promoting 'restorative justice' are trying to make happen" (Johnstone, 2004, p.5). These objectives determine whether restorative justice is used "to affirm or transform institutions" (Reimer, 2015, p.3). Correspondingly, I find the dichotomy of affirmative and transformative restorative justice detailed by Woolford (2009; based upon Fraser's 1997, 2000 theory of justice) as the most practical way to explore the different understandings of the concept. This differentiation is like Johnstone and Van Ness's (2007) encounter and transformative conceptions, Braithwaite's (2002) description of practitioners as administrative and social justice orientated, and Woolford and Ratner's (2003) discussion of governmentalists and communitarians. While the two conceptions emphasise different elements of restorative justice, as Reimer (2015, p.14) noted,

It is important to state that these understandings exist on a continuum. Although the bulk of their writings may situate specific scholars as advocating for either affirmative or transformative RJ, their individual views and writings are often complex and nuanced.

There are similarities between affirmative and transformative restorative justice that are worth noting. Within peace theory, Johan Galtung (1969) differentiated between positive and negative peace. Negative peace is concerned with controlling personal violence. Whereas, positive peace is a social justice approach that addresses the sources of violence. Both affirmative and transformative restorative justice can be considered forms of positive peace. Both conceptions seek to repair harm and resolve conflict. However, their scope differs significantly. Affirmative restorative justice is a responsive *peacemaking* approach, whereas transformative restorative justice is *peacebuilding*, actively seeking to create conditions in which conflict is less likely (Galtung, 1976).

An affirmative response typically focuses upon modifying the behaviour of the wrongdoer, and the greater context in which the behaviour occurred is not considered or challenged. Affirmative restorative justice can be used to resolve an issue and repair the harm caused. As Reimer (2015, p.14) noted, an affirmative restorative justice "improves upon – rather than dismantles – existing systems". Marshall's (1999) definition is reflective of an affirmative perspective as it focuses upon a "process", whereby an offence is "resolve[d]" and "deal[t] with". Daly (2016) also defined restorative justice in an affirmative manner. She described restorative justice as a "justice mechanism" (Ibid, p.14) and "a justice mechanism is a justice response, process, activity, measure, or practice" (Ibid, p.15). Equally, MacAllister (2013, p.99), stated that "'restoration' typically involves responding to and repairing some harm or damage that has already been caused". These affirmative descriptions focus upon processes, mechanisms, and response. As such, they are akin to a tool that is used as and when needed, and significantly the resulting implications of such processes are "modest and specific" (Ibid, p.105).

In contrast, a transformative understanding of restorative justice aims to challenge structural inequalities and injustices. The transformative conception emphasises restorative justice as a way of being and relating to one another. As Van Ness (2013, p.33) stated, "Restorative justice is more than a process and /or an outcome. It offers a perspective that changes how we view ourselves, others around us and the structures that influence and constrain us". Equally, Gavrielides (2007, p.139) claimed restorative justice, "is an ethos; it is a way of living. It is a new approach to life, interpersonal relationships and a way of prioritizing what is important in the process of learning how to coexist". Johnstone and Van Ness (2007) stated that transformative restorative justice is a vision that rejects the self as a separate entity in favour of an emphasis on interconnected relationships. Thus, the implications of transformative restorative justice are considerable and impact our dialogue, the way we relate to one another and the world, and how we distribute resources (Ibid). Critically, MacAllister (2013, p.105) argued that a transformative restorative justice is "logically paradoxical". In comparing Oxford English Dictionary definitions of restorative and transformation, he stated that the two terms denote significantly different processes. The former requiring the return of something "to how it was before" and the latter involving "becoming different and new" (Ibid, p100). He stated that by nature restoration is purely responsive, and the proactive practices and experiences are simply education. Thus, MacAllister (Ibid) argued the terms are incompatible, and restorative justice cannot be transformative. This argument has practical significance. As Cremin, Sellmen and McCluskey (2012, p.430) noted, these linguistic contradictions within restorative justice challenge definitional clarity, and could ultimately reduce its "power". In reference to peace studies and sociology, they suggested that these inconsistencies can be overcome when restorative justice is understood as "restoring communities to a place where conflict is non-destructive or restoring conflict to a non-destructive level" (Ibid, p.434). This acknowledges that the real sources of conflict can be deeply rooted. As Woolford (2009, p.153) noted, "Anything less than a transformative

approach to injustice tends to only scratch the surface of the problem, ignoring its deeper cultural, structural, and political roots".

2.5 Developing terminology

As restorative justice moved into schools, the terminology developed. The use of criminal justice terminology such as justice, victim and offender were deemed unsuitable for educational settings (McCluskey et al. (2008). As Hopkins (2009, p.26) argued, "the term restorative justice began to outgrow its usefulness in educational contexts." Thus, the term justice was frequently removed, to emphasise the educational context, and was replaced by a host of other terms, such as restorative approaches, restorative practices, restorative processes, restorative responses, restorative communities, restorative school climate, restorative education, restorative measures, restorative discipline and restorative schools. These terms are frequently used synonymously. However, they can have different meanings and crucially for this study they can reflect different conceptions of restorative justice in education. As an illustration, restorative discipline clearly emphasises an affirmative responsive encounter (Amstutz and Mullet, 2005). Whereas, McCluskey et al. (2011) suggested that restorative approaches include transformative restorative justice. Adding to the complexity, single terms have also been used to describe different conceptions. For example, Amstutz and Mullet (2005) described restorative practices affirmatively, whereas Wachtel (2013, p.4) defined restorative practices as transformative. Thus, restorative terminology has developed incoherently.

After considerable reflection on the preferred term for this study, it became clear that by removing justice and adding numerous other terms, the whole concept was becoming more ambiguous (Vaandering, 2011). Thus, I began to reconsider the meanings of justice and education, in order to determine their compatibility. Justice is a multidimensional construct. As Evans and

Vaandering (2016) noted, justice is dualistic. Primary justice is synonymous with social justice. Whereas secondary justice is responsive and is tantamount to judicial justice. Correspondingly, Sawatsky (2008) differentiated between justice *served* (imposed on mainly unwilling participants), and justice *created,* (a creative learning opportunity). When justice is created, "It is about learning to see the good and the bad in others and in ourselves. It is about strengthening community and learning to live with respect" (Ibid, p.17). In *Returning to the Teachings,* Rupert Ross (1996) also directly connected justice with teaching and learning. He stated justice involves "proactive teachings about how people *should* approach the living of their lives, as individuals and members of the community" (Ibid, p.258). While justice includes responsive elements, justice really means, "living a good life or doing things the right way" (Ibid, p.257). Equally, Vaandering (2011, p.307) stated that justice is "honouring the inherent worth of all and is enacted through relationship." Akin to transformative restorative justice, these understandings view justice as a relational. Among the Latin origins of *Education*, is the word *educere,* which means to lead out (Craft, 1984). Education involves preparing learners "for the changes that are to come—readying them to create solutions to problems yet unknown" (Bass and Good, 2004, p.162). Education also "empowers learners of all ages to live out their capacity for being human and relational" (Evans and Vaandering, 2016, p.6). Thus, both education and justice involve learning, including learning how to live respectfully. In addition, they both emphasise relational capacity. Considering the ambiguity of alternative terms and the real compatibility of justice and education, I have chosen to use the term restorative justice in schools. In making this decision, I acknowledge and respect that others will have different understandings.

2.6 Summary

Rooted in Indigenous philosophies and practices, restorative justice has changed considerably in modern times. It began in the criminal justice system with VOMs, other practices were then added, the focus expanded to include human rights and community settings, and most recently relational

understandings were developed. Restorative terminology has also expanded, and multiple restorative terms have been employed.   I illustrated the compatibility of justice and education and justified my preferred term restorative justice. The modern developments of restorative justice have real significance for the conceptualisation of restorative justice, and this research. Notably, the essentially contested nature of restorative justice has led to a lack of conceptual clarity. In educational settings, restorative justice can be conceptualised as affirmative practices or as a transformative ethos. These conceptions have significantly different aims and implications in schools. In the next chapter, I will explore the available literature on the characterisation and operationalised of restorative justice in everyday school life.

Chapter Three: How is restorative justice constructed and embedded?

Thus far, I have provided an overview of the development of the concept and the practice of restorative justice. I illustrated that restorative justice is an essentially contested concept that can be constructed as an affirmative behaviour management tool or a transformative relational ethos. Within this chapter, I explore the current literature on how restorative justice has been constructed and embedded in schools. While there is a growing body of literature on restorative justice, I will illustrate that there are significant gaps in how restorative justice is characterised and operationalised in everyday school life.

3.1 Constructing restorative justice in schools

Restorative justice can be considered in relation to two interconnected conceptions; a focus upon affirmative practices or transformative relations. Before I begin considering the two constructions in detail, I want to first highlight a central difference. To facilitate this discussion, I use Bragg and Manchester's (2011) discussion of ethos, which I have adapted to fit this context. Restorative justice can be considered as a condition *for* learning, and restorative justice *as* learning. Restorative justice for learning, is a behaviour management tool, to enable the real learning to take place. In this sense, restorative justice can be seen as influential in encouraging 'good behaviour' and therefore reducing the incidence(s) of conflict or bullying that may hinder learning. In contrast, restorative justice as learning, is itself a mechanism for education. In this way, restorative justice provides stakeholders with opportunities to develop their understanding of relating to those within the school and the wider world (Bragg and Manchester, 2011).

3.1.1 Affirmative restorative justice in schools

In the previous chapter, I detailed how four key practices (VOM, conferences, conferencing and circles) came to be seen as restorative. When restorative justice was brought into schools, those

practices were used in response to a wide range of behaviours in schools including assault, conflict, bullying, truancy, theft, vandalism, substance misuse and academic dishonesty (Ahmed and Brathwaite, 2006; Kara and MacAllister, 2010; Morrison, 2002; Suvall, 2009; Thorsborne and Blood, 2013; Varnham, 2005). Restorative encounters were most commonly described as a technique for managing behaviour or simply "another tool in the toolbox" (McCluskey, 2013, p. 134). Stinchcomb et al. (2006) suggested that restorative justice is one of many approaches schools can utilise and that the "most feasible and flexible approach" to the wide variety of student behaviours is a mixture of restorative and "punitive" (exclusionary) measures (Ibid, pp. 141-142). Equally, Amstutz and Mullet (2005, p.17) claimed restorative justice can be used "alongside existing school policies." Thus, suggesting that restorative justice can be used in a limited and purely responsive manner.

The social discipline window (Wachtel, 1999; see Figure 1), has been used internationally to illustrate restorative justice in education (Wachtel, 1999; Martin, 2007; Morrison, 2003, Reimer, 2015; Webb, 2018), and like the examples above it contrasts a restorative approach with punitive discipline. The window has a two-way continuum with four models of social discipline; punitive, restorative, neglectful and permissive. On the vertical axis is control, which is defined as limit-setting and discipline, and on the horizontal axis is support, which is described as encouragement and nurture (Wachtel, 1999). The window is focused upon different responses to behaviour, as such, it clearly illustrates an affirmative understanding of restorative justice in schools. Restorative justice is portrayed as a form of discipline with a high level of control and high support. As Wachtel (1999, p.2) stated, "Employing both high control and high support, the restorative approach confronts and disapproves of wrongdoing while supporting and valuing the intrinsic worth of the wrongdoer." In line with an affirmative response, the focus is on modifying the behaviour of the wrongdoer, and the greater context in which the behaviour occurred is not considered or challenged. As Webb (2018, p.61) noted, "A restorative environment exists when one upholds high control and high support for

another. This is generally thought of in terms of the student–teacher relationship, but it can be associated with any relationships in a school."

Figure 1: Social Discipline Window (Wachtel, 1999)
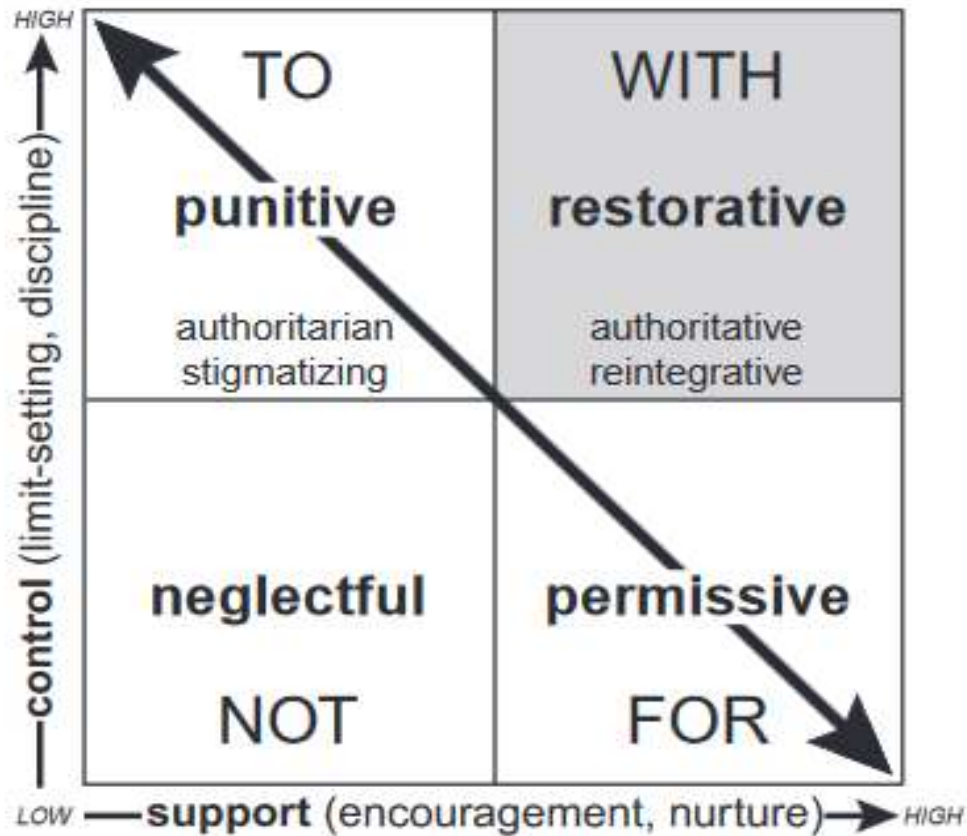
Wachtel (1999) highlighted the importance of language in the social discipline window, emphasising practices done *with* people and not *to* them. Correspondingly, restorative questions are an important component of affirmative restorative justice. Restorative questions reflect a supportive and reintegrative process, instead of a stigmatizing and authoritarian one. As I explained earlier (see section 2.2 contemporary restorative justice), restorative questions developed out of a scripted conferencing format (Hopkins, 2009; O'Connell, 1998). There are many variations on the exact nature of the questions. Hopkins (2011) detailed one example that has been influential in schools.

What happened? What are/were you thinking? What were/are you feeling? What impact has this had on you? What's been the hardest thing for you? What do you need [to do] to move forward? These questions act as a guide for restorative encounters (Shaw and Wierenga,2002). As an illustration, Kane et al. (2007), stated that when conflict occurred, staff could easily consult cards with the questions and the process was clear to follow. Equally Vaandering (2014, p.523) noted,

> Personally, I had discovered the versatility of these restorative questions for shaping thinking and dialogue in challenging situations. I used them to guide conversations between individuals or groups of people in major or minor conflicts when they confided in me. I used them to shape what I wanted to say to people face-to-face when I was personally involved in conflicts with other adults or with my students as a group.

So, restorative questions are not an everyday form of language. They are only used after conflict or wrongdoing occurs. Restorative questions act as a guide that provide a clear format or structure for a restorative encounter.

The majority of research on restorative justice in education is based upon an affirmative understanding (McCluskey, 2013) and its success is frequently related to behaviour modifications, such as reduced suspensions. As an illustration, in Ontario, where this research is situated, Nanavati et al. (2007) found that over four years with restorative justice, suspension rates dropped from 569 to 82 in a secondary school and from 200 to 30 in middle school in Peel Region. Similarly, Lewington (2016) reported reduced suspensions in the Lakehead District School Board and Zheng and De Jesus (2018) noted a reduction in re-suspensions and Toronto District School Board after implementing restorative justice.

Affirmative restorative justice has been called a new paradigm. As an illustration, Hopkins (2002, p.145; adapted from Zehr's 1995 work) contrasted "the old paradigm retributive justice" with "the new paradigm restorative justice" in schools. Similarly, Eyler (2014) suggested that restorative justice was a paradigm shift in school discipline. Among this literature, are multiple studies that suggested restorative justice is a "progressive" form of discipline. As an illustration, in an article in

the *International Journal on Progressive Education*, Ryan and Goodram (2013) highlighted the negative

impacts of exclusionary discipline and suggested that restorative justice was a recommended

"alternative discipline measure" (p.175). In another article for the *European Journal of Alternative*

Education Studies, Papakitsos and Karakiozis (2016) discussed mediation as a progressive means of

managing conflicts within the Greek educational system. In a third article, published in

ENCOUNTER: Education for Meaning and Social Justice, Gold (2011) discussed restorative circles in

response to a homophobic insult at school and suggested restorative justice was the missing tool.

These three examples all described restorative justice as a progressive approach, yet within a purely

responsive framework. Correspondingly, research has shown that restorative justice is most

frequently used in a limited manner in schools (Morrison, 2007).

3.1.2 Transformative restorative justice in schools

While the most common conception of restorative justice in schools is affirmative, there is a

growing number of proponents of transformative restorative justice. Braithwaite (2003, p.1) argued,

"Restorative justice is not simply a way of reforming the criminal justice system; it is a way of

transforming the entire legal system, our family lives, our conduct in the workplace, and our practice

of politics. Its vision is of a holistic change in the way we do justice". Proponents of transformative

restorative justice suggest that affirmative restorative justice *may* be beneficial to those involved, but

it does not guarantee restorative outcomes (Johnstone and Van Ness, 2007). Significantly, a justice

mechanism does not create social change, instead it supports the status quo (Reimer, 2015) and

practices are ultimately about promoting school engagement by diminishing unwanted behaviours

and reducing exclusions (Johnstone, 2011). In addition, McCluskey (2013) suggested that when

restorative justice is used affirmatively its effectiveness is reduced and ultimately it will be assimilated

with other approaches. There is an expanding body of research substantiating this claim.

In Chapter Two, I discussed the values of affirmative restorative justice, and I noted that Braithwaite (2002), Van Ness (2002) and Pranis (2009) all originally focused their discussion on process orientated values; those that only shape and guide the practices and their outcomes. However, a transformation conception states that restorative values need to be part of the everyday school culture. Correspondingly, research has shown that when restorative justice is used in an environment with conflicting practices and values, it is less effective and less sustainable. For example, Johnson and Johnson (2010) stated that restorative justice is less effective within a competitive context. In a competitive setting, there are different goals, individuals are focused upon their own well-being, there are feelings of distrust and hostility among individuals, the needs and interests of others are denied, the focus is on the immediate short term, interactions are oppositional, communication is poor, misperceptions are common, and there is a "destructive 'go for the win'" perspective (Ibid, p.167). Whereas in a cooperative context, there are collective goals, there is consideration for the wellbeing of the individual and the other, there is trust, the needs and interests of others are considered, the focus is on the long term, interactions are promoted, "perceptions are accurate," and there is "constructive problem solving" (Ibid, p.167). Johnson and Johnson (Ibid, p.166) suggested that the simplest way to build a cooperative school environment is to "use cooperative learning throughout the majority of the school day." This suggests that the implications for transformative restorative justice are broad and impact the entire school. While individualistic and competitive values can be rife in schools, the suggestion is a school cannot be restorative without challenging such ethea. Correspondingly, Hendry (2009) argued that before implementation schools should consider if restorative values correspond with the school values. There is also evidence that without transformative restorative justice, there are fundamental tensions between restorative and institutional values. As an illustration, Shaw and Wierenga (2002) reported on a pilot of restorative practices in twenty-three schools in the State of Victoria, Australia. They

found that when restorative justice was implemented in a limited manner, there are many tensions, including, "with traditional methods, contradictions in the management of incidents and lack of staff awareness and understanding were cited as adversely affecting the impact of the strategy" (Ibid, p.3).

Under affirmative restorative justice in schools, I discussed the social discipline window now, I will contrast that model with Vaandering's (2013), relationship window (Figure 2) as an example of transformative restorative justice.

Figure 2: Relationship Window (Vaandering, 2013, p.325).
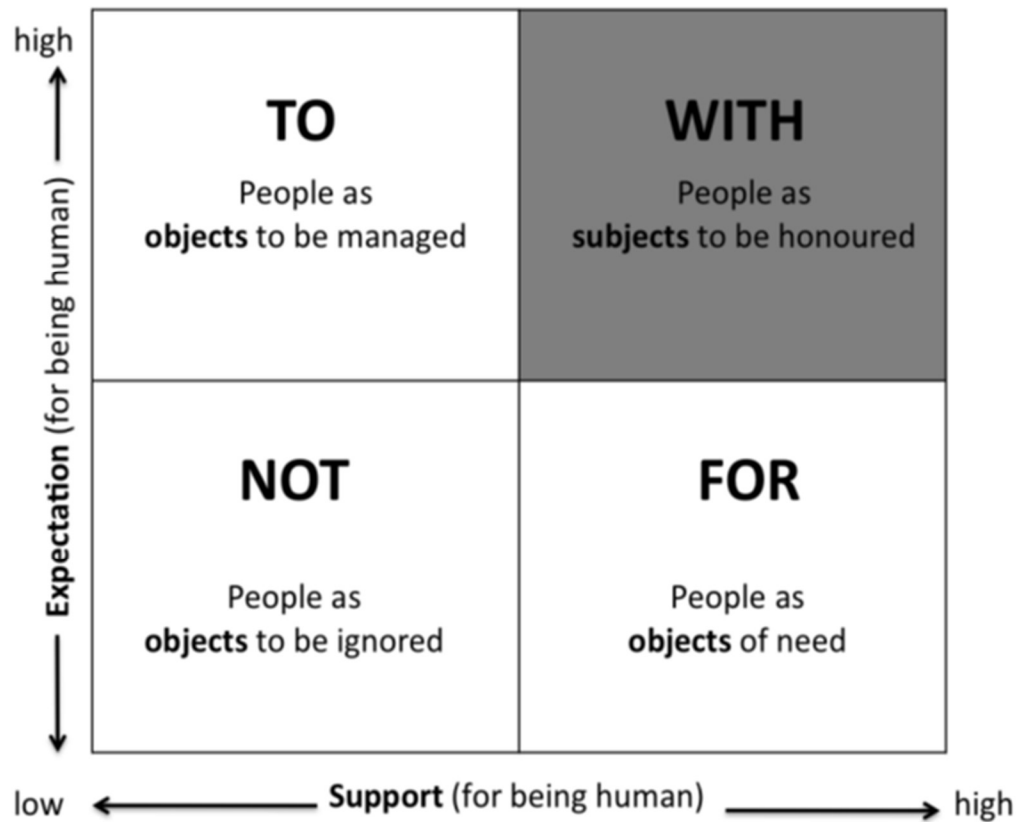
Vaandering (Ibid, p.320), noted that the social discipline window used language that focused upon behaviour and control, using terms such as "authority, regulation of behaviour, maintaining social order, enforcement of behavioural standards and social control." This language fundamentally

"defines justice as right-order" (Ibid, p.321). In contrast, Vaandering emphasised a transformative understanding that focused upon relationships. Using a similar quadrant model, she suggested that restorative justice views people as subjects to be honoured. The focus is not upon the response, but on interconnections. When these two models are compared the former illustrated social control, whereas the later illustrated social engagement. Reimer (2015) argued that those two perspectives embody affirmative and transformative understandings of restorative justice. She suggested that transformative restorative justice is founded upon social engagement and the importance of relationships, and affirmative restorative justice aims to achieve social control.

As restorative justice in education has developed, it has expanded its focus from responsive encounters to include a relational philosophy informed by restorative values. There are a growing number of models that illustrate the importance of transformative restorative justice. Van Ness (2013) suggested that all three conceptions of restorative justice (encounter, reparation and transformation) are necessary in schools. Thus, restorative justice in schools requires responsive gatherings, the goal to repair harm and a relational emphasis. Hopkins (2004) illustrated restorative justice in education as a jigsaw puzzle. Each piece represents an important component such as emotional literacy, mentoring and circles, values, policies and contextual features (Ibid). Wachtel (1999) created a continuum to demonstrate restorative justice in schools (see Figure 3). He suggested restorative justice in schools involves a continuum of informal to formal practices.

Figure 3: Restorative Practices Continuum (Wachtel, 1999, p.3).
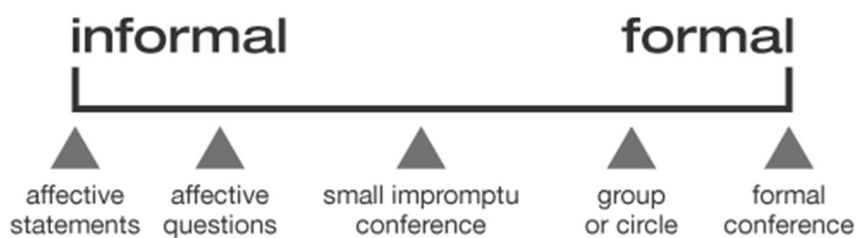
Informal practices take place daily and include community and relationship building. Whereas formal practices are associated with reparative encounters such as circles and conferences.

In addition, Morrison (2005b; 2007) discussed a public health model using a pyramid design, with practices ranging from the primary, universal level, to the secondary, targeted level and the tertiary, intensive level. The primary level is the foundation of the pyramid, involves everyone in the school and acts like an "immunization strategy" (Morrison, 2005b, p.152). Akin to the vaccination of patients to protect against future outbreaks, restorative justice builds social and emotional competencies. The secondary level is targeted and responsive. On this level restorative justice involves individuals or a small group within the school, using a circle to resolve problems and repair relationships. At the top of the pyramid is the tertiary level. Like the secondary level, it is responsive, but it is used after a serious incident. On this level, restorative justice may involve conferencing with a large group of people (such as parents, teachers and social workers). The aim is to rebuild relationships in different areas of the student's life (Ibid). Van Ness (2013), Hopkins (2004), Wachtel (1999), and Morrison (2005b) all offered very different models of restorative justice in schools. However, they share core elements including both proactive and reactive practices and restorative values and principles.

3.2 Implementing restorative justice in schools

Several studies have suggested that leaders are important in implementing restorative justice. Hopkins (2009) suggested that visionaries are necessary to spark the fire and get others on board. Crowley (2013) stated that a principal (head teacher) is key to establishing restorative justice. She suggested that the principal establishes the values of the school and can encourage staff and students to adopt a respectful and non-judgemental way of being. Equally, Thorsborne and Blood (2013, p.89) also claimed that it is important that "key people" adopt restorative justice for them to become

entrenched. Furthermore, Pavelka (2013, np) stated that, "strong leadership is required to establish, sustain, and expand restorative practices" within schools. Russell and Crocker (2016) reported on a case study on the implementation of restorative justice in an elementary school in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. The arrival of a new principal who sought to change the school climate was cited as a significant motivator. This emphasis on a top-down approach mirrors some of the literature on organisational culture change. For example, Lee (2004, p.39) claimed that change must first occur in leaders and that real change "can only be driven by passionate and persistent leadership at the top." However, this raises several questions about how such practices relate to restorative values such as inclusion and respect for individuality. Multiple studies have highlighted the challenge of adopting restorative justice (Green et al., 2013; Kane et al., 2007; McCluskey et al., 2008a; Morrison, 2007; Morrison and Vaandering, 2012; Reimer, 2015; Vaandering, 2009, Webb, 2018). For example, Green et al. (2013) found that restorative values were easier for some to adopt than others. In particular, individuals with some previous experience in a communication role were more readily accepting of restorative justice than those with no previous experience or training. Equally, Webb (2018, p.199) stated that "the introduction of restorative practices brought about noticeable tension as individuals responded in different ways to the new direction." In addition, Vaandering (2009), found that schools supported dialogue until it began to challenge institutional structures. Equally, Morrison and Vaandering (2012, p.148) argued, "while educators readily embrace the RJ premise that relationship is more important than the behavioural incident, they are reluctant to let go of the option to punish and exclude". Thus, the implementation of a restorative justice can represent a considerable challenge. If restorative justice is implemented through a top-down approach, how are alternative views and ways of being treated? How is buy-in achieved from those who are initially unfamiliar, opposed or uncomfortable? There is little empirical data on how stakeholders experience the

implementation of restorative justice, especially within this top-down manner. This study will

consider these questions and provide unique insights from stakeholders at three primary schools.

Most of the current literature states that once the idea of restorative justice has been

considered and accepted, the vision is then developed through training (Anfara et al., 2013; Hopkins,

2012; Lillard, 2017; McCluskey et al., 2008b; Reimer, 2015; Suvall, 2009; Vaandering 2009; Webb

2018). As one principal reported (Reimer, 2009, p.87) "schools interested in implementing

restorative justice [should] find 'some training or program that melds with it'". The International

Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) has been influential in providing training for schools in

Canada and around the world. However, the importance of training to implementation is contested.

Most notably, Llewellyn and Llewellyn (2015) suggested that the process of implementing

transformative approaches differ significantly from implementing affirmative restorative justice.

They claimed that transformative restorative justice cannot be implemented through standardised

training programmes.

> A restorative approach based on relational theory is grounded and contextual. The only
> standard answer one can offer from a restorative approach as to what is required in practice
> is it depends'. It depends on the relationship at stake and on the context. Thus, 'it depends'
> does not mean we cannot know that upon what it depends. Indeed, a starting point for
> implementing a restorative approach is to be attuned to the principles that from its relational
> grounding (Ibid, p.19).

Llewellyn and Llewellyn (Ibid) continued to explain that learning cannot focus upon set practices,

but need to explore how relationships can be transformed throughout the school. The implications

for this type of learning differ significantly from the standard training model. Correspondingly, there

is a growing body of literature that suggests restorative justice should be implemented within a

positive learning environment, where interconnectedness and cooperation are emphasised, and there

are high levels of support (Johnson and Johnson, 2013; Llewellyn, 2008; Wachtel, 1999). Research

has illustrated that sustaining restorative justice can be challenging or impossible within power

based, punitive relational ecologies (Elliot, 2007; Guidoni, 2003;). Furthermore, when restorative justice is implemented in schools with contrasting values, then practices are vulnerable to co-option, assimilation or misuse (McCluskey, 2013; Zehr, 2008;). However, questions remain about if and how schools determine their readiness for restorative justice.

Most of the available literature suggests that transformative restorative justice takes a somewhat adapted form of training. For example, in a study of restorative justice in two Ontario schools in different school boards, Vaandering (2009) found two different methods of implementation. In one school training was grounded in a transformative conception and comprised Indigenous teachings on community, capacity, connection, voice and sacredness (Lockhart and Zammit, 2005, p. 6). Whereas in the other school, training focused upon a model that emphasised safety and reparation. Russell and Crocker (2016) detailed how instead of set training dates, teachers were invited to "learn at their own pace" (Ibid, 209). In addition, school heads were available to cover teaching while a teacher used restorative practices to respond to an incident. Thus, breaking down power dynamics between teachers and principals, and reinforcing the collective and collaborative whole. While some teachers reported initial doubts about restorative justice, the focus upon values and principles over practices (such as the examples above) in implementation meant it "came to make sense" in the school. Teachers saw the implementation as an opportunity to learn and restorative values as congruent with teaching. Thus, Russell and Crocker (2016, p.210) found that "the change process to become empowering, develop from the ground up and generate radical change in the school." Thus, while the decision to implement restorative justice came from leaders, the way it was implemented reflected restorative values. Significantly, they concluded that the implementation of restorative justice was successful because it was not merely a policy change, but was deeply rooted in values.

Notably, Morrison (2007) and Roche (2006) suggested that restorative justice likely already exists within the schools. Morrison (2007, p.121) said, "In different ways, and to different levels and standards, restorative justice has probably always been practiced in schools." Correspondingly, Roche (2006, p.224) noted,

> The reaction of many teachers to the concept of restorative justice is that this is simply a new name for the way they have always handled problems in the classroom and schoolyard; bringing disputing parties together in an effort to make them understand the consequences of their actions, and appealing to both parties to be involved in the search for solutions.

I heard similar accounts while conducting my Master's research at a "restorative school" in England (Sullivan, 2014, unpublished). One teacher noted restorative justice had been used in the school long before it was officially implemented, however, the practices had not been identified or labelled as restorative. Correspondingly, Kane et al. (2007) found that determining how restorative justice was already being used (such as peer support) was beneficial in illustrating that it was not merely another initiative and staff already had some the necessary skills. Thus, acknowledging existing practices and philosophies can be an essential step in implementation. This appears to support, MacAllister's (2013) argument that some aspects of restorative justice are simply education. However, while restorative justice in schools is not new, or solely restorative, the commitment to these practices and philosophies and the extent they are used can differ when restorative justice is implemented.

In a study of 18 Scottish schools, Kane et al. (2007), found that restorative justice was effectively implemented in considerably different manners. In some schools, restorative practices were initially implemented to a small group or part of the school. As an illustration, in one school, restorative justice was first introduced into a behaviour support unit and then extended the outwards across the school over time. In another, students in the early stages of secondary school were first introduced to restorative justice, followed by subsequent years. Other schools already had considerable restorative practices in place, and so efforts were instead focused upon building upon

existing capacities. Some schools concentrated upon strengthening connections with outside agencies and the community. Kane et al. (Ibid) highlighted several areas in which school initiatives helped present restorative practice, such as through introducing 'playground pals' to teach students how to develop and organise playground games. Overall, they (Ibid, 55) found that the introduction of restorative justice included a "broad range of changes" and different schools emphasised different elements. There was not one model of effective implementation of restorative justice.

3.3 Embedding restorative justice in schools

As I have illustrated affirmative restorative justice is typically understood as a mechanism that can be used alongside other justice mechanisms (Amstutz and Mullet, 2005; Daly, 2016; McCluskey, 2013; Stinchcomb et al., 2006). As such, it can be utilised as and when needed. However, there is a growing body of literature which argues that affirmative restorative justice is inherently unsustainable. As an illustration, McCluskey (2013) stated that when restorative justice is utilised in a limited fashion, its effectiveness is reduced and ultimately the approach is assimilated with others in schools. In addition, Shaw and Wierenga (2002) argued that effective implementation of restorative justice requires a whole school approach. Equally, Cremin (2002, p.142) stated, "initiatives do need the support of the whole school community in order to achieve success." Unfortunately, to date, the leading promoters of an affirmative understanding of restorative justice (such as Daly, 2002, 2015; MacAllister, 2013; Marshall, 1999) have not discussed embedding or sustaining practices. Thus, the literature on embedding restorative justice in schools emphasises a transformative perspective.

Once a school has implemented restorative justice, they need to work on embedding it within the school, so that it is present across the setting and is sustainable. Thus, As Zehr (2002, p.10) suggested, "restorative justice [was] a compass, not a map." Equally, restorative justice in schools is "not a goal" but a "process" (McCluskey, 2013, p.140). Embedding restorative justice is a

dynamic process where schools are recurrently examining and evaluating their practices in relation to restorative values. Thorsborne and Blood (2013) related the task of embedding restorative justice to a journey that never ends. They suggest that as schools are traditionally hierarchical organisations and there can be a tendency to revert to inequality. Therefore, Thorsborne and Blood (Ibid) emphasised focus and repetition, or "keeping the pressure on" and "maintaining the gains" to embed a restorative justice (Ibid, p.170). From their discussion, it appears that these tasks lie with "leaders" and "key people" and involve evaluating efforts, expanding restorative practices, disseminating information, providing staff with new responsibilities and engaging outside organisations (Ibid, p.171-173). Kane et al. (2009) also endorsed the importance of school leaders. In particular, they felt the principal (head teacher) should help others in building leadership roles. Kane et al. (2009, p.247) found that the schools which were the most successful in embedding restorative justice had restorative justice "champions." This appears to mirror what Green et al. (2013) found in the workplace that contrary to a communitization of justice (Braithwaite, 1989), "professionals [are] claiming symbolic ownership" (Green et al., 2013, p.323). This also raises questions about how inclusive restorative justice is in practice, how opposing views and practices would be approached. As an illustration, the suggestion that people in positions of power (e.g. leaders) are pushing the practice forward indicates that a hierarchical structure is still in place. This highlights another apparent tension, between the perceptions of restorative values as equal and non-hierarchical and the practice.

As restorative justice is constructed through relationships, staff play an essential role. As a result, Thorsborne and Blood (2013) claim that to sustain restorative justice, new recruits must be considered carefully, as the employment of someone with a contrasting belief system could be threatening. This is a compelling argument, and it has significance for the overall conceptualisation of a restorative justice. If to embed restorative justice, a school must only accept likeminded

individuals then perhaps as Green et al. (2013) have suggested, in practice the values of respect and inclusion are not fully present. No known research that has explored this tension in restorative schools and how for example a member of staff that is committed to a more individualist approach can be reconciled with an approach that heavily focuses on the collective. Blood and Thorsborne (2013) stated that building transformative restorative justice is a lengthy process, which typically takes three to five years and can require "substantial" relational change (ibid, p.6). This relational change can be challenging because it involves a shift from a punitive to a relational ecology and requires a reverse in power dynamics (Morrison and Vaandering, 2012). Through this shift, teachers and administrators move from authoritarians to empowering students to take ownership of conflicts. In addition, Green et al., (2013) highlighted that 'buy-in' can be difficult as some individuals will be more accepting of restorative values than others. However, there is a need for more research exploring how schools address these challenges and to what extent they reflect restorative values and principles.

3.4 Summary

This chapter has explored how restorative justice is constructed, implemented and embedded in schools. I have illustrated that restorative justice can be conceptualised as affirmative practices or a transformative ethos and, significantly that the two perspectives have different goals and implications for schools. I noted that most research to date has focused upon affirmative approaches and there are gaps in the literature on transformative restorative justice in schools. In the implementation and embedment of restorative justice, there is some conflicting literature. Many studies detail a top-down approach to implementation with standardised training. However, others suggest that transformative restorative justice cannot be developed in such a manner. When considering embedding restorative justice in schools, affirmative practices have been called unsustainable whereas, building a transformative ethos is an ongoing process.

While restorative justice in education is now the fastest developing area of practice (Morrison, 2015), research has been "gradual" and "disappointingly" lacking (Reimer, 2015 p.4; Ortega et al., 2016 p.467).   Throughout this chapter, I have raised significant questions on the characterisation and operationalisation of restorative justice, such as if restorative justice is implemented through a top-down approach, how are alternative views and ways of being treated? How is buy-in achieved from those who are initially unfamiliar, opposed or uncomfortable? How do schools determine their readiness for restorative justice? How is implementation experienced by stakeholders? And how restorative justice is embedded within the school in a manner that reflects restorative values? This research seeks to answer these important questions by exploring three case studies. The following chapter, I will explore the literature in relation to the second research question on how restorative justice relates to a schools' educational mission.

Chapter Four: Restorative justice and educational mission

> At present opinion is divided about the subjects of education. All do not share the same opinion about what should be learned by the young, with a view to goodness or to the best life; nor is the opinion clear whether education should be directed mainly to the understanding, or mainly to moral character. If we look at actual practice, the result is confusing; it throws no light on the problem whether there should be training in those pursuits which are useful in life, or those which make for goodness, or those which go beyond the ordinary run (of knowledge) (Aristotle, 2009, p.299).

Philosophers have debated the meaning of education for millennia, as is evidenced by Aristotle's statement in the 4th century BC that "opinion is divided" (2009, p.299). Within the earlier discussion (see section 2.4), I noted Johnstone's (2004) idea that one way to understand the concept of restorative justice was to consider what promoters are trying to achieve. I believe the same principle can be applied to education, as understandings of the purpose(s) of education, can inform the content, nature of relationships as well as goals. Within this chapter, I will explore two examples of educational mission; social control and radical change. Then, I will explore the current literature on restorative justice in relation to those contrasting objectives.

4.1 Educational mission

I spent a considerable period of time considering different educational theories and how to frame this discussion. Initially, I explored Askew and Carnell's (1998) typology of models of education (see Figure 4). The typology has a two-way continuum with four models of education; liberatory, social justice, child centred and functionalist. Each model sits within a distinct quadrant. Functionalist and child-centred education both emphasise social regulation, yet have opposing positions on the source of knowledge. The liberatory and social justice models emphasise radical change within society, yet are also hold opposing positions on knowledge (Askew and Carnell, 1998). I planned to explore the different models in line with the research question on how restorative justice interacts with various missions.

Figure 4: Typology of educational models (Askew and Carnell, 1998, p.84).[4]

Radical Change

Liberatory
- bringing about individual change as prerequisite for change in society
- facilitating interpersonal relationships
- curriculum based on developing skills of self-reflection and analysis of experiences, particularly relating to inequality

Social justice
- encouraging responsibility for changing society
- teaching based on radical analysis of social injustice in society
- curriculum based on developing skills of critical analysis and social awareness

Client-centred
- developing individual potential
- developing commitment to social and cultural norms through shared understanding of social values
- curriculum based on perceived needs and ability level of the individual

Functionalist
- imparting objective knowledge and skills that are useful and practically applicable in society
- reinforcing social and cultural norms through training and instruction
- curriculum based on perceived needs of economy and society or on perceptions of 'worthwhile' knowledge

Social Regulation

However, it became apparent that the framework was an oversimplification and in practice, multiple

models can be utilised. In addition, the models and theories can also overlap in significant ways

further complicating the discussion. For example, Askew and Carnell (1998) connected Freire

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[4] The horizontal axis represents the location of knowledge. On the far-left side of the typology knowledge is intrinsic and as one moves over to the right knowledge becomes increasingly extrinsic. While I considered adding labels to this continuum for clarification, ultimately, I chose to respect the authors original design and leave it unaltered.

(1993, 1996) with liberatory education. However, his theory that education should work towards radical change, is also evident in social justice education. As another example, child-centred, social justice and liberatory education can all be considered alternative education (as an illustration, child-centred learning is collaborative, and students are active participants with distinct capabilities, in liberatory education students play an active role in learning, and social justice education challenges students to think and act beyond the classroom.) As I began to explore restorative justice in relation to the models, these complexities created significant challenges that impeded the discussion. However, I reference Askew and Carnell's (1998) typology of models because it was influential on my thinking. In particular, what I took from the typology was the continuum of educational purpose. At one end, education functions to support society and the status quo, and at the other to question society and produce change.

Thus, education is not neutral (Apple, 2004; Askew and Carnell, 1998; Biesta, 2009; Foucault, 1972; Freire, 1993), instead it is fundamentally purposeful, and either functions as a means of socialising students (of any age) into social norms or is about producing radical change. This divergence in purpose is well established. There are two different Latin origins of the word education; *educare*, and *educere*. Educare means to train or to mould and refers to instruction, obedience, and acquiring knowledge with an emphasis on social conformity (Craft, 1984). In contrast, educere means to lead out and has been connected with a transformative education approach (Cajete, 1994; Battiste, 2002), which is child-centred and emphasises individual creativity (Craft, 1984). This dichotomy also aligns with modern theory, such as Biesta's (2009, p.7) discussion of education as socialisation (becoming part of "social, cultural and political 'orders'") and subjectification (defined as the opposite of socialisation), Bass' (1997) discussion of education for preserving society or providing change, and Sterling's (2001) description of education to support

society (through socialisation and employment preparation) and promote change (individual freedom and social change). Equally, Freire (1993, p.34) noted,

> Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.

Education then is directly related to social order and can be utilised as a mechanism to support or alter society. Thus, there is a solid theoretical foundation for considering education in relation to social control, and radical change. In addition, this provides a clear and concise framework in which to consider my research question on how restorative justice interacts with different educational missions.

4.1.1 Social control

Education [can] help in 'breaking in' the colt to the harness (Ross, 1901, p.166).

Education is inherently connected with our perception of the ideal society, and educational activities are tailored to realise that goal (Suissa, 2010). Social control operates from the standpoint that the best vision of society is the status quo. Society is deemed functional, and so education acts as an "active force" to support society (Durkheim, 1956; Apple, 2004, p.39). As Durkheim (1956, p.123) stated, education is "above all the means by which society perpetually recreates the conditions of its very existence" (Ibid, p.123). Schools and are connected directly or indirectly to the dominant cultural hegemony and economic system (Giroux, 1981). Social control refers to the processes and mechanism utilised to shape an individual's behaviour in a socially desirable fashion. The goal of social control is conformity.

The current vision of an ideal society in Ontario has been shaped by a neoliberalism. While neoliberalism is a complex concept, Birch (2015, 571) suggested that it "can be broadly defined as the extension and installation of competitive markets into all areas of life, including the economy,

politics, and society." Based upon the belief that competitive market organisation is the most

efficient, proponents of neoliberalism argue that it "should replace all other institutions (e.g. family,

state, community, and society) as the main mechanism for creating, promoting, and maintaining

social order" (Ibid, p.572). Thus, significantly, education is organised and controlled based upon

market principles. For example, students are akin to consumers, and schools are products competing

against each other to lower costs and attract students.

I contend, for neoliberalism, the control of social agencies, such as education is essential to

ensure the dominance of a consumer-driven, capitalist society. As Giroux (2013, p.9) noted,

> Neoliberal ideology emphasizes winning at all costs, even if it means a ruthless
> competitiveness, an almost rabid individualism, and a notion of agency largely constructed
> within a market driven rationality that abstracts economics and markets from ethical
> consideration.

A standardised curriculum is utilised to ensure the status quo, knowledge is located extrinsically. All

learners have access to "worthwhile" knowledge as defined by the educational institution, workplace

or state (Askew and Carnell, 1998). Standardised curriculum dictates what is taught and ensures

students have access to content that will both support and reinforce society. As Walthouse (2014)

noted standardised curriculum provides structure, consistency across districts, guidelines for

teachers, and definitive expectations for students. The prescribed knowledge and skills are directly

related to the needs of corporations to increase profits and not create engaged or critical citizens

(Giroux, 2013). In Ontario, a standardised curriculum prescribes what is taught, and provincial

testing such as the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) is used to judge student's

retention and comprehension across the province. Adults are unquestionably in charge, and the

teacher is considered the expert who passes knowledge onto students. This interaction reinforces a

power base and hierarchy, that is essential to social order (Bourdieu and Passerson, 1990). Thus,

respect for hierarchy is normalised. In addition, referent power can be seen in students respect for

authority figures and in turn behaving pleasingly. As social control theory states, students with strong connections will engage in behaviour that will produce the other's approval (Hirschi, 1969). As Fisher et al. (2018) noted, "Given that teachers and other adults are integral parts of maintaining the social order, when students form relational bonds to adults in the school, students are less likely to engage in the behaviours adults may deem problematic that will threaten those relational bonds." Thus, students obtain knowledge, achieve a standard of behaviour, mindset and way of working and ultimately prepare to fulfil their role in society (Askew and Carnell, 1998; Parsons, 1959; Durkheim, 1956).

A central feature of neoliberalism is the implementation of punitive responses to undesired behaviours. Social control is regularly discussed in reference to deviant behaviour or wrongdoing. For example, Cohen's (1985, p.3) frequently cited definition described social control as, "organized responses to crime, delinquency, and allied forms of deviant and/or socially problematic behaviour". Rule (1973, p. 19) provided a similar description by focusing on, "all those mechanisms which discourage or forestall disobedience". Reinforcing ideas of right and wrong, there are rules of behaviour. Conflict and wrongdoing are understood as disruptive, detrimental and dangerous. Behaviours that challenge or impede the status quo are viewed as a threat and are penalised. As an example, in Ontario, the OSSA (2000) introduced mandatory suspensions and expulsions for wrongdoing. Conversely, behaviours that are deemed desirable and supportive can be rewarded. As an illustration, while learners with poor attendance may be punished through exclusions or fines, regular attendance might be rewarded with a certificate or prize. Thus, attendance is encouraged, and the potential influence of schooling is increased (as greater exposure equals greater potential opportunity for students to receive accepted knowledge) (see Skinner, 1976). The end result is compliant, disempowered, unquestioning students who learn to follow rules and ultimately fulfil their societal roles.

There are two central arguments against education for social control. The first suggests that social control has been ineffective. For example, while social control in education aims to produce moral order, it has been unsuccessful in creating safety and security in schools, or society. Conversely, zero tolerance practices and elevated exclusion rates have created more conflict and ultimately increased suspensions (Skiba et al., 2008). In the United States, this failure became known as the 'school to prison pipeline,' as educational exclusions have led to an increased likelihood of incarceration. Similar patterns have been found in Ontario, as students who are excluded are less likely to complete high school, and in turn those without a high school education are more likely to be incarcerated[5] (Rankin and Contenta, 2009). Thus, rather than supporting society and the status quo, such mechanisms of social control have increased undesirable behaviour.

The second argument is critical of society and the order that social control aims to support. By encouraging conformity and supporting the status quo, education normalises and maintains inequalities. The central radical critique states that education supports the dominant social, political and economic conditions. In Canada this society is individualistic, materialistic, capitalist, and patriarchal (Ward, 2004). Students are taught that inequalities, such as those of race, class and gender are inevitable (Hicks, 2004). Furthermore, these inequalities are viewed as necessary for society to function, as without inequality, the status quo would be challenged, and the whole nature of society would be jeopardised. Thus, students come to see inequality and hierarchy as natural. The emphasis on zero tolerance pushes students to follow the rules and conform, and in doing so, threaten their democratic potential, because students are not provided with the necessary skills to question and challenge within a democratic context (Giroux, 2006). As Giroux (Ibid, p.184) stated, "Zero tolerance policies not only turn schools into an adjunct of the criminal justice system; they

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[5] Over seventy per cent of Canadian inmates have not finished high school (Rankin and Contenta, 2009).

further rationalize misplaced legislative priorities. And that has profound social costs." In light of these problems, critics concerned with decreasing oppression and increasing social justice have argued that education should promote radical change (see for example: Apple, 2004; Freire, 1993, 2000; hooks, 1994; Giroux, 1981, 2007; Kincheloe, 2008; O'Sullivan, 1999).

4.1.2 Radical change

I began the previous section on social change by noting that education is inherently connected with our perception of the ideal society (Suissa, 2010). While social control is concerned with perpetuating society, the opposite end of the spectrum is concerned with promoting radical change. Radical change is brought about through challenging the status quo. It stands in opposition to the current society. Radical change holds a critical perspective that focuses on challenging social norms and conformity and hopes to create something better (Ward, 2014). As Llewellyn and Llewellyn (2015, p.14) noted, "education helps students construct counter-hegemonic identities for themselves and then act as public citizens against individual and collective oppression."

It is possible that at an extreme, radical change may involve completely moving away from social institutions such as schools. Some proponents of radical change do not believe it is possible within mainstream schooling. For example, Ivan Illich (1971) argued that schools are fundamentally institutions of social control. He did not believe that radical change could occur within schools, and so he sought to "deschool" education. Equally, Rousseau (1979) spoke of his concern about the corrupting nature of schools, which taught children to obey and conform to limitations, and discussed homeschooling as an alternative. These perspectives are noteworthy, and they exemplify the range of radical views. However, there is a large body of literature that considers radical change within schooling.

When considering how education can challenge and change the social order, there are two primary (overlapping) foci, the individual and society. The Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1993, 1996) is among the most well-known advocates of individual change. I will begin with a brief background history, as I feel it illustrates the nature of the radical change he sought. Freire worked with illiterate peasants in the North East of Brazil from the late 1940s until the 1960s. Because of colonisation and slavery, three quarters of the local population were illiterate and the average life expectancy was 30 years old (Diaz, 2019; Ward, 2004). Freire worked with students who were from enslaved families, and he saw that abolishing slavery did not bring them freedom. Instead, the social control was so powerful that they internalised this oppression and subjugation (Diaz, 2019).

In response, to his experiences Freire (1993, 1996) viewed education as a political practice that gives students the knowledge and skills to develop "conscientization" or the critical consciousness necessary to transform the world. Education was a practice of hope.

> Without a minimum of hope, we cannot so much as start the struggle. But without the struggle, hope as an ontological need, dissipates, loses its bearings, and turns into hopelessness. And hopelessness can become tragic despair. Hence the need for a kind of education in hope. Hope, as it happens, is so important for our existence, individual and social… (Freire, 1996, p.2)

Students are viewed as social actors who are altered through learning, and so by focusing upon the individual, more significant change is achieved. Freire (1993) saw learning as preparation for an independent and free life. He (Ibid, p.34) claimed that education can function as "the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world." Freire argued against social control in education. He (Ibid) called the expert knowledge found under social control, the banking system of education because knowledge is located externally and is deposited into students making them more passive. This as a process of dehumanisation, which places learners and teachers as opposites (expert and ignorant, powerful and weak), and reflects oppression within society. In contrast, Freire (Ibid)

advocated for dialogical, problem-posing education that emphasises equality and produces

liberation. He (Ibid, p.53) noted, "The *raison d'être* of libertarian education…lies in its drive towards

reconciliation." This begins by reconciling the tensions between teachers and students, so they

occupy both roles. Students are both learners and teachers, and vice versa. Freire (1993,1996)

stressed the inherent goodness of the child and her/his own capacity to develop learning. As

students are not passive learners, they can develop a collaborative and critical dialogue with teachers.

In line with and the need to resist conformity, education is a political practice that gives students the

knowledge and skills to develop "conscientization" or the critical consciousness necessary to

transform the world (Ibid).

hooks (1991, 1994) built on Freire's (1993, 1996) work and added an important feminist

perspective. She (1991, p.1) noted that when she came to liberatory theory,

> I was hurting-the pain within me was so intense that I could not go on living. I came to
> theory desperate, wanting to comprehend-to grasp what was happening around and within
> me. Most importantly, I wanted to make the hurt go away. I saw in theory then a location for
> healing noted that schooling can be a place of oppression or a practice of freedom.

Like Freire (1996), hooks (1991) saw hope in education. Hope to challenge the status quo and the

inequalities that society normalises. She also highlighted the importance of reconciling student-

teacher relationships. However, she added important insights into how education can "transgress"

racial, sexual, gendered and class confines. For hooks (1991, 1994) radical change requires a

commitment to ongoing questioning and change. As an illustration, self-reflection can be a powerful

mechanism for both teachers and students to consider power and dominance within their own

position, learning and society broadly and ultimately challenge them.

While Freire (1993, 1996) and hooks (1994) focused upon individual change, other

proponents of radical change in education have focused upon social change. This perspective

suggests that for radical change to be realised students actively participate in society.   As Hackman

(2005, p.106) argued,

> Educators need to distrust the notion that silence is patriotic and teach students that their rights as citizens in this society carry responsibilities of participation, voice, and protest so that this can actually become a society of, by, and for all of its citizens. Students need to learn that social action is fundamental to the everyday workings of their lives.

Thus, teaching includes critical analysis as well as direct action. For example, Alinsky's (1971)

discussed radical change through protests. This connects with developing democratic potential, as

students develop the skills to participate, question and challenge within a democratic context

(Giroux, 2006). Citing Barber (1992), Braithwaite (1999, np) argued,

> Democracy is something that must be taught. We are not born democratic. We are born demanding and inconsiderate, disgruntled whiners, rather than born listeners. We must learn to listen, to be free and caring, through deliberation that sculpts responsible citizenship from common clay.

From an anarchist perspective, a better society must be created (Suissa, 2010). Schools can be part of

this process by being a place where students can experiment with transforming relationships and

create ideas of a new order.

I have illustrated how radical change perspectives can focus upon individual change and

greater social change. However, I think they are best considered together.

> Both traditions are concerned with wholeness and holistic thinking, but neither, arguably, is complete without the other. There cannot be wholeness in individuals independently of strenuous attempts to heal rifts and contradictions in wider society and in the education system. Conversely, political struggle to create wholeness in society - that is, equality and justice in dealings and relationships between social classes, between countries, between ethnic groups, between women and men – is doomed to no more than partial success and hollow victories, at best, if it is not accompanied by, and if it does not in its turn strengthen and sustain, the search for wholeness and integration in individuals (Richardson, 1990, 7).

As Richardson (Ibid) argued, focusing upon the individual or society alone is not sufficient to

produce radical change. Instead, change should focus upon both the personal and the political.

Radical change is built upon the idea that society is fundamentally flawed and education should work towards transformation. Both of these ideas have been the subject of some criticism. For example, Yagelski (2006, p.542) argued educational institutions are not fundamentally flawed.

> Most teachers I have worked with do not readily embrace the notion that the education system they are part of - and to which they have committed themselves in good faith - is inherently flawed in the ways Freire describes or that it works against the goal of helping students becoming 'fully human' in Freire's sense of the term.

It follows that if education is not fundamentally flawed, radical change is not necessary. A second site of criticism is the call for transformation. Many proponents of social control also note the necessity for change, however, they claim it does not have to be radical. As an illustration, Durkheim (1956) stated that educational reform was essential to respond to the changing needs of society and thus conformity. In this sense, change need not be radical, it can be reformatory and still supporting the status quo.

4.2 Restorative justice and educational mission

I have illustrated that education is not neutral (Apple, 2004; Askew and Carnell, 1998; Biesta, 2009; Foucault, 1972; Freire, 1993; Ward, 2014), instead it functions to promote or challenge society. A central question of this research is how does restorative justice interact with the school's educational mission? Thus, I will now consider the literature on how restorative justice interacts with the missions of social control and radical change.

4.2.1 Restorative justice and social control

> Sometimes, in our zest for change, we become a mere reflection of what we resist. We change the coverings but not the underlying logic. … Sometimes we also see this where restorative justice initiatives are institutionalized as mechanisms of crime control. We use an "alternative" process, but we use it within the imagination and framework of the existing culture. Because of the way we use the alternative, it is not a genuine alternative at all. It does not challenge the basic logic, and thus actually entrenches the status quo (Sawatsky, 2007, p.10).

As I illustrated in Chapter Two, the modern restorative movement was born out of the failures of the existing state-controlled system and advocated for a communitization of justice (Braithwaite, 1989). In the criminal justice system, it developed as an alternative response to crime, and in schools, it has been called a radical alternative, and a paradigm shift (Eyler, 2014; Morrison and Vaandering 2012; Vaandering, 2010; Zehr, 2013). Zero tolerance practices were described as stealing conflicts from those directly involved (see Christie, 1977) while instituting a standardised response. In comparison, restorative justice was described as an interactive, reparative practice where stakeholders own their conflicts (Morrison, 2011). As such, restorative justice was conceptualised as a radical change. However, there is some evidence that restorative justice can fulfil the mission of social control.

The current discussion on restorative justice and social control, mainly centres around the idea that practices can be utilised as mechanisms of control or "object of politics" (Woolford, 2009, p19). As Vaandering (2014, p.65) noted, "Findings reveal how RJ, situated in the discourse of behaviour and classroom management, inadvertently reinforces an agenda of compliance and control rather than its intended purpose of building relational, interconnected and interdependent school cultures." Equally, Reimer (2015, p.309) found "that a school that embraces RJ does not necessarily become an institution of social engagement; schools can continue to operate as agencies of social control while embracing RJ. In fact, RJ can become a tool of social control." She directly connected affirmative restorative justice with social control, suggesting that affirmative restorative justice emphasises "compliance, rules, behaviour and punishment, and a focus on the individual" (Ibid, p.24). Equally, Woolford (2009) stated students are taught peaceful acts of conflict resolution, which would ultimately make them more passive individuals. In addition, by resolving the issue and repairing the relationships, the students could get on with the business of learning. This understanding of restorative justice "fits comfortably within schools" as it does not require a radical

culture change (Reimer, 2015, p.32). As McCluskey et al. (2008b) noted, "by focusing on the individual pathology of a wrongdoer and without questioning how a person comes to be identified as 'having wronged' or 'being wronged', restorative justice cannot fully respond to essential questions of power, class and gender" (p. 206). In addition, as Johnstone (2011) noted there are significant similarities between punishment and restorative justice, including both can purposefully induce pain. Affirmative restorative justice perhaps it is best considered along a continuum, as "alternative punishments, not alternatives to punishment" (Daly, 2000, p.8). Thus, restorative justice is not *radically* different from other responses (as suggested by Hopkins, 2002; Wachtel, 1999; Zehr, 2005).

Restorative justice can help achieve control by improving outcomes, encouraging compliance, conformity, attendance and control. Correspondingly, schools have reported significant improvements after introducing restorative justice, including reduced exclusions, better attendance, improved communication, repaired relationships, a calmer environment and improved climate (Brown, 2018; Cameron and Thorsborne, 1999; Thorsborne and Blood, 2013; Karp and Breslin, 2001; McCluskey et al., 2011). Restorative justice could be appealing as an affirmative mechanism of social regulation. According to Woolford (2009, p.86), students who are taught "non-combative and peaceable" conflict resolution will ultimately become individuals who would favour discussion over acts of rebellion. This would clearly support the status quo and dominant capitalist system. However, there is a dearth of literature in this area (McCluskey et al, 2008).

The majority of the literature has connected affirmative understandings of restorative with social control. However, Vaandering (2009) noted that the aims of restorative justice can "easily… be misconstrued, co-opted and used to control others through the practices embedded in institutional structures." In this light, interactions that aim to transform relationships, empower

students and build community such as class circles can be misconstrued as a form of social control. Rather than being radical, they "may be no less repressive than traditional forms of pedagogy" (Gore, 2002, p.2). Equally, Reimer (2015) found that as restorative justice helped develop relationships, students ultimately became more compliant. This reflects social control theory which states that students with strong connections, seek to engage in behaviour that will produce the other's approval (Hirschi, 1969). Thus, by building relationships, restorative justice indirectly functions to support compliant, desirable behaviour reflective of social control. In addition, during my Master's research (Sullivan, 2014), I noted that a restorative school as able to gather a great deal of information on students, under the guise of restorative justice (such as through morning and afternoon circles). These practices operated under transformative intentions, however, viewed in a different light they represent powerful hidden surveillance. In such cases, "restorative practice might just still be about compliance, another surveillance technique to add to the Foucaultian panopticon" (McCluskey et al., 2008, p.415). Thus, significantly, there is some evidence that transformative restorative justice can also be used as a mechanism of social control. However, there is very little empirical research in this area. For example, it is not known how stakeholders' experiences and understandings of restorative justice and social control in schools. This research seeks to address these gaps in our knowledge

4.2.2 Restorative justice and radical change

The current discussion on restorative justice and radical change largely centres around the transformative understandings. Restorative justice can be used as a "political project" or a social movement to produce social change (Woolford, 2009, p.19). Modern restorative justice developed in response to the ineffective, individualistic responses found in the culture of punishment (see Chapter 2). As such, restorative justice is a critical perspective that can be used to support radical change by challenging oppression, inequality and injustice (Llewellyn and Llewellyn, 2015). It is a

collaborative and dialogic approach that contrasts with the individualism driven by neoliberalism. Notably, Morrison (2011) contrasted zero tolerance policies as components of social control with restorative justice as a form of social engagement. Equally, Evans and Vaandering (2016, p.13) noted restorative justice challenges traditional social control that seeks to "manage, control, shape, or mould students, as if they were inanimate objects," instead it "nurtures, feeds, guides and supports". Transformative restorative justice has implications beyond responding to behaviour, it impacts the whole school (Amstutz, 2005; Hopkins, 2004; Karp and Breslin, 2001; Llewellyn and Llewellyn, 2015; Llewellyn 2015; Thorsborne and Blood, 2013). Reimer (2015, p.32) argued, transformative restorative justice challenges oppression while emphasising "relationships, mutuality, a broad focus beyond harm, and attention to power relations". The transformation conception of restorative justice as described by Van Ness (2013, p.33) "a perspective that changes how we view ourselves, others around us and the structures that influence and constrain us," aligns with Freire's (1993) hooks (1994) theories that individual change is a necessary condition for social change. Correspondingly, Vaandering (2014, p.77) connected restorative justice with Freire (1993, p.70), and "a commitment to humanization…dialogue and 'action-reflection…to transform the world'" (Freire, 1993, p.70). As such, restorative justice challenges the injustice and inequalities on market-driven capitalism, producing engaged students who are more likely to be active and democratic citizens. However, there are very few empirical studies that have explored transformative restorative justice in schools.

Much of the literature on restorative justice and radical change focuses upon a transformative conception, and as I previously noted affirmative understandings are commonly aligned with social control. However, affirmative understandings are participatory, democratic, dialogic and relational encounters, in that light, they also reflect radical change. Through restorative encounters, stakeholders take ownership of their conflicts and the process which puts individuals

and not the state as central. Cremin and Bevington (2017) highlighted how traditional school responses can focus upon the wrongdoer as bad and thus punish him/her. In contrast, restorative justice explores the needs of all those affected. It shifts from the neoliberal the focus on the individual to the interconnection of relationships and community. Dialogue is also inclusive and is based upon equal relationships, rather than power and authority. Individuals are understood as people to be valued and not objects of control (Crowley, 2013). Reflective of Freire (1993) and hooks (1994) practices are non-hierarchical, collaborative and relational.

4.3 Summary

Education is a social institution that can be considered in relation to two opposing functions; to support or challenge society. By considering restorative justice and educational theories on control and change, I was able to explore how restorative justice is being used to support contrasting interests and ideals. I noted that affirmative restorative justice can be utilised as mechanisms of control. Practices can be used to decrease wrongdoing and increase compliance without challenging existing structures. In contrast, transformative restorative justice is a critical perspective that can be used to challenge oppression, inequality and injustice. However, I noted complexities within these interactions, as transformative relationships can be co-opted to for control, and affirmative practices can promote individual empowerment and change. Significantly, the different conceptualisations of restorative justice have different implications for the school. However, I noted the dearth of empirical research in this area (McCluskey et al., 2008). To date, only a few studies have explored the politics of restorative justice in education (for example, McCluskey et al., 2008a; Reimer, 2015; Vaandering, 2009, Woolford, 2009). By exploring how restorative justice interacts with the schools' mission, this paper adds to the understanding of restorative justice, social control and radical change. In the following chapter, I will detail the research methodology.

Chapter Five: Methodology

Restorative justice is increasingly being implemented in schools around the world. However, there is not a comprehensive definition, and restorative justice can be constructed as a behaviour management mechanism or as a relational philosophy. Consequently, these different understandings and practices can be used to fulfil different educational missions. While there is a growing body of literature on restorative justice, there are considerable gaps in our knowledge of how restorative justice is constructed in the everyday operation of schools. My original contribution to knowledge is to address these gaps in the literature and advance the understanding of the role of restorative justice in education. My argument is, that as restorative justice moves forward, we need to be clear what "it" is, how the concept is understood, and in what ways it is operationalised in schools. In order to achieve this objective, I sought to answer the primary research question: How is restorative justice constructed, and embedded within primary schools? And the sub-question: How does restorative justice interact with the school's educational mission?

This research aims to explore the construction and embedment of restorative justice in schools and how that interacts with the educational mission. As such, I utilised a qualitative research approach. There are numerous differing descriptions of qualitative research. Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p.3) offered a practical general definition that has guided this research.

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world.

Thus, qualitative research is an interactive and interpretive method that provides insight into the area of study. A quantitative approach would have been feasible and could also have produced noteworthy results. However, a qualitative approach, is the most suitable approach for this type of

exploratory study, as by being situated within schools committed to restorative justice elucidated their subjective realities. Qualitative research also offers a connection with the contexts and people which is congruent with restorative justice principles. Specifically, within the collaborative qualitative approach that I have selected, research is done *with* schools and their stakeholders rather than *on* them. Within the previous literature review chapters, I illustrated how values are fundamental to restorative justice. While there are multiple descriptions of restorative values, there is some consensus on key elements such as the emphasis on communication, respect and collaboration. These features are mirrored within a collaborative qualitative approach. A central tenet of qualitative research is that reality is constructed through social interaction (Merriam, 2009). I will discuss constructionism in more detail under the heading theoretical paradigm. However, the central characteristic is that there are multiple ways of constructing reality. Like restorative justice, qualitative research recognises different understandings and experiences. Both acknowledge, respect and explore these differences, and emphasise the importance of discussion and communication. Individual stories are essential to comprehending experiences. This research acknowledged subjective realities and gave a voice to participants, rather than asserting "expert" views. Thus, in process, both restorative justice and qualitative research emphasise interaction and inclusion. In summary, qualitative research is the most suitable approach for this study as it is an interactive, exploratory method that can elucidate subjective realities while connecting with the context and people. Qualitative research also mirrors restorative values adding an additional level of investigation and synchronicity.

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) discussed five distinct phases within the qualitative research process; the researcher as a multicultural subject, theoretical paradigms, research strategies, methods of collection and analysis, and interpretation and evaluation. These five phases provide a practical

framework with which to discuss the different features of my methodology. Thus, this chapter

follows these five phases and then finishes with a discussion of research ethics.

5.1 The researcher as a multicultural subject

> Every researcher speaks from within a distinct interpretive community, which configures, in its special way, the multicultural, gendered components of the research act (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p.11).

> Humility…requires a deep awareness of how our biographies shape our knowledge and biases. Our gender, culture ethnicity and personal and collective histories all profoundly shape how we know and what we know, and in ways that are often difficult to bring to consciousness. Humility calls us, then, to a deep appreciation for and openness to others' realities (Zehr and Toews, 2004, p. 407).

> I begin with the researcher as a multicultural subject, rather than the selected research

strategy or methods because my biography has impacted every phase of the research process. Each

researcher brings a biography of knowledge and experiences of gender, class, race and culture that all

influence the research approach (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p.11). As reality is subjective, neutrality

within qualitative research is not possible. Virginia Olesen (1994, p.165) suggested rather than

abating the importance of one's positionality, researchers should use this as a "Resource to guide

data gathering or creating and for understanding her own interpretations and behaviour in the

research". Thus, subjectivity can be utilised to bring valuable insights into the research findings.

Through the process of reflexivity, I critically examined my role as a researcher (Lincoln and Guba,

2000) and highlighted my personal values and reflections for the reader (Maxwell, 2005).

Throughout the research process, from negotiating access to data analysis, I maintained a reflexivity

journal. These thoughts are included within the individual case studies and the discussion chapter.

This practice of being open about my subjective reality is also consistent with the values and

principles of restorative justice that emphasise communication, honesty and humility.

My biography is complex. In multiple ways, I come from a position of privilege. I am a

Canadian born, middle-class, 'white,' settler, Christian, female from a private-school background

(comparable to an independent school in England). I have attended several highly regarded universities, am a PhD student, and a mother. These features intrinsically influence how I see and understand the world. In addition, they can influence how others see and respond to me. Both are significant for this study. Conversely, there is a great deal of who I am, that is less visible. I was born to a loving, teenage girl who sacrificed a great deal to give me life. At birth, I was given into the custody of a social welfare institution and then adopted. My early years were happy and carefree until my mom was diagnosed with terminal cancer. At which point my childhood and adolescent years were shaped by the disease and the associated hospital visits, diverse treatments, joyful periods of remission and then relapses, until her death when I was 17. At this trying age, I left my family and our affluent home in Toronto and moved "up north" onto a farm. I was informally adopted by a rural family who brought stability, love and laughter to my life. I mention these key life moments, to illustrate that my subjective view is multidimensional. Throughout my life, I have resided in a diverse range of cultural, economic and social environments around the world, which have challenged and strongly differed from my perspective.

My biography with restorative justice began nearly twenty years ago. I was first introduced to restorative justice in 2000 while working at Corrymeela, a peace and reconciliation centre in Northern Ireland. After graduating from high school, I was filled with indecision about my future. Uncertain of who I was and what I wanted to do with my life, I submitted various job applications; police officer, flight attendant, and international volunteer. I was committed to accepting the first offer. Thus, I became a Long-Term Volunteer at Corrymeela. The days were long and rewarding, facilitating groups from around the world, living and working in the community. One afternoon, I joined a group excursion to the Shankill Alternatives in Belfast. Then, the community organisation was using restorative justice with wrongdoers and paramilitaries, and arranging alternative measures to traditional punishments. At that time, I had not heard of justice apart from retribution and

stigmatisation. In line with what the Shankill Alternatives were doing at the time, I initially viewed restorative justice as an affirmative approach or a justice mechanism. The idea that justice could be healing had a profound impact upon me and led me to pursue multiple degrees including this PhD. Over the last twenty years, I have continuously maintained a commitment to restorative justice. However, my understanding of the concept has developed and altered.

During an MA in Restorative Justice at the University of Hull, I was introduced to Johnstone and Van Ness's (2007) discussion of the meaning of restorative justice. They (Ibid) differentiated between the core concept, and different conceptions (see the meaning of restorative justice in section 2.4 for further explanation). My current position on restorative justice is strongly influenced by this distinction. I believe there are core conceptual features that most people would accept. Restorative justice is appraisive, open and multi-dimensional. However, under the overall concept there are different conceptions; which reflect the emphasis that is placed upon different restorative elements such as an encounter, goal or ethos (Ibid). These distinctions are significant, as the manner in which restorative justice is understood can determine the lens used, the foci and what may be overlooked. As an illustration, if like Daly (2016) or Marshall (1999), I conceptualised restorative justice as a process or a mechanism, this study would have focused solely upon specific responsive encounters (such as conferences, circles or mediation). However, through this PhD and the previous MA, my own emphasis moved to restorative justice as a way of living and relating to one another. Because my own understandings of restorative justice have changed over time, I wanted to be inclusive, and I was open to all three conceptions. I wanted to know what changes were associated with restorative justice by searching for responses practices (who was using them, when, why, where and with whom), the underlying purposes (reparation, deterrent, punishment or something else), the use of language and types of interaction. This broad focus was not always easy or comfortable. Throughout the data collection, I thought it was much easier to understand and identify the concrete

encounters, than the more abstract transformative conceptions. As a result, I often spoke with an individual or group after observations, asking their thoughts on what had occurred, why and if it represented a change. My passion for restorative justice determined my desire to undertake this PhD, the selected subject matter, and principles have guided the research process. I tried to conduct every area of this research with thought to the principles that underpin restorative justice. As such, I respected and valued the diversity of conceptions on restorative justice and in pursuing this research my aim was not evaluative, explanatory or descriptive, instead it is exploratory.

While in Northern Ireland, I was proud to hear that some restorative approaches "originated" in Southern Ontario (Elmira), not far from where I grew up. I did not then recognise the Indigenous origins of restorative justice. It was only as I began to study justice at university that I increasingly became aware of the real origins of restorative justice. As a Canadian, living in ongoing colonisation, this acknowledgement became central to the concept. I then began to explore my own history and how my Celtic ancestors used restorative justice before the colonisation of Ireland. I began to see how Indigenous practices and philosophies were being colonised globally. I remember first reading Daly (2002) and feeling anger that Indigenous practices and philosophies were being appropriated while denying the relationship. Through the case studies I was given the opportunity to hear from Indigenous people about the hurt and anger of having Indigeneity of restorative justice denied and on the importance of that acknowledgement. I see the indigeneity of restorative justice as integral to the concept. However, this study has further developed my understanding. I began to see how some understandings of restorative justice (as a tool of behaviour management) are far removed and contrary to the Indigenous origins. Ultimately, this study gave me a deeper appreciation for the complexity of this issue. My history shapes who I am, how I understand restorative justice, how I approach this project and to some extent how others see me. Rather than

minimising my own experiences and positionality, I acknowledge them so that it may be included as a resource for this research.

5.2 Theoretical Paradigm: Constructionism

Akin to a blueprint that guides home construction, a theoretical paradigm directs a study's structure and vision (Grant and Osanloo, 2014). It lays the philosophical foundation within which the study is situated. Consistent with other researchers (such as Hopkins 2006; Reimer, 2015; Sawatsky 2002; Webb, 2018), I believe constructionism is well suited for restorative research. There are a multitude of differing descriptions of constructionism (see for example: Bryman, 2012; Becker, 1982; Crotty, 1998; Lincoln and Guba, 1985, 1990; Shadish, 1995). My understanding is based upon the idea that the human world is distinct from the physical, natural world and thus requires a different research approach (Guba and Lincoln, 1990). Constructionism (also called constructivism) states that meaning is produced through social interaction. As Bryman (2012, p. 34) noted, "the social world and its categories are not external to us, but are built up and constituted in and through interaction". Using a constructionist perspective in this research did not mean that I alone constructed reality. Rather, it meant that I explored the different conceptualisations of restorative justice through observations, interviews and documentary information. It meant that I did not seek one ideal or right version of restorative justice. I viewed restorative justice as something that was built and not found (see Rorty in Ramberg, 2009). Restorative justice does not exist in a real tangible manner like a rock or a tree, but is made through behaviours, actions and beliefs that are assigned to it. This means in this research, I accepted that there are multiple ways of constructing reality and sought to capture the different perspectives. This corresponds well with a restorative approach. Within the literature review, I illustrated that restorative justice itself is an essentially contested concept, that is internally complex, appraisive, and developing unpredictably. As such, it is conceptualised in different manners. As there is not one absolute understanding, understanding can only be developed

from experiencing the context that is being studied (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). This also mirrors restorative justice which values a diversity of understandings. As an illustration, the core of restorative practices is concerned with exploring and communicating unique perspectives, such as through circles, conferences or mediation.

5.3 Research Strategy

The chosen research strategy was a case study, a "comprehensive research strategy" that "allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events" (Yin, 2003, p.2 and 14). This approach corresponded well with my research questions, settings and overall objectives. A case study strategy is an ideal approach for exploratory questions, such as the 'how' questions considered in this research, and for investigating "contemporary phenomenon within some real life context" such as my investigation of restorative justice in schools (Yin, 2003, p.1). Various other strategies could have been utilised to produce information on the subject matter. Surveys for example, could have provided data about restorative justice in schools. However, they would not provide the detailed picture I am seeking to develop. In contrast, ethnography's long-term approach could have provided detail, yet was unfeasible in this study, as it would require a substantial time commitment, considerable financial assistance, long-term accommodation and childcare. Thus, a case study was an ideal strategy to develop a 'thick' description of one or more cases in their everyday environments. Geertz (1973) used the term "thick description" to describe a method of immersion that enables the researcher to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the cultural context. Geertz (Ibid) borrowed the term from Ryle (1949), who suggested that the contraction of an eyelid could mean a twitch in one context, a wink in another or a mocking gesture in another still. The difference between a thin and thick description lies in depth of understanding of what is occurring (twitching, winking, versus for example a fake-winking as part of a rouse to fool another). Another benefit of case study research is the use of data triangulation. Data triangulation

involves gathering data from multiple sources which is a significant strength because in comparing results from different sources, the findings can be corroborated (Yin, 2003). Data triangulation can also address the problem of construct validity as multiple sources explore the same phenomena in different manners providing a "chain of evidence" (Ibid, p.36). While a case study is not purely a qualitative strategy (Ibid), I will focus upon qualitative methods to engage with the schools and build a comprehensive exploration of restorative justice. This study includes a combination of participant observation, interviews and documentary information.

While this study included exploratory research that explored the phenomenon (restorative justice) within a real context (schools), it did not use a traditional case study approach. Case study research traditionally involves the intensive study of one case (Bryman, 2012). In contrast, this study used a multi-site design, as research using two or more cases is frequently perceived as "more compelling" and thus "more robust" than a single case study (Lee, 2004, p.5).[6] Furthermore, in a traditional case study, data are typically presented in a systematic manner. I have detailed my methods of data collection and analysis to enable the reader to determine their merits. However, my major focus was upon the rich descriptions of the cases, akin to a pseudo-ethnographic approach. My motivation for this alternative approach was to "take the reader into the case situation and experience- a person's life, a group's life, or a program's life" (Patton, 2002, p.450). While storytelling is a central feature of case study reporting, traditionally it is matched with rigorous detailing of the research (Stake, 1995), a feature that can detract from the readers transportation to the setting.

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[6] I chose three case study schools to be small enough to allow for in-depth exploration, yet also enable some divergence and ultimately provide a more significant discussion.

5.3.1 Case selection and access

Seawright and Gerring (2008, p.294) argued that the "primordial task of the case study researcher" is case selection. Case selection is a significant consideration in all research but especially in studies with a small number of cases where selection could have a considerable impact on the overall study. However, in this study, cases were not selected for generalisability, rather my primary aim was to explore the chosen schools as unique cases (Stake, 1995, p.4). As Shields (2007), suggested, "The strength of qualitative approaches is they account for and include difference --- ideologically, epistemologically, methodologically --- and most importantly, humanly". In addition, "The trouble with generalisations is that they don't apply to particulars" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.110). Rather, generalisation suggests that my results must relate to *all* other schools using restorative justice (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), which is inconsistent with a concept that is socially constructed and influenced by the specific context. Rather, "what becomes useful understanding is a full and thorough knowledge of the particular, recognizing it also in new and foreign contexts" (Stake, 1978, p.6).

I utilised a purposeful sampling approach. Purposeful sampling is frequently utilised in qualitative research, as it can assist in finding information-rich cases that are relevant to the chosen phenomena (Palinkas et al., 2015). Whilst this sampling strategy has been described as "the least rigorous technique" (Marshall, 1996, p.523), it allowed me to pursue my aim of exploring schools actively committed to restorative justice. I chose to focus upon primary schools because they form the foundation of learning. Primary schools are a "critical stage in children's development [that] shapes them for life" (DfES, 2003, p.4). They are typically a child's first introduction to restorative justice and so can also shape an individual's future understandings and use of restorative justice. Furthermore, as a mother of two primary school aged children, I have a personal interest in primary education.

Ontario is often cited as the birthplace of modern restorative justice (Van Ness, Morris and Maxwell, 2001). However, there are very few studies exploring restorative justice in education in the province. This makes Ontario an interesting and unique setting in which to sample cases. In Canada, education is a provincial responsibility. Each province or territory has its own structure, policies, curriculum and means of assessment and the Canadian federal government's involvement in education is "limited, and sometimes non-existent" (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010, p.3). In Ontario, publicly funded education is managed by either district school boards or school authorities. School authorities only manage a small number of schools in distinct areas, such as those based in hospitals or situated in isolated and underpopulated regions. School boards are the dominant method of school management in Ontario. They oversee most of the province geographically and have the most students. As a result, I chose to focus my search entirely upon school boards. Ontario school boards are divided into four streams; English, French, English Catholic and French Catholic. Within these streams there are 72 district school boards; comprising 31 English public, 4 French Public, 29 English Catholic, and 8 French Catholic (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2017[d]). While I learnt French at a young age, I chose to focus on English boards because I felt more confident conducting the research in my arterial language. Thus, the search began by focusing upon all English school boards in Ontario. Initially, I spent four months examining the use of restorative justice by different boards across the province; exploring school board pages, individual school websites, literature searches, and discussions with personal contacts. Ultimately, I selected one Board, based upon its ongoing commitment to restorative justice as described in the Board's and school's literature. This form of non-probability, purposive sampling helped me to obtain a School Board that had a history of restorative justice and ongoing practices within its schools.

The process of obtaining access to a setting can provide valuable information about the organisation and as a result can be included as part of my observational process (Crow and Semmens, 2011). Conducting research in Ontario public schools can represent a significant challenge, as prior to seeking access to a specific school, the prospective investigator must first apply to the relevant school board(s) for official approval. The applications are not standardised, and each board has its own specifications, forms, specific criteria, necessary supporting documentation and deadlines. As Table 1 illustrates, the research process from first contact to follow-up and feedback was nearly two years.

Table 1: Research Timetable

Date	Action
February 2, 2016	Ethical approval granted from the University of Hull
July 2016	Initial contact with Mallard School Board
September 22, 2016	Initial research application submitted to Mallard School Board
October 12, 2016	Initial application declined
October 14, 2016, to February 2017	Ongoing communication around potential revised application
February 2, 2017	Revised application submitted
February 24, 2017	Conditional approval granted with revisions requested
March 9, 2017	Research approval granted by Mallard school.
March 10, 2017, to March 30, 2017	Consent received from principals to visit schools
March 20, 2017, to April 28, 2017	Initial school visits
June 2018	Follow-up school visits and findings shared

While I was aware of the challenges of gaining access, I was unprepared for the length of time and effort it would take. My initial application was declined based upon the length of time I applied to be in each school (originally three months). At this point, feeling like a failure, I was going to give up on Mallard and approach another School Board. However, I decided to contact Mallard and see if I could resubmit. Throughout the next few months, I had ongoing communication with the Board to determine whether my application might be considered with revisions. While there was

no certainty my research would ever be approved, these conversations filled me with hope. The Board members I spoke with were passionate about restorative justice and I am grateful for their feedback. Among the most significant revisions was the research timeframe and to change the language in my information sheets and consent forms so that it reflected the "appropriate literacy, [and] comprehension level" for parents and students. As an illustration, information sheets discussed ethos in schools. The Board felt that it was a "technical word" used by practitioners and recommended that I utilise "simpler language." The Board also requested that audio tapes be destroyed upon transcription, that I add the study name to the top of my forms and that I submit a police check to specifically work within a vulnerable sector. I completed all the necessary changes and responded to all the Board's questions. Ultimately, I am grateful for the board's attention to detail and think their requested revisions made my study better. I received a letter of decision approving my research on March 9th, 2017. In the letter, the Board recognised "the importance of the information your research will generate".

Multi-site case studies can be used to either produce similar or dissimilar results (Ibid). The 'cases' I am concerned with are schools committed to restorative justice. While there is not a "typical" restorative school and different factors such as location, stage, and religious affiliation can impact the school, I proposed to investigate three schools with similar features. Along with full research approval, the Board recommended three schools "that have just been named to be Restorative Practice leaders". It was suggested that "these are the most likely to assent to participating in your research". However, I was not required to include these schools and was approved to contact any primary school within the Board. At the time, I had mixed feelings about using recommended schools. I wondered if the Board had a potential bias and was encouraging me to contact schools that could be seen as among the best. Yet, conversely, I was also grateful for a list of schools that were actively building restorative justice and would likely consent to participate, thus

saving valuable time. After some reflection, I concluded that I was open to seeing what the schools brought. If for example, they were model schools where restorative justice was working well, I thought that could have provided some interesting and significant insights. Thus, my initial plan involved contacted all three recommended schools.

The first two schools included in this study were from the recommended group. I attempted to contact the third suggested school by both phone and email and did not receive an immediate response. Because of the strict timeframe I had to complete the data collection, I then contacted a fourth school within the Board. The third school did ultimately reply and consented to be part of that research, but at that time they could not be included. An additional (fifth) school, also expressed an interest in participating in the study, however, the three available spaces were filled. Ultimately, the three case study schools shared some core similarities. They were all public primary schools (provincially funded education, comparable to early years, key stages one, two and three in England) within one school board in Ontario. They were also committed to restorative justice education. However, the schools had different physical structures, sizes, student populations, provided instruction in different languages (in addition to English), and were in varied geographic areas. In hindsight, I think the different features of schools and their different relationships with restorative justice added to the richness of this study in a way that I never anticipated. While gaining access was very challenging, I am glad I persisted and am very pleased with the three unique cases that make up this study.

5.4 Methods of data collection

5.4.1 Participant observation

Participant observation is a type of observation when the researcher actively participates in the context. This method has been selected to actively engage with the schools and document first-

hand experiences. This offered me a real insight into the everyday experiences of the school and its members. As covert observation raises significant ethical concerns, I was transparent in my role. I observed openly and overtly and presented myself as a PhD student interested in learning about the school. This approach reflected Merriam's (2009, p.124) "observer as a participant" stance as my "activities [were] known to the group," yet "participation in the group [was] definitely secondary to the role of information gatherer." However, this looked considerably different depending upon the context. As an illustration, in the Hummingbird grade 1 French immersion class, I sang and acted alongside the students. Whereas, in the GSA at that school I sat quietly and did not take notes or ask questions. Equally, in Kingfisher during the grade 7/8 math quiz I did not interrupt or speak with students. In contrast, in the grade 3 math class, students were working on math exercises and I sat with them, asked how it was going and worked with them to resolve problems. My level of interaction also varied within a class. As an example, the Sycamore grade three class began with gym games where I sat on the side-lines, only speaking to students when their turn was up, they were slightly injured or tired. Yet, after gym the class returned to their classroom and I actively participated in a circle (sharing my own thoughts and opinions). Thus, my role as a participant observer, was mixed. Complete participation was not always an option and I was always conscious of my role as a researcher.

Participant observation provided me with the freedom and flexibility to explore the schools. In each school, I observed the members of schools (staff, volunteers and students), the many different areas (such as classes, library, gymnasium, and hallways), and activities (such as instruction, group work, special interest groups and clubs, meetings, assemblies, presentations and playtime) within the school. Throughout the research, I compiled notes by hand (pen and paper) and kept all the notes on my person. While other techniques such as video recording may have provided more detailed data (Barner-Barry, 1986), they would also have been significantly more invasive, they could

impact behaviour, and they also raise substantial ethical concerns around confidentiality and consent. Note taking was a simple, accessible and discreet method (Ibid). While I regularly took notes while observing, I also consciously took time after leaving a classroom or space to review my notes, clarify and write up anything I had missed earlier. In addition, each evening in my bed and breakfast or hotel, I also wrote up detailed summaries of the day to try and capture all aspects of my observations. These practices meant my notes were comprehensive, and much easier to read, understand and analyse at later stages.

It is not possible to clearly detail the number of students I observed in each grade, as on numerous occasions different grades were mixed, including split grade levels (where different grade levels shared a classroom), shared lessons (where students from different grades joined together for a class), and shared use of spaces (such as gym, library, recess or at assemblies). At other times, I spent half a period observing a class in the computer lab or library and once they left, a subsequent class or classes would arrive. However, in each school I observed instruction at every grade level from junior kindergarten to grade eight. In addition, in each of the three schools, I observed classes in both French and English. While English is my arterial language, I was in a French immersion programme from the age of 4. I felt I could sufficiently observe and communicate with stakeholders in French. I also felt that to have a full understanding of the schools, that I could not exclude classes based upon language. This was particularly evident in Hummingbird Public School, where over half of the students were in the French Immersion programme.

While I included French classes, I consciously chose not to include observations from the staff room or social gatherings outside school hours (for example, when I was invited to dinner at staff member's homes). I believed that these places should be safe spaces where staff were free to relax, without being conscious of an active researcher present. Furthermore, as both contexts can

feel relaxed and staff may disclose information that they would not in another space, research

consent is highly questionable. While this could provide another dimension to my observations, I

did not feel it was ethical to include such information. Chart one provides a summary of my

inclusion and exclusion criteria for observations.

Chart 1. Inclusion and Exclusion criteria for observations

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
All areas of the school and school ground unless noted in the exclusion criteria	Staff room
General observations of the community and wider setting in which the school was situated	Washrooms
	Staff homes and outside school social gatherings

The observational data does include informal and sometimes lengthy conversations that I had with

stakeholders. These conversations developed organically and are distinct from interviews as did not

follow the interview format, structure or questioning. As an illustration, while observing a class at

Sycamore Public School, the students were working on an independent study project, and so I talked

informally with the teacher.

My understanding of restorative justice as a social construction influenced my observations.

While observing the schools I tried to observe everything. My inclusion criteria included all areas of

the schools and school grounds except staff rooms and washrooms. The fact that I did not focus my

observations solely on restorative actions was beneficial for two reasons. Restorative practices or

interactions were rarely labelled as such. Furthermore, I gained a sense of the schools overall which

directly related to my interest in how restorative justice was built within the different school contexts

and the associated changes[7] in practices, language, and relationships.

5.4.2 Interviews

As Seidman (2013, p.9) suggested, "At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in

understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience".

I conducted interviews to gain a more profound sense of their experiences and views of staff and

students within each school. To be inclusive of differing staff perspectives and roles, the interviews

included teaching and non-teaching staff. Initially, I considered interviewing only staff members.

However, as the research involved working closely with children, I was conscious of their

involvement. Children in research can be viewed in four differing ways: the child as object, the child

as subject, the child as social actor and the child as a participant or co-researcher (Christensen and

Prout, 2002, p.480). Traditionally and most commonly, children are viewed as objects in research.

This perspective disavows children as unique social actors. Rather they are viewed as vulnerable

dependents (Ibid) and would be excluded from the interviews. However, the perception of children

as objects, controlled by the adults, is contradictory to the values upheld by this research and those

of restorative justice (such as the respectful, equal, non-hierarchical and collaborative way of being).

I realised the importance of students' voices and in this research, children were viewed as social

actors, who actively participate and contribute in the schools.

Prior to visiting the schools, all interview forms were tested for comprehension by three

children and three adults who work within education. The feedback they provided ameliorated the

forms. As an illustration, a six-year-old questioned the meaning of the words "quote" and

"voluntary". This led me to add explanations of the words on the form. My initial plan was to recruit

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[7] By changes, I include both changes in action and understanding. As an illustration, a change occurs when existing practices come to be considered as restorative.

interviewees in the same manner across the three schools through snowball sampling. Snowball

sampling is a method that uses a chain of recommendations to locate individuals who may speak to

the area of interest (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981). However, challenges getting volunteers and time

constraints made that unfeasible. Because recruitment differed across the case studies, I will discuss

each school independently. At Hummingbird Public School, (the first school I visited)

advertisements were placed on the school's social media to recruit staff members. Ultimately, this

produced two volunteers. I directly approached three other staff members based on their roles in the

school, and all three consented. Announcements were made on the public-address system and in

classes to recruit students. Interested students put their name on a sign-up sheet. I then met with

them in person to provide a brief overview and provide the parental information and consent forms.

The first three students to return their forms were included in the study. At Kingfisher Public

School, the Principal recruited one staff member and both the student participants. The remaining

staff members were purposively selected as above. All staff interviewees were purposively selected at

Sycamore PS. The principal recruited students from different grade levels. Thus, the sampling

process differed across the three schools, and each case included purposively selected interviewees.

Thus, this sample is not random or intended to reflect the overall school population. However, my

aim was not to produce generalisable results, but to explore some of the unique views that exist

within the schools. Chart two details the inclusion and exclusion criteria for interviewees.

Chart 2. Inclusion and Exclusion criteria for interviewees

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Students or staff (full or part time) at a case study school.	Any individual unable to provide informed consent
Individuals who can speak and understand English (those who cannot read English must consent to have information sheets and consents forms read to them.)	Staff and students unable to speak or understand English

Individuals able to provide informed consent	Any student without parental consent, or those unable to provide parent consent within the research period
Students with both their own and parental consent	Parents or caregivers who are not staff or volunteers at the case study school
	Community residents who are not staff or volunteers at the case study school
	Staff and students away from the school during the interview period.

Semi-structured interviews were used to provide a comparative framework whilst allowing me some freedom and flexibility to explore individual responses at a deeper level. Interview protocols were designed to help guide the process. While different protocols were developed for staff and students (see Appendices J and K), they followed the same structures, including research introduction, general background questions (length of time at the school, grade or years teaching). I started and ended every interview in the same manner. I began by going through forms and consents, then introduced myself and my background with restorative justice. At the end of every interview, each interviewee was invited to share any further comments or questions. Lastly, I thanked them for their participation. The speaker largely influenced everything in the middle. This made it unpredictable with no standard structure. Prior to interviews, the researcher reviewed the appropriate information sheet and completed the consent form (see Appendices C to I). This includes background information on the study, an overview of the interview process, discussion of harms and benefits, confidentiality, participating and withdrawing from the study, and how to contact the researcher if needed. In total, I conducted twenty-one formal interviews across the three schools, this included nine teachers, seven students, three principals, two non-teaching staff and a school Elder. The interviews ranged from 25 to 110 minutes with an average time of 47 minutes. All interviews were conducted in the schools. Students were questioned during class times and staff members were interviewed before or after school or during their breaks.

As Seidman (2013) suggested, there are two criteria in determining the number of interviewees: sufficiency, and saturation of information. It is very challenging to know beforehand the number of interviews necessary to achieve saturation (Bryman, 2012). Specifically, there needs to be enough participants to provide insights into the phenomenon being studied. I sought to obtain in-depth information from multiple stakeholders in each school; including two or three students (due to challenges in getting research participants within a tight time frame, two students were interviewed at Kingfisher and Sycamore PS, and three at Hummingbird PS), three teachers, the principal and non-teaching staff members. This sample provided a rich range of perspectives whilst using limited time effectively.

5.4.3 Documentary information

The collection of documentary information can provide insight into how the school, school members, classes and groups present restorative justice, as well as relevant information about how it is introduced and embedded in the school. Atkinson and Coffey (2011) suggested that documents can provide their own unique discussion of reality. That is, depending upon the author's purpose of the information and the intended readership they can provide important insights into the context. For each case study, I collected all available documentary information from the school including letters, class hand-outs, brochures, newsletters, newspapers, agendas, meeting minutes, administrative documents, and information from mass media (including videos and websites). This approach was open and not explicitly focused on restorative justice. Documents were gathered before, during and immediately following the fieldwork. Chart three details the inclusion and exclusion criteria for documentary information.

Chart 3. Inclusion and Exclusion criteria for collecting documentary information

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
All publicly available documentary information (in print or electronic)	Student records
School websites and social media sites	Confidential school reports
Written summaries of school policies including, code of conduct and student handbook	
All flyers, brochures and handouts at the school	Materials in any language other than English or French
Material that specifically mentions restorative justice, or specific practices	
Documents in English and French	
Local newspapers, magazines, flyers, and tourist information	

In collecting documentary information form the schools, my goal was not to focus upon documents that discussed restorative justice, but to collect all publicly available documentary information on the school and surrounding community. I viewed this akin to bringing an empty suitcase and leaving with it filled. However, in an age where there is increasing appreciation for the environment and the impact of cutting down trees to produce paper, printed documentary information was not as plentiful as I expected. Strictly from a data collection perspective, the lack of paper materials was surprising and a disappointment (as a person who has seen deforestation and clearcutting, I was very pleased at the schools' commitments to the environment). As a result, at each school, I had to take a more proactive approach. I asked principals and administrative staff what documents had been produced, if they were available online and if not for a printed copy. Even, after this approach, the amount of documentary information was considerably less than I originally anticipated. I did not leave any school with a physical or virtual suitcase filled.

5.4.4 Gaining acceptance and building rapport

> Rapport is achieved when participants come to share the same goals, at least to some extent-
> that is, when both the "informant" and the researcher come to the point when each is

committed to help the other achieve his or her goal, when informants participate in providing information for "the book" or the study, and when the researcher approaches the interaction in a respectful and thoughtful way that allows the informant to tell his or her story (DeWalt, DeWalt, and Wayland, 2011, p. 268).

Building rapport has been described as both a goal and a crucial component of participant observation (Ibid) and interviewing (Seidman, 2013). While building rapport is critical, descriptions of how to achieve rapport or what is the desired level of rapport can vary widely. As an illustration, Jorgensen (1989, p.77) suggested self-revelation, such as telling a secret about yourself as an effective means of building rapport. Whereas, Miller (1952) warned of the dangers of "over-rapport" and becoming too familiar and losing the objectivity needed for research. In addition, in the context of interviewing, Seidman (2013, p.99) suggested that "too much or too little rapport" can negatively impact the research process. Thus, rather than merely focusing upon simply building rapport, I was conscious of the type, quantity and quality of the desired rapport (Ibid, p. 99).

Initially, my aim was to gain acceptance within the schools. Gaining acceptance is not about being liked or loved as a person, but about receiving some level of recognition and approval within the setting (Jorgensen, 1989). I saw gaining acceptance as the foundation for building rapport, and from my first contact with each school, I was conscious about achieving some level of acceptance from insiders. In hindsight, I feel that gaining acceptance and beginning to build rapport was a multi-layered approach, akin to the layers of an onion. From the first contact, each principal was very open and accepting of my research. I believe the principals' commitment to restorative justice and interest in my research greatly aided the initial acceptance. Secondly, the principals' announcements of my arrival and introductions to others further assisted in gaining acceptance in the schools. Through introductions, staff and students became aware of who I was and why I was visiting the school. This invited discussions, classroom visits and greater rapport. My initial impression was the staff who appeared to be the friendliest and most welcoming were those who

were interested in my research and/or the subject matter. However, I naturally connected with some people more than others and some stakeholders were naturally outgoing and talkative, and thus more approachable. These individuals were particularly helpful in providing introductory information about the school and how it operated. Primary students were also particularly welcoming. As an illustration, they wanted to play at recess, asked me when I am coming back to their classroom or if we could be "friends". Some of the older students, would say hello in the hallway and then laugh when I replied or asked me random questions such as "Do you dabb?" (A dance move where you tilt your head to one side bend one arm and outstretch the other), or "What type of music do you like?"

Initially, I used strategies such as making eye contact, smiling and acknowledging people in the halls. I introduced myself and explained my research. For the most part, people were very friendly, saying "hi" or "good morning" in the halls. I also tried to be open and visible within the school. For example, when I was writing up notes, I often sat visibly on a hallway bench, rather than behind closed doors, so that I was visible. Within a smaller school, it was rather easy to be visible and become a familiar sight. For example, after one week in Kingfisher school, a student approached me and said, "Wow, you have been here forever." At the time, I chuckled to myself and felt that he must be getting accustomed to seeing me around the school. However, at Hummingbird PS, a much larger school, I was continuously meeting people and seeing new faces. I also tried to engage in informal conversation. As an illustration, when staff or students mentioned their dogs, home renovations, sports team and so on, I asked questions and expressed interest in getting to know them better. I also tried to build on details from previous conversations over time such as "How did the test go?" or "How was the new art class you started teaching?" This process can sound calculating or even fake when written up. However, this was not the case. I had a genuine interest in the members of the school. I never feigned interest or lied to reflect another's views. On

the contrary, I expressed my differing interests. For example, during National Hockey League

(NHL) playoffs when a staff member at Kingfisher PS wore an Ottawa Senators jersey and

discussed her/his team, I mentioned that I supported a rival team (Toronto Maple Leafs). This

opened a friendly banter over which team was performing better.

5.5 Data analysis

> Data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial propositions of a study (Yin, 2003, p.109).

The analysis of qualitative data, particularly from multiple methods is a "messy" process

(Lester, 1999, p.2). The data analysis was influenced by my understanding of restorative justice as a

social construction, and directly related to the research questions. Across all methods of data

collection (observation, interviews and documentary information), thematic analysis was used.

Thematic analysis involves looking for themes in the data. This technique is well suited to

explanatory studies such as this one because it can create meaning from the data. I sought to explore

themes that related to the school generally and its use of restorative justice. There are many

techniques for finding themes in data (see for example Ryan and Bernard, 2003). My initial strategy

of identifying themes across all methods was word repetition. Word repetition was used under the

premise that to understand how a concept is constructed, one must examine the words that are used.

As Ryan and Bernard (2003, p.89) stated, words that are used repeatedly are "more likely" to be a

theme. Secondly, I explored similarities and differences across the data and then other strategies

including: transitions, metaphors, linguistic connections, missing data, and theory related material

(Ryan and Bernard, 2003).

Unlike other research phases, data analysis is not a unique stage in observational research.

Instead, analysis occurs throughout the entire research process (Crow and Semmens, 2011). While I

was observing, I tried to make sense of what I was occurring by highlighted key words or noting

questions in the margin. As an illustration, at Hummingbird PS circles were repeatedly observed and emphasised by stakeholders and so were identified as a potential theme. This became a catalyst for further exploration, raising questions such as who was using circles/who was not, where, when, how and why? In this manner the analysis of observational data developed organically. In line with Merriam (2009), the analysis intensified as the research process expanded. Once I completed the observations, I then began to categorise and consolidate the data from each school. To respect the data integrity and avoid any confusion, I analysed each school at separate times. I highlighted my field notes in different colours and began to extrapolated pieces under different headings in a word document. For example, all encounters (observed or discussed) were highlighted, this to led to sub-headings, such as specific encounters, and then further sub headings such as restorative script. In this way, I was able to focus upon the specific research questions, data was reduced and the large amounts of significant data became manageable.

I took a different approach to analysing the interview data. During the first interview, I tried to complete some level of analysis by noting connections and key ideas. However, I found that this detracted from the interview. As my primary aim was to listen to the individual and understand their responses, that was my focus during the interviews. Immediately following, I noted brief points that stood out for me (this included key ideas such as how they described their school or restorative justice or times when they became emotional). The real analysis of interview data began after data collection. After transcribing the interviews, I had initially planned on using the computer software package NVivo as the primary means of data analysis. NVivo is a practical tool for analysing large amounts of qualitative data from different sources, such as the data that will be produced in this study. Furthermore, it has been suggested that the use of computer data analysis software can add rigour to the research (Richards and Richards, 1991). However, after reviewing and transcribing the interviews repeatedly, I had become very familiar with the data and had already identified numerous

themes. Ultimately, NVivo became a secondary level of analysis, used to identify word frequency and associations. Patton (2002) suggested that as a researcher interacts with the data patterns emerge and I certainly found that to be true. Listening to interviews over and over and then reading transcripts gave me a real sense of the data. Like my observational data, I began to categorise the interview data under headings and subheadings. However, it this instance I also included individual names. In this way, I could explore the similarities and differences between respondents as well as the number of times themes were mentioned.

While I read through documents during the data collection stage and the real analysis took place after the school visits were completed. To begin, I separated materials into three categories; those about restorative justice, about the school broadly, and about the community. If a document had any reference to restorative justice (using the terminology or not), it was placed in that category. I used a similar approach for the school and community information. However, this took a lot of movement back and forth as the documents frequently overlapped different categories and so needed to be refined. From these initial categories I began to explore underlying themes. For example, in what contexts was restorative justice discussed, how was it described or defined (who, what, how, why) and what were the key words utilised. I then ultimately began to explore how these different themes reflected conceptualisations of restorative justice. A similar approach was used to analyse school and community; what was context, how were they described and so on. The vast majority of documentary information fell into the community category. It was much easier to locate newspapers, community magazines, tourist information and flyers. While this gave me an overall sense of the surrounding area, much of this material was not relevant. As an illustration, a local car accident or upcoming attraction do not specifically speak to the research question.

5.6 Interpretation and evaluation

Through the practice of data collection and analysis, themes and categories were identified.

Subsequently, I started to construct interpretations of what was learnt. This process is akin to

"telling a story" because interpretation produces meanings, connections and patterns that form a

storyline (Marshall and Rossman, 2016). As Patton (2015, p.570) states:

> Interpretation by definition means going beyond the descriptive data. Interpretation means
> attaching significance to what was found, making sense of the findings, offering
> explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, considering
> meanings, and otherwise imposing order.

The story directly related to the research questions to explain how schools construct, introduce and

embed restorative justice. I used a linear-analytic structure (Yin, 2003) to report the case studies.

This is the standard compositional structure for reporting case study research, which uses a sequence

of subtopics beginning with the research problem (Ibid). Initially, I discussed the research problem

and previous literature, followed by the methodology, the findings from case studies, overall

discussion and conclusions. This has been selected because it is a clear structure in which to

examine data from multiple cases as well as multiple sources. It also fit well with the exploratory

nature of the research, progressing from the reason for the study to the conclusion.

Initially, I considered each interview separately. I felt that each interviewee had something

different and unique to add to the overall story of the school and that distinct views could be lost if

all the interviews were amalgamated. I also wanted to provide the reader with a full picture of each

interview. As Rabiee (2004, p.657) states, "reflection about the interview, the settings, and capturing

the non-verbal communication expressed…would add a valuable dimension to the construction and

analysis of data". However, after the lengthy process of writing up the interviews, descriptions and

my reflections, I felt strongly that this level of detail would jeopardise the confidentiality of the

interviewees. While each view was informative, it was more important for me to ensure the

confidentiality of respondents. Therefore, I separated the results by data collection method. I feel strongly that by examining each method separately, I help to preserve the confidentiality of the interviewees and the integrity of the source. As an illustration, the views of interviewees are not confused with my observations or with documentary information. If all this data were initially amalgamated, subtle differences that may have existed within sources would be lost. This level of detail also provides an additional level of analysis as once interviews are considered independently, they are discussed as a group. And, ultimately once each method of data collection is examined independently, I will then compare and contrast the overall findings across methods. This will ultimately create a richer picture of the findings.

Once I had explored the three cases independently, I interpreted the overall findings. While this study is not comparative research, within the discussion of findings I do explore multiple cases together, a practice that can be seen as comparative. As Adamson (2012, p.647) noted many, "hesitate to label themselves comparativists…using comparative research as a means to bring their findings into sharper relief." While I concede that the discussion contains a comparative element, I maintain that the research is fundamentally not comparative in nature. I am not seeking to systematically identify similarities and differences across the cases. The cases are not comparable (like for like) and vary in numerous ways including size, population, location and structure. Furthermore, they have different histories and commitments to restorative justice.

5.7 Research ethics

I consulted and was guided by the Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research produced by British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018) and the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS[8] ;

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[8] The TCPS is a document produced by Canada's three national research agencies; the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC).

Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of

Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2014). "BERA believes

that educational researchers should operate within an ethic of respect for any persons – including

themselves – involved in or touched by the research they are undertaking" (BERA, 2018, p.6).

Throughout this research, key ethical concerns were apparent including informed consent,

confidentiality, and harm and benefit. In line with ethical standards, ethical approval was sought and

granted from the University of Hull's Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix A) and Mallard

District School Board (this document contains identifying information and so has not been

included).

5.7.1 Consent

The use of participant observation produced several ethical concerns. Among the most significant, is

a participant observer can blend into a setting and thus people may not know they are being

researched. As Jorgensen, 1989, p.28 noted that,

> Participant observation does not have human subjects…The people with whom the participant observer interacts are not at all like the subjects of an experiment or respondents of survey research. The participant observer interacts with people under the ordinary conditions of their daily lives much like any other participant.

This study was based upon everyday life within schools, and my interactions did not involve

experiments or manipulations. However, it was evident that my role was not like any other

participant. My role was to observe and learn about the school and its stakeholders. While people

may act in a different way when they are aware, they are being observed (Patton, 2002), ethically, I

felt strongly that I should gain consent to conduct the research and provide full disclosure about my

role. Initially, I was granted Board approval to conduct the research, then principals by email or

telephone consent, followed by principals written consent. Because of the large number of students

and staff in each school, it was not feasible to obtain consent from all those observed. In lieu, I

clearly identified my role as a visiting PhD student who was researching the school. My presence and role were announced on the public-address system in each school, in school social media, on calendars, weekly newsletters and through introductions. I also intentionally carried a file folder and notebooks throughout my observations. This clearly made me stand out rather than blend into the environment and was another measure of transparency. On numerous occasions, people remarked about my note taking, which invited a conversation about the true nature of my research and allowed me the opportunity to explain my role.

Informed consent was also a primary concern in interviewing. All staff who verbally consented to be interviewed were provided with an outline of the study (see Appendix E) and were asked to provide written consent at the commencement of the interview (see Appendix I). Students who expressed an interest in participating were given a parental information sheet (see Appendix C) and parental consent forms (see Appendix G). With parental consent, students were given an outline of the study (see Appendix D) and were asked to provide written consent at the beginning of the interview (See Appendix H). All consent forms also included a supplementary consent to audio record the interview. If consent to record was declined or withdrawn, the interview would have proceeded with responses written by hand. However, all interviewees provided consent for audio recording. During four interviews staff or students gave statements off the record. In these instances, either before or after making a disclosure, the interviewees asked for specific statements to be excluded from the study. While I felt that some of these disclosures could add to the study, the interviewees did not provide consent, and so, these statements have not been included in the study.

The documentary information collected was all readily accessible within the school or online. No confidential files or reports were accessed. Thus, no additional research consents were sought.

5.7.2 Confidentiality

Providing anonymity to research sites and participants is standard ethical practice (Walford, 2005). Several measures were implemented to protect the anonymity and minimise the risk of leaked information. All confidential documents (including consent forms, audio recordings and notes) were kept on the person during data collection and then stored in a locked cabinet. All observational notes were kept on the person during fieldwork and then entered into a password-protected electronic file. All interview audio recordings were transcribed into a password-protected electronic file, and then the original audio was deleted. I am the sole person with access to this data. Following standard research protocol, ten years after the completion of the research these files will be destroyed. All study data were saved on a password-protected computer, with only the principal investigator having access. In addition, no confidential information is stored in electronic databases and documents. As an illustration, each school was assigned an identifying code (such as 001), and participants were identified only by a participant code (such as T4). In the event, that documentary materials collected contained identifying material, the same protocol was followed. All schools, school boards and participants were also given pseudonyms. However, as Walford (2005, p.87) noted maintaining anonymity through pseudonyms is "very unlikely" within schools. Principals, teachers and other students will know who is involved in the research and keynotes will be sufficient for individuals quoted to be identified (Ibid). This is pronounced within this study as several interviewees were recruited through principals or teachers, students were required to leave classes, staff were seen talking with me or walking to interview spaces where others knew interviews were taking place. Thus, complete anonymity was impossible. As Wolfe (2003, p.21) suggested, "transparency is best achieved through frankness." At the beginning of each interview, I explained that while pseudonyms will be utilised in the dissemination of this study, it may be possible for others in the school to identify you. Thus, I asked interviewees to be conscious that they might be

identified and self-censor accordingly. While this may impact the content of the interviews, it is the most open and transparent practice.

Another challenge to protecting anonymity was the small number of male teachers within the schools. According to Ontario Ministry of Education (2018ᵃ) statistics for 2015-2016, only 18% of public-school elementary teachers were male. Thus, statistically in smaller schools, there may only be one or two male teachers in the entire school. This posed a significant challenge, as by identifying stakeholders as male, could significantly reduce anonymity. I spent a considerable amount of time debating the best approach to address this challenge. I did not feel that gender was a strong consideration in the study or impacted the construction or embedment of restorative justice. Thus, I chose not to identify the gender of any staff members. Instead, I have utilised a gender-neutral title (Mx) and s/he pronouns. While this reduces the level of staff detail, it was a necessary step in protecting the anonymity of male staff.

5.7.3 Harm and Benefit

A researcher has an ethical obligation to assess the potential harms and benefits of the research. Harm covers a wide range of areas from physical injury, "psychological distress, discomfort, social disadvantage, invasion of privacy or infringement of rights" (Israel and Hay, 2006, p.96). While this research did not pose any real risk of physical harm, I considered several areas of risk. It was possible that interviews may bring up sensitive or uncomfortable memories, which could cause the interviewee discomfort. To reduce this potential, I introduced several safeguards. I designed the interviews in a sensitive manner. The interviews were also completely voluntary, and all interviewees were advised only to share what they are comfortable disclosing. In addition, interviewees were informed that they could stop the interview at any time. Thus, if they felt any discomfort or potential for discomfort they could withdraw with no penalty. The second area of risk is maintaining

confidentiality. I collected confidential information (such as names, position) during the interviews and observations. If anonymity was breached and this information was disclosed, the interviewee and others could be harmed. As I previously discussed, measures were implemented to protect the anonymity of interviewees and minimise the risk of leaked information, including the storing of information, destroying audio recordings and using pseudonyms.

While ethics are typically discussed in terms of reducing the risk of harm, research should also provide some benefit (Israel and Hay, 2006). The real benefit of this study lies in its contribution to knowledge. It is anticipated that the three case study schools will benefit from the insights this research provides. In addition, more broadly, this research makes an original contribution to knowledge by furthering our understanding of how schools construct and embed restorative justice. This is a significant benefit, as there are considerable gaps in our knowledge of how restorative justice is constructed in the everyday operation of schools.

5.8 Methodology Summary

Restorative justice is increasingly being implemented in educational settings. However, there are considerable gaps in our knowledge of how restorative justice is constructed in the everyday operation of schools. In particular, there remains a lack of conceptual clarity on how restorative justice in education is "characterised and operationalised" (Morrison and Vaandering, 2012, p.148). This is significant because while restorative justice began in schools as a behaviour management mechanism, some proponents now argue that in order to challenge injustice it must be transformative. My overall aim in pursuing this research was to build conceptual clarity and gain "a deeper understanding of the richness of the concept" (Johnstone and Van Ness, 2007, p.19). To achieve that objective, I sought to answer the primary research question: how was restorative justice constructed, and embedded within primary schools? And the sub-question: how did restorative

justice interact with the school's educational mission? To obtain the "thick description" needed to properly explore the phenomenon (Geertz, 1973), my research involved a multi-site case study of primary schools committed to restorative justice in Ontario, Canada. Using a multi-site case study approach, I selected three primary schools within one school board in Ontario, Canada. The three schools had differing histories with restorative justice and were at different stages of implementation. Methods of data collection included participant observation, interviews and gathering documentary information. Data were analysed thematically primarily through manual analysis. I consulted and was guided by the Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research produced by BERA (2018) and the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2014). Ethical issues were considered, including consent, anonymity, harm and benefit. I received ethical approval from the University of Hull and from Mallard School Board. In addition, each principal provided research consent for the school. All interviewees also provided written consent, and parental consent was also received for all students.

Chapter Six Case Study: Hummingbird Public School

> I am waiting for it to unfold. I am so excited about that, I really don't, I don't know [where it will go]. It is kind of unknown territory. But I trust that it is going to be fantastic! [With added emphasis] (Mx Chelton, the principal at Hummingbird PS speaking on the school's restorative journey.)

6.1 Chapter Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I discussed my research design and methods. In line with Yin's (2003, p.147) description of the multiple-case studies, each school will be reported in a separate chapter so they can be considered uniquely. In this chapter, I explore the data from the first case study, Hummingbird Public School. The findings showed that Hummingbird PS was a big, busy, and dynamic school actively progressing in forming a unified identity. Restorative justice was understood in different ways and used to varying degrees in different areas of the school. While Hummingbird PS was committed to restorative justice, Mx Chelton (the principal), described the school as beginning a new journey. Restorative justice had not yet been formally implemented or embedded throughout the school.

In order to fully explore the individual data sources, this chapter is comprised of four distinct sections. Initially, I considered my observations, including my first impressions, the school's recent development, inclusion, and restorative justice. The next section focused upon the interviews and includes an introduction to the interviewees. Common themes including the new building; fun and happy place, respect and caring; inclusion; cliques and bullying; staff connections and divisions; community building and restorative justice. In the following section, I considered all the documentary information, which comprised internal materials and news media. Lastly, I will discuss all the data sources collectively and summarise the chapter's findings.

6.2 Observations

I begin by considering my observations and experiences. This discussion includes my first

impressions, an overview of the school's recent history and descriptive themes. Then, I will explore

how restorative justice is constructed and embedded at Hummingbird PS, through physical

indicators, the meaning of the concept, circles, restorative language and efforts to sustain practice.

6.2.1 First Impressions

I pulled out of my driveway before daybreak. It was a chilly, early spring morning with temperatures

of -9 Celsius. There had been a significant snowfall the previous evening, but the roads were clear.

The cloudless sky was still illuminated with stars, and the air was crisp. After many months of

negotiating access, the drive to Hummingbird PS, the first of three case study schools felt

monumental. I was filled with a mixture of excitement and anxiety at beginning my fieldwork. I felt

enthusiastic to learn about the school and what experiences lay ahead, yet unsure of how

stakeholders would welcome me or respond to the research.

Hummingbird PS is in a town with a population under 20,000. The owner of my bed and

breakfast later described it as having "the best of both worlds", with small town charm, and big city

amenities. At 8:40 am, I arrived at the large, modern building located on a quiet, tree-lined, mostly

residential street. I approached the large glass front doors of the school, pulled and found them

locked. I buzzed reception and was admitted without explanation. Once inside, I went directly to the

office, where I was asked to sign in to the visitors register and wait. Within a few minutes, Mx

Chelton, the principal appeared with a smile and introduced her/himself. S/he invited me to her/his

office where we discussed the study protocol and s/he signed the school consent form. As a safety

precaution, I was asked to read the student handbook sections on lockdown and fire procedures.

Then I was provided with a visitor's badge, a key and a workspace and Mx Chelton gave me a tour

of the large building. As we walked through the wide halls, Mx Chelton explained Hummingbird PS

had approximately 60 staff and over 700 students from junior kindergarten to grade 8. Students were

split between French Immersion (French language instruction) and English streams. There was also

a gifted programme for students in grades 5 to 8. Hummingbird PS had two main geographical

boundaries, students in the English programme lived in the local area, and those in the French

Immersion programme were bused in from a wider area. More than half of the students were in the

French Immersion programme. The school also had a music programme, gym, library and a

breakfast club[9] for all ages.

I spent two weeks as a participant observer at Hummingbird PS. During this time, I stayed

in a local bed and breakfast and then a motel. I went to local shops and restaurants and visited local

parks and attractions. Because of the school's size, I was not able to observe every classroom.

However, I did observe every grade level (junior kindergarten through to grade eight), French and

English classes, "gifted" programme, as well as the office, gym, library, computer room, music,

theatre, recess, school clubs, hallways and, before and after school times. Hummingbird PS was an

active and lively school. Throughout the day the halls were filled with activity. Staff and students

carved out their own spaces, sitting in circles, against walls, under the stairs, on landings or wherever

they could find an area. There was a constant hum of noise, from students reading books out loud

to helpers, group work discussions, practising musical instruments, or dance routines. I found that I

had to arrive at 7am for the hallways to be empty and within half an hour, there was already the

initial signs and sounds of daily activity.

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[9] Breakfast club took place in the main foyer every morning. All students could participate and were provided with breakfast items such as a fruit cup, yoghurt tube, milk and cereal.

6.2.2 School development

Hummingbird PS had undergone momentous changes. In 2015, the brand-new, purpose-built building was completed with contemporary amenities such as smartboards in every classroom. The modern design combined smooth black stone, clear glass, wooden panels, and silver handle rails all glistening with a burnished shine during my visit. There was also one portable classroom located in the schoolyard. Before the new building, the school was housed in different buildings or campuses. The structures were differentiated by school division; primary (kindergarten to grade three), junior (grades 4 to 6) and intermediate (grades 7 and 8). They were also spread out on the current property so that there were two different mailing addresses. In the past, there was very little interaction between the campuses. Staff and students mainly stayed within their own building area and decisions were made internally. Throughout my visits to Hummingbird PS, stakeholders spoke about the transition they had undergone. Many referred to the previous buildings as "different schools." In the new building, these separate institutions were brought together under one large roof. This was a big step towards creating one comprehensive school. However, the creation of joint space also produced new challenges. While the move occurred two years before my visit, they were still working on creating a fully inclusive and collective identity. Some divisions clearly still existed. During my observations, I had heard different stories about staff divisions. Yet, this picture did not fully evolve until I conducted the interviews, and so to respect the integrity of the sources, I will consider those findings under that section.

6.2.3 Inclusion[10]

Throughout my time with Hummingbird PS, inclusion recurrently appeared as a common theme. While inclusion was never related explicitly to restorative justice, it does speak to the overall culture of the school and will be considered in that sense. One of the first things that struck me about Hummingbird PS was the number of posters, signs and notices. Posters advertised many different sports clubs and activities, but numerous others focused upon inclusion such as, mental health, sexuality and gender orientation, racism, differing abilities, equity, respecting difference and various student designed anti-bullying posters. The discussion and promotion of acceptance of gender identities and sexual orientations were particularly prevalent. This was visible in many forms, there were posters on the walls, signs on classroom doors, announcements, presentations, a pride flag, and a Gender and Sexuality Alliance Group (GSA)[11]. On a primary classroom door was a picture of a rainbow hand with the caption, "I will not judge you because of your race, religion, colour, disability, age, sexuality or gender. Never, I promise". Inside the classroom was a large rainbow flag (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning/Queer or LGBTQ flag). No reference was made to the flag during my visits to the class, but it is noteworthy as a symbol of inclusion. Aside from the symbols and signs of inclusion, there were active discussions on gender and sexuality. On March 31st during the morning announcements, there was an acknowledgement of Transgender Day of Visibility. The statement noted the day was designated to raise awareness of transgender peoples.

As I noted, among the posters decorating the school walls were some advertising the Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA). The GSA at Hummingbird developed out of the students need to discuss gender and sexuality within a safe space at the school. The group met during the first break

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[10] I recognise that inclusion is a contested term in education. Throughout this thesis, inclusion is defined as incorporating all students irrespective of their "race, ethnicity, language, gender, sexual orientation, income or ability" (Evans and Vaandering, 2016, p.55).

[11] Of note, GSA frequently refers to gay-straight alliances, however at Hummingbird the acronym stood for a different phrase.

in the library and was facilitated by two staff members. I approached one about observing the

gathering. S/he consulted with the group in my absence, and it was collectively agreed that I could

attend. I was welcomed into the group, and I sat within the rough circle of chairs. Consciously, I did

not take notes or ask questions. I did not want to make students feel that I was studying them or

make them uncomfortable. I was very moved by the student's experiences, by their maturity, and

strength of character. While the group consented for me to participate in their gathering, the

content was very personal, and I do not think it is necessary or appropriate to include individual

statements or stories. However, it is important to note that the students discussed experiences of

teasing, bullying and hurtful language at school. So, while the GSA itself was an example of

inclusion, it also revealed negative and exclusionary practices.

During my time at Hummingbird PS a community HIV and AIDS agency also spoke to each

intermediate class about gender and sexuality. I purposely joined a class for their presentation. To

begin a facilitator explained,

> We all come here with different ideas. We are not here to change your ideas; what you have
> been taught at home and what your family believes. We are here to show you a different lens
> to see things.

The presenters discussed the discrimination of LGBTQ people around the world and encouraged

students to speak within groups about how they would act in different situations. The discussion

moved to the difference between tolerance and acceptance, common terms and their meaning, and

sensitive language. Students were actively engaged in the discussion and asked many questions.

However, at the end of the presentation, one student outed another student in front of the class.

And so, even in this discussion designed to actively raise awareness, there was evidence of

inappropriate and exclusionary behaviour. Both the presentation and the GSA illustrated active work

on inclusion in Hummingbird PS. However, they also both highlighted that more work was needed.

In my observations of student interactions, I also overheard homophobic language at different

times, including several incidents of intermediate students nonchalantly saying, "Oh, that's so gay," or "that's gay." These comments were not directed towards one individual; however, they used the word "gay" in a derogatory and disrespectful manner. The focus on inclusion in Hummingbird PS stood out. The school was actively engaged in promoting acceptance and diversity through different approaches. However, as my observations indicate, hurtful, exclusionary and derogatory behaviours still existed.

<u>6.2.4 Restorative justice</u>

Hummingbird PS first implemented restorative justice in 2007. At that time, it was constructed as a tool to respond to bullying or wrongdoing. During initial discussions, Mx Chelton informed me that in the past restorative justice was not "a priority" and that it eventually vanished. Until recently, there was "nothing" restorative in place. Mx Chelton described Hummingbird PS at the beginning of their restorative journey. The school had committed to developing restorative justice and yet, were in the planning stages of a pilot project.

6.2.4.1 Physical indicators

My observations of restorative justice in Hummingbird PS arose from different areas, from physical indicators, invitations to observe different encounters, and informal discussions of what it means and how it was implemented. Some of these moments were planned, but many were spontaneous. To begin, I was interested in how Hummingbird PS physically advertised its commitment to restorative justice. For example, could a visitor to the school see signs, posters or materials on restorative justice? My observations indicated, the response was principally no. As I have noted, there were numerous posters throughout Hummingbird PS, which discussed values such as inclusion, equity, and respect. However, there were no visible signs or posters discussing restorative justice in the classroom or school walls. I also searched the student library for books. While I found

some resources on reconciliation, bullying, diversity and social justice, I was unable to locate any materials specifically on restorative justice. However, I did locate some restorative resources in the small staff library, including several copies of Howard Zehr's (2002), *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, Belinda Hopkins (2011) *The Restorative Classroom*, and resources from Real Justice and the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP). In addition, Mx Chelton the principal had restorative materials including a restorative handbook, and cards with restorative questions in her/his office. Notably, these materials were largely hidden, contained solely within staff areas and would not be visible or accessible to most visitors. Thus, Hummingbird PS's commitment to restorative justice was not presented or advertised in an overt physical sense.

6.2.4.2 Meaning

While there were no overt, visible physical indicators, I explored deeper into the meaning and prevalence of restorative justice. During my observations, I did not speak with any students who endorsed an understanding of the terms restorative practice or restorative justice. As an illustration, I was asked to give a talk about my research to a group of students in the gifted programme. I began by asking the group if they had heard of restorative justice and none of the students raised their hands. After a very brief explanation, again no hands were raised. This was interesting for different reasons. Firstly, the general lack of acknowledgement from a large group of "bright" students. Secondly, I was aware that one of the pupils in the class was recently involved in a restorative encounter. Following the talk, one of the class teachers said s/he was particularly surprised none of the students raised their hand. S/he suggested, "there [was] a disconnect" between knowing the practices and labelling them as restorative justice. So, students did not connect with restorative terminology.

In contrast with the students, almost all staff members that I spoke with were familiar with restorative justice. They preferred the term restorative practice, which was primarily used to describe responsive encounters. For example, after the above talk with the gifted class, the teacher mentioned s/he had received training in restorative justice many years ago. S/he described it as a conflict management tool but said s/he had doubts about its utility for serious incidents. On a different occasion, another teacher introduced me to a colleague by saying I am "studying restorative practice". S/he went on to describe restorative practice as "a way of solving problems" in a "healthy way."

6.2.4.3 Circles

From my earliest introductions, when I explained my research to staff, I recurrently heard, "Oh if you are interested in restorative justice, you should visit this class because they use circles". During my visits, I felt that for many stakeholders, restorative justice was synonymous with circles. On several occasions, Mx Chelton (the principal), explained how informal restorative circles were an important part of how s/he resolved wrongdoing with students. In addition, two different teachers and Mx Chelton invited me into their workspaces at specific times, because they wanted me to observe circles. These circles took various aims but were all described as restorative justice. Staff were particularly aware of the morning circles and responsive circles conducted by the principals. Other circles occurred within classrooms or spontaneously and were less visible or recognised.

While I witnessed different circles during my time at the school, three particularly stand out. The first because it is the traditional responsive circle used to address an incident that occurred between students and was facilitated by a senior staff member. The second circle was a talking circle, and it was hosted by a First Nations Elder who spent time explaining the significance of a circle. And the third, because it was a brief and informal class circle, which the teacher was keen for me to

observe. S/he described the circle as "restorative practice" and was clearly proud of the use of circles in her/his class. While these three circles differed widely in aim and content, they were all described as "restorative practice."

6.2.4.3.1 Responsive circle

On my second morning at Hummingbird PS, Mx Chelton, the school principal invited me to join a responsive circle. S/he stated before the circle could proceed, the student who did the harm must be willing to accept responsibility. The circle was held in a private office and was attended by Mx Chelton, three students Tyler (the student who did the harm), Jessica (the student who experienced the harm) and Maryanne (a mutual friend of both students), and me. To begin, Mx Chelton introduced me and confirmed that all present consented to being observed. The students agreed, smiled, and said "hi" to me. My role in the circle was solely as an observer, I watched and listened but did not interject or ask questions. I did not want to interrupt or alter the encounter. I aimed to see what the circle looked like, how the conversation developed, what language and questions were used, and the outcome. I will describe this encounter in some detail to give the reader a sense of the experience. Mx Chelton began the circle by explaining the aim was to "restore the harm caused." S/he then asked Tyler to describe what had happened. He stated during a previous recess, a group of students were playing outside when things got "competitive". According to Tyler, Jessica said, "I am better than you". To which he replied, "I could kill you if I wanted to". Mx Chelton asked several probing questions about other words used, what exactly was said and happened, and how Tyler felt. Tyler said he felt mad. However, he could not remember why and initially had some difficulty remembering many details, replying "umm, I don't know" or "I don't remember." As the circle developed, Tyler disclosed that he had called Jessica a "bitch" and had hit her. The discussion then focused upon the escalation of violence, rather than the initial alleged provocation. Tyler was encouraged to think about the different people affected. Jessica said she was angry and frightened

after the incident and was unsure how it might progress. Maryanne also described how the incident had affected her. Visibly upset, she began to cry and said, "They are my friends. I don't want them hurt or fighting. The hardest thing is seeing them fighting". Maryanne also said the fight had been tough on her, and that she had not told her parents about what happened or talked to anyone. Mx Chelton asked Tyler if he wished to say anything to Jessica or Maryanne. He apologised, and both girls said they accepted his apology.

Mx Chelton said, "Today is not about consequences, it is about a plan" and moving forward. S/he encouraged Tyler to think proactively about what he could do to stop such an incident occurring in the future. Tyler suggested several strategies including deep breathing, walking away, taking some time to himself and talking with others about how he was feeling. Mx Chelton stated s/he would type up the agreement and have the three students sign it. S/he thanked everyone for their participation, and the students left. The circle lasted 20 minutes in total. Notably, the encounter was never overtly called "restorative," rather it was called a talk, discussion, and a circle. Reflecting on the encounter, I felt that all the students got a chance to speak. They each shared their feelings, experience, how it impacted them and were active in developing a plan for the future. Tyler was not asked or forced to apologise but did so on his own. From my perspective, the circle seemed to empower the young people, they took ownership of what happened and decided themselves on the necessary actions to move forward. Mx Chelton's role was really to facilitate the conversation. S/he consulted a manual on restorative justice (produced by a large restorative organisation) and asked restorative questions, such as what happened and what were you thinking at the time. I thought it was particularly significant to have Maryanne, a mutual friend present. She was clearly upset and had been holding in her concerns and emotions. It could have been easy to overlook how the conflict had a wider impact than just the student who did the harm, and the student who experienced the harm.

6.2.4.3.2 Talking circle

The first circle I discussed was facilitated by a school staff member and largely followed a script to resolve a conflict. The second circle was quite different because it was a talking circle led by a First Nations Elder visiting the school. The aim was not to address an issue but to bring people together. I was invited to join the circle by the class teacher Mx Potter, who knew of my research. I arrived late from another class, the students were already seated in a large circle, and an empty chair was waiting for me. This small act of having a place, made me feel included from the beginning. The Elder began the circle by playing the spirit flute. S/he then said a prayer of thanks for the morning and all that it had brought, and for being together. S/he explained that traditionally, everyone in the circle would introduce themselves and have an opportunity to speak. However, the group was large (made up of approximately thirty students, the Elder, Mx Potter and me) and there was not enough time. The Elder then asked, "Why do you think we have a circle?" S/he paused and then said,

> If this was at a board table, there would be someone at the head, someone leading, in charge. But in a circle, we are all equals. I am equal with you. Everyone can speak as long as they hold the eagle feather.

Because of the group size and time constraints, the Elder spoke predominantly. However, at different points, the feather was passed around, and students spoke or answered questions. Again, the Elder played the flute and this time everyone danced. After approximately 45 minutes, the circle ended with a closing prayer. Translating this experience into words is difficult. Discussion flowed from topic to topic (the significance of circles, self-care, relationships, differences between men and women, Indigenous culture, the spirit flute and personal encounters) without the rigidity of apparent structure or format. Personally, I found the circle profound, and there was an emphasis on interconnected relationships. The purpose was apparently to bring people together as a collective, and I felt connected to the group.

6.2.4.3.3 Class circle

The final circle was a primary French Immersion music class. The teacher had an incredible enthusiasm for the class and its use of circles. The class began with a circle where students sat together "to be connected." After the initial circle, the students spread out across the room and worked independently. Then, before the class ended, they came back to together again in a closing circle. I joined in the circles, spoke in French and actively participated in different activities such as passing a clap or a beat from one person to the next. The circles did not involve affective statements or responsive objectives, and there was no discussion of circles or their significance, it simply existed as a means of bringing people together in a connected manner. It was a way to acknowledge the beginning of the class and the closing. Again, this emphasises interconnected relationships and connections.

6.2.4.4 Restorative Language

At this point in my observations, I hope a picture is starting to emerge. Hummingbird PS was described as at the beginning of their restorative journey. This commitment was not overtly advertised throughout the school and students did not connect with the terminology. However, circles were visible in different areas of Hummingbird PS and were used to fulfil different objectives. In this section, I will discuss the use of restorative language within the school. In line with Kane (2007, p.59), I understand restorative language as "promoting effective listening, open-ended questioning, empathy and using non-judgemental words." Several staff members suggested restorative language was essential to differentiate between doing practices *with* students, rather than *to* them. They felt that language was central in illustrating the collaborative nature of restorative justice. However, it was most visible through the restorative script. As I illustrated, restorative questioning was present in the responsive circle (6.2.4.3.1). However, several other more informal instances also used the script. For example, a teacher addressed an incident at recess, in which one

student was swearing at another, by going through restorative questions. On another afternoon, I watched a grade four class present short plays on cyber-bullying. The style and format differed from group to group. In one performance, a group of girls portrayed a media interview with a victim of cyber-bullying. While they did not mention restorative justice, their questions followed the restorative script, including what happened? What were you thinking? How did you feel after? What happened next? So, these students illustrated a familiarity with restorative questions.

The previous examples clearly connected restorative language with a script in responsive practices. That was the predominant understanding. However, a few teachers discussed how restorative language could be used every day and not restricted to wrongdoing. In the class circle (6.2.4.3.3), the teacher spoke about restorative language as one that embodied equality. S/he suggested that there is an equal opportunity to talk, students took turns and listened to each other. Another teacher also described restorative justice as a value-based language; that was inclusive, "respectful" and "non-judgemental." That meant that everyone's voice was valued, and everyone in the class listened to each other respectfully. It was also a language which recognised the collective whole while appreciating diversity. For example, as the teacher noted, "Everyone in this class is learning," some were "learning not to eat play dough", while others were "learning to read." Language was also used to illustrate inclusion. S/he noted that students were not labelled or separated as boys and girls, instead, they could choose if they "feel like" a boy or a girl any given day. Rather than a language that was just used within responsive incidents, this example illustrates a way of communicating every day in the classroom.

6.2.4.5 Embedding restorative justice

From my initial tour of Hummingbird PS, I was informed that the school was at the beginning of its restorative journey. As such, I was surprised at the variety of circles and the use of restorative

language in the school. Restorative justice was also clearly embedded within one classroom where restorative values influenced everyday interactions. However, restorative justice was never discussed as embedded throughout the school, instead it was primarily confined to specific areas of the school where staff were committed to the practices and/or philosophies.

6.3 Interviews

Having discussed my observations, the following section considers the second data source, interviews. I will begin by providing a summary of all the interviewees. Then I will explore the descriptions of Hummingbird PS, and common themes including the new building, values and divisions. Next, I will focus upon restorative justice, its meaning, the emphasis on a responsive dialogue that promotes accountability, implementation and buy-in, construction in the everyday, and moving forward.

6.3.1 Introduction to interviewees

I conducted seven interviews at Hummingbird School, including three students and four staff members. The interviews ranged in time from twenty-five to one hundred and fifteen minutes, with an average time of 59 minutes. To provide the reader with a brief introduction to the different interviewees, these summaries include a brief personal background and any notable attributes during the interview.

Mia was a 13-year-old, grade eight student (comparable to year 9 in England and Wales). She had attended Hummingbird PS for most of her life. She was expressive and talkative. Mia described herself as a loner without any real friends at school, and also discussed different incidents of bullying and discrimination.

Lisa was a 10-year-old, grade five student (comparable to year 6 in England and Wales) in the French immersion programme. She had attended Hummingbird PS since kindergarten. She was

a soft-spoken girl who at times appeared shy or nervous. However, she was inquisitive and asked many questions throughout the interview.

Juliette was a 10-year-old, grade 5 student (comparable to year 6 in England and Wales) in the French immersion programme. Hummingbird PS has been her only school. She also attended an after-school daycare programme at the school. She was active in the school and participated on several teams including soccer and basketball. She presented as very articulate and confident.

Mx Brossard is a teacher who had been at Hummingbird PS for less than five years. S/he spoke very passionately about her/his students and colleagues. Mx Brossard said that her/his understanding of restorative justice had developed from a responsive script to a way of speaking and relating to one another.

Mx Montega was a teacher who had been teaching at Hummingbird PS for over five years. S/he was trained in restorative justice a decade ago and used it informally with students in the halls or before class.

Mx Wittenberg was a teacher who had been at Hummingbird PS for over five years. S/he was trained in restorative justice in the past but said it was not something s/he used or came across regularly.

Mx Chelton had recently begun the position as the school principal. However, s/he had been involved with the school in different capacities over the years. S/he was excited about building restorative justice at Hummingbird PS.

Mx Milard was a non-teaching member of staff. S/he had worked at Hummingbird PS for less than five years. While her/his position did not involve teaching, s/he had regular contact with other staff and students.

6.3.2 New, big, building

Hummingbird PS had gone through a significant transition and was still adapting and forming. Previously, the school was made up of different buildings on the property. All interviewees spoke about the move into the new building. As I found in my observations, several interviewees called these buildings different "schools" (Mx Chelton (principal), Mx Milard (non-teaching staff), Mx Montega (teacher), Lisa (student)). And so, while they were previously under the same school heading, they were often thought of as separate institutions. Each building had its own culture and community and operated distinctly. Mx Chelton (the principal), said there were clear divisions, and staff and students did not frequently interact with others from different buildings. Equally, Mx Montega (teacher), said the different buildings operated separately, "staff really didn't mix aside from once a month at a staff meeting".

6.3.3 A fun and happy place

Within the big, new building, the picture that the interviewees provided was an active, busy and happy place. Juliette, a student, described the school as "fun, upbeat and amazing…cause there is all sorts of different things you can do! It's like a thousand posters around the school right now for different clubs." She discussed having a lot of fun being involved in sports and teams. Another student, Lisa said she is very happy at Hummingbird PS. "There's lots of things for kids to do. They do like clubs, sports and they encourage kids to keep playing them like if they don't make it and the next year, they will like do it more." Mx Milard (non-teaching staff member) described the school as "very joyful, it's a happy place!" S/he added it was "not quiet, but there is always something going on." Mx Brossard, (teacher) described her/his class as a very happy place, where students have fun learning. While many interviewees described Hummingbird PS as a fun and happy place, it was not unanimous. Mia (student), had some negative experiences at school. She did not want to label her experiences as entirely negative, but said, "So I would say like my time here has been kind of neutral,

I guess…it could be better". So, it is important to acknowledge that while many saw Hummingbird

PS as fun and happy, others had less positive experiences. I will explore Mia's experiences in greater

detail in the following sections.

6.3.4 Respect and caring

Several interviewees discussed the importance of respect at Hummingbird PS. However, this was

framed in different manners. Mx Brossard (teacher) discussed respect in an expansive manner that

comprised respect not only for each other but also for the earth.

> It's about respecting the earth. It's about respecting each other, and it is just I always
> thought if we could all truly believe that we needed to keep each other happy and
> support each other that, there would not be as many problems in this world.

S/he emphasised the importance of respect in her/his classroom and said teaching "is so much

about respect." Mx Milard (non-teaching staff member), discussed a mutually respectful

relationship. S/he said students "respect me and I respect them." Mx Chelton (principal), stated, "It

is important for staff and [most] parents…that the kids be respectful". While most staff members

discussed the importance of respect at Hummingbird PS, it was only mentioned by one student who

felt that a great deal of disrespectful behaviour existed. Mia stated, "No one that I've, you know, met

in this school is sincere. They are either, you know, liars or fake or disrespectful." So, a contested

picture is starting to emerge. While, many described Hummingbird PS as fun, happy, and respectful.

Mia highlighted a very different experience.

Several staff and students also described Hummingbird PS as caring or loving. For example,

Mx Brossard (teacher), spoke of her/his love for her/his students. In addition, Mx Chelton

(principal) stated, "I love people here". Lisa (student) described Hummingbird PS as "a caring

school". She said that staff "have the best interests for the kids and for them umm, to like help the

kids out and like I am thinking they are trying to help the kids [and] not tell them to not do this and

that. Just like the best, they are thinking for the best interest for them. ….. They help you and if you don't understand or anything, they will go over to you and just like they are having the best interest for them." However, again this view was not unanimous. Mia (student) said she felt the school was very uncaring, and that both students and teachers did not care. "I feel that some of the teachers genuinely like they don't care, you know. And like I will tell them something and they will be like, 'oh my gosh, I am so sorry' and they will like talk to the other teachers about it, but they never do anything about it." Again, this illustrates the contested picture with different experiences.

6.3.5 Inclusion

Inclusion arose as a theme within my observations. Congruently, nearly all interviewees discussed inclusion. The new school building was repeatedly described as an inclusive space, which combined everyone together under one collective roof. The previous buildings were described as "separate" (Mx Milard), "split apart" (Lisa), "different schools" (Mx Chelton (principal), Mx Milard (non-teaching staff), Mx Montega (staff)), whereas the new building was described as "all together" (Mx Chelton, Juliette, Mx Montega). So, the new building was not simply a new structure, it was an amalgamation of different groups under one roof, and the new building was a big part of the school's current identity. All the interviewees discussed the impact of the new building and described Hummingbird PS as a "big" school. Lisa (student) described how over seven years, "I have seen it come from a small, little school to a big school." However, she sometimes missed the old school and its divisions, "Sometimes I liked how it split apart and like how it was set up". Mx Chelton (principal), noted how the new building brought an opportunity for staff to work collectively.

> There was a lot of excitement about moving into a building that is big and bright and light and airy and has smart boards in every room and everybody Has [emphasis added] their own classroom. But there was so much, um having to get to use to living together for the first time. Right? Sharing resources with other divisions and Realising that we have to make

decisions together we can't just, like the main campus decides what they are going to do, and the east campus decides what it's going to do. We can't do that anymore. We have to be one staff.

So, the new building brought new opportunities to form an inclusive and collective identity. Two teachers also spoke of the importance of promoting inclusion in their classrooms. Mx Brossard discussed the significance of the rainbow flag in her/his classroom.

I did talk to the kids about the rainbow flag means that we accept everyone, and we love everyone, and it doesn't matter who we are or what we choose to do, that we are all represented here, and we love each other.

S/he emphasised her/his class as a "safe space" where everyone can be "who they want to be." Mx Montega stated that promoting inclusion part of character education in this class. However, s/he noted, "it is done very informally" and not always a priority.

6.3.6 Cliques and bullying

While there were clear efforts to promote inclusion, all the interviewees noted the existence of cliques or bullying. As an illustration, Mx Montega noted that "huge" divides existed between French Immersion and the English students. S/he stated that is very rare for students to "develop friendships" across streams, and "they don't interact". S/he described efforts to bring some of the students together for shared physical education. However, s/he noted it was a challenge, and the "kids don't like it". Lisa (student) also talked about cliques and how students stay within their own groups.

It is usually just groups of people that come together, like best friends or like stuff and they just stay in a group and if like other peoples, other people don't want to be around them they just stick with their own group and just like stay away from them. I stick with my two best friends.

She said she was aware of other students who did not have a clique or group of friends, but also suggested that they could join in large group games or activities if they wanted. She was very happy at school with her friend group. In contrast, Mia talked at length about being excluded in school.

She explained how the school was made up of different cliques and groups, but she did not feel that

she belonged with one. She spoke about painful experiences of being excluded and alone.

> You know how kids make groups when they are little, and they have those groups up until grade 8? I never [pause] you know had a group. Sooo, I have kind of been like by myself most of the time…I mean, like, okay (pause) so during lunch, people, I feel like they don't really like sit in with me. So, I usually just sit alone, unless people like wanna join me and I am like [high pitch voice], yeah sure you can join me. We'll just chat, but ummm [laughs] I just, you know, stay back and let people do their thing. I know that teachers say you just have to go around a bit and try to find friends. I have done that since you know, since I was little and since I first came to this school, but you know [pause] no one is interested in you know, kind of finding out my personality. When there is group projects and you HAVE TO [emphasis added] have a group and I am going around and I am usually like one of the last people and the teacher HAS TO [emphasis added] put me in a group.

Mia (student) also spoke about bullying and hiding at recess. "Ummm, I have done this before [she

laughs], um, staying in the washroom because I don't want to go outside." She also spoke about

another student at Hummingbird PS who was also bullied and called names, such as "fat" and

"ugly." Mx Montega and Mx Wittenberg (teachers) also discussed name-calling and bullying as an

issue. Another student, Juliette also mentioned bullying, however for her, it was not a significant

problem "I feel like every school has a bit of bullying…. but it is not really a big, big problem here".

Again, there is a complexity of perspectives here. While all the interviewees noted the existence of

cliques or bullying, not everyone experienced cliques negatively or thought bullying was a big

problem. Whereas, Mia who experienced ongoing bullying and felt excluded was profoundly

impacted.

6.3.7 Staff connections and tensions

All teachers spoke of strong relationships within their grade divisions. They also spoke about the

importance of these relationships and how they made their time at school enjoyable. Mx Wittenberg

discussed a close connection with her/his divisional colleagues. "I feel really cohesive with the

people that I work with, that is something I look forward to when I come to school in the morning

is to see the people that I work near, those relationships are super important." Equally, Mx

Montega also spoke of very close bonds with her/his colleagues, "proximity wise it's just, just a natural." S/he emphasised the importance of these relationships, so teachers can support each other and work together. Equally, Mx Brossard spoke of her immediate colleagues as part of a strong team, a "dream team", working well together.

Teachers reported strong positive connections with their divisional partners, and there is also a strong history of these groups working independently in the separate campuses. However, the grade divisions were also identified as a barrier to forming a collective identity. Mx Montega stated it, "does tend to be very segregated". Mx Chelton noted that staff were in a new situation, working together under one roof.

> The staff, they had to move into a new building, they had to adjust to being all together and they were being asked to make some changes in, in how they went about their daily business and that just …it was tough, really tough…I knew coming into this year that, um, there was a lot of community building to be done.

Mx Wittenberg, Mx Montega and Mx Chelton all noted past or ongoing challenges such as divisional groups eating lunch in separate spaces or in different parts of the lunchroom. They also said that this had been a source of contention.

6.3.8 Community building

While lunch was noted as a time of staff tensions, it was also viewed as an opportunity for community building. Mx Montega, Mx Wittenberg (teachers) and Mx Chelton (principal) all spoke about the importance of the social convenor, Mx Harris. Mx Chelton described Mx Harris as someone who "pulled people together". S/he stated, "s/he's one of those people who can sort of bridge that all". Furthermore, Mx Chelton stated, Mx Harris had recognised that food could be a mechanism for building community and had organised staff pot luck meal days, such as sandwiches, crockpot meals (an electrical appliance used for slow cooking meals) and treats. Mx Chelton viewed these collective meal days as influential in building community. As s/he stated, "food brings people

together." Mx Wittenberg felt that relationships were improving. "I feel that the staff room now is really growing into a place where you can go in, sit anywhere, talk to anybody. And it's not a negative place. It's a place where you hear lots of laughing." There were also initiatives to build staff community outside school hours. Mx Wittenberg (teacher) spoke about staff trips that are arranged out of school hours, "They, they wanna build a community and do that kind of thing. Um, so, so that's good because it does blend people across the divisions". Mx Montega spoke of formal outings as well as informal gatherings after work where "everyone is invited". Thus, while challenges existed, there was the sense that staff were increasingly integrating across divisions.

Interviewees also discussed several initiatives to bring students together. Lisa and Juliette (students) discussed the reading buddy programme, where they help younger students read. Juliette said she had become acquainted with many younger students through reading buddies, "I know quite a few people from there, from doing that. Cause like every time you don't have like assigned reading buddy". She said the younger kids say "hi" to her in the hallway or give her hugs. Mx Wittenberg (teacher) said the programme as a good form of community building.

> It is really good for my students…Um, I just think it teaches them a lot. How to care for somebody else. It's just a very nice relationship. I think the blending of the divisions, not only does it get you as a teacher to go to someone else's room and teaches you something different. But it also blends the students. So, there is someone else in the school that they care about. It's good community building. I like the idea too for teachers to um, to go into other teachers' classrooms and just sort of see, what, something, something else that is happening, somewhere else.

Lisa and Juliette also discussed lunch monitoring, where students have lunch with a younger grade and help them if needed. In addition, Juliette discussed peer helping, where grade 7 and 8 students find people who are alone or bored at recess and start activities.

Lastly, Mx Chelton (principal) discussed the implementation of restorative justice was a community building mechanism. S/he stated, that "A lot of healing that needs to happen and I, and

to me [restorative justice] is the best way." S/he stated that restorative justice could heal division that exists on "so many different levels. Like there is healing that needs to happen between divisions, there is healing that needs to happen between individual teachers, there is healing that needs to happen between parts of this staff and the community".

6.3.9 Restorative justice

6.3.9.1 Meaning

As a result, an important first step was to explore the interviewees understanding of the concept. In my literature review, I discussed restorative practices as a complex concept. As such, prior to exploring the current state of restorative practices, I will initially have sought to understand what constitutes restorative practices in Hummingbird. For me, that was an essential first step. I did not want to assume that when interviewees discussed restorative practices, their understandings of restorative practices were the same as mine.

All three student interviewees and Mx Milard (non-teaching member of staff) said s/he was unfamiliar with restorative terminology. In addition, after I provided explanations of restorative practices, s/he reported s/he had never heard of that occurring in the school. While unfamiliar with restorative justice, students described other responses to wrongdoing. Juliette (student) said after an incident the teacher would "just say people have been doing this and I don't like it, and stuff like that. And she will like kind of explain why people shouldn't do that and why it's not nice." Mia (student) also said teachers would respond to wrongdoing by talking with students. As a student who had been harmed by wrongdoing, she felt that responses were not sufficiently punitive.

> I feel like a lot of the teachers talk about it and say like, don't do this and like don't do that but when a problem pops up, they don't do anything about its been that way since I was little. And I have gone to the principal so many times about like fights and stuff and no one's ever had like a detention or anything like that, it's just like "Don't do that again" and they just say that over and over and over again.

In contrast, Lisa (student) emphasised punitive responses to wrongdoing. Lisa said, when there is a conflict or wrongdoing, "their teachers tell them what the consequence is." They may have to stay in "for a few recesses [and not] go outside", "or you can get um suspended from school if you do something really bad". So, student and non-teaching interviewees were unfamiliar with restorative terminology and practices, and they described other approaches for dealing with wrongdoing.

The second group of interviewees understood restorative justice as a responsive tool. Mx Wittenberg (teacher) described restorative justice as, "a way of dealing with the students, it's just a [pause] discipline tactic or a, a class management tool." However, s/he was trained "years ago" and expressed some doubt about whether her/his understanding was "right." Mx Wittenberg said, "I don't know a lot about what, like, restorative practice, I just know what I have seen and what I do, and what works. I don't know if I am calling it the right thing. I don't know, I may be wrong". Mx Montega (teacher) also described restorative justice as a responsive tool. S/he said, "It is a tool, right, to get to the issues faster, I think it typically comes when there is conflict". Mx Chelton (principal) gave some mixed responses, which reflect both responsive and relational understandings. Initially, s/he described restorative justice responsively. "It is interesting because when I think of the word restorative there is an implication that something is needing to be restored, so I see it as very responsive. So, my understanding is that it is about repairing the harm". S/he noted, "I haven't given it a whole lot of thought as to what will a proactive approach look like". But then later stated,

> Transformative is a great word because that's what I, that's what I envision. I envision we are going to transform the culture here. This [restorative justice] won't be the only way that we do it, like, I think there are lots of other things already in the works. That are already beginning to transform.

The final interviewee, Mx Brossard (teacher) discussed how her/his understanding of restorative justice had evolved from responsive encounters to a form of interaction and relationships.

 I think when we first, when I first started with it, it was very responsive. So it was that one kid kicked another kid, how did it make that kid feel…Now it is, just kind of a community thing, and it's a way to speak to people, a way to like, like it's a, a language and letting them talk about feelings and [slight pause] and bringing a group together so it's a way of like being a group and being productive together.

Interestingly, unlike other interviewees, Mx Brossard emphasised a relational ethos that influenced language, relationships and daily interaction. This perception clearly differed from the predominant conceptualisation of restorative justice as a responsive mechanism.

6.3.9.2 Responsive dialogue that promotes accountability

Several staff members emphasised the importance of language and communication in restorative justice. Mx Chelton (principal), Mx Montega, Mx Brossard and Mx Wittenberg (teachers) all discussed the importance of the restorative script. Mx Chelton stated,

And I, I'm I'm always astonished at how the youngest kids can, can really dig into those questions, right? And it makes such a difference to say tell me what you were thinking at the time as opposed to why did you do that? Because why is loaded!! It is just loaded, right? Right? As opposed to tell me a little bit more about what you were thinking at that time? Do you remember what thoughts were going through your head? Like it is just, I don't know, it is less threatening.

Equally, Mx Wittenberg said, restorative questions get students to think about their behaviour. "I find it very useful because it stops them, and it makes them think. As soon as you ask them what their role in it was, and what they were thinking, what the other person was thinking, it, it, it slows them down, it makes them think". Mx Wittenberg said, "That they [students] know in advance if there is a conflict or some sort of wrongdoing, that this is how it is going to be addressed. Yeah and I am going to ask questions, and I need you to answer them." S/he also stated that a principal frequently used restorative justice, "There is a lot, there is always a lot of dialogue. Talking. When [s/he] is, disciplining kids". Mx Montega noted that recently little cards were distributed, "to keep in our pockets for, umm (pause), you know outside at recess if we run into conflict." S/he also noted

that the principal "has a, a booklet so s/he will follow the, the talking stems to make sure that s/he's using the language." Mx Brossard stated,

> I just find it makes everything more purposeful for the kids, so it is not just that YOU'VE [emphasis added] made a bad choice and you have hurt someone it's that um, you know, how were you feeling when you did this? That impacted this person, and now their family at home might be impacted and it just makes everything so much bigger than, than someone might think it is in the moment [giggles].

S/he also noted that when the language is used regularly, students learn it. "I feel like after the kids are kind of trained in what language to use and to talk about feelings and to make things better that they don't always need an adult."

All staff members stated that the responsive restorative dialogue can help students think, be accountable and accept responsibility for their actions. Mx Chelton (principal) stated,

> Because the, the longer, the more number of years that, that you are doing them the fewer incidents …Because kids become accountable and they hold other kids accountable and they figure out how to resolve them on their own. They take ownership of the conflict- like whoaa!! It is awesome.

Equally, Mx Brossard (teacher) stated, "I use it because I think it makes kids more accountable for their actions". Mx Wittenberg (teacher) also said, "I think it teaches them to settle things maybe more independently. Mx Montega (teacher) thought restorative justice enables students to look at how their actions affect others. "I think it is important to develop citizens who understand another person and it's not just them thinking about their world, right?"

6.3.9.3 Implementation and buy-in

Restorative justice was initially implemented in Hummingbird PS a decade before my visits but was described as an initiative that had faded away over time. With a new principal, the school had joined a pilot project to develop restorative justice throughout the school. However, during my visits, restorative justice had not yet been formally introduced to all members of the school community. The principal planned to raise the issue with the school council, then with the wider parent and

family group and students at a later date. Initially, Mx Chelton (principal) took a staged approach to

gauging potential interest in restorative justice. To begin, s/he "touch[ed] base with 3 or 4 key

people so that I can get my sense of how things are going to go, I don't even remember. Um, I had,

I had had conversations in advance and had planted the seeds and had put out an email." Once key

people expressed an interest, the "pilot project to develop restorative practices was then discussed at

a staff meeting". Mx Chelton emphasised that restorative justice was a collective decision, "If we are

not in consensus, it is not happening. And that's ok, I am ok either way." Despite this dialogic

process Mx Montega stated s/he was unaware of the initiative.

> I didn't really know that it was an initiative to be honest. Yeah, I kind of got the sense,
> the clue, when the cards were passed around again, you know to keep in your pocket… I
> just thought, well maybe that's going to happen again. But I, I didn't know.

S/he was also unaware of the staff meeting that introduced the idea. It is not clear what happened,

or why s/he had not received the notice. However, s/he described her/himself as "somebody who's

open to new learnings and I enjoy picking up new things". However, s/he noted, "I am not going to

lie to ya. I think if it came across people's desk they would be like, Oh for God's sakes! This is what

we are doing next! Like we are back to this NOW!" Later, Mx Montega stated, "There's definitely

those people that just respond differently and negatively too…they resent the fact that someone else

is choosing something that they want, need to know, right? They would rather have that um, make

that choice". Mx Wittenberg (teacher) believed restorative justice should be "encouraged…uh, as a

management style that it would be divisional."   S/he suggested, "People would be more open to it"

if restorative justice was implemented separately within grade divisions because they "have different

concerns". In this respect, restorative justice would be a behavioural management mechanism

specifically tailored to the unique needs of the grade divisions. Mx Chelton (principal), suggested

that some individuals, "who aren't afraid of change and who um, are willing to move forward and,

and, and encourage the ones who maybe have been here for longer and who, may or may not want to see things change because, that's the way we have always done it [laughs]".

Mx Brossard (teacher) was committed to using restorative justice every day. "I was happy to hear that they would be expanding because I think, umm it would be nice in a school this size if the kids could be more aware of their behaviours. If they have proof it works." S/he also noted that restorative justice would be easier for some to adopt than others. Because restorative justice was a foreign concept to the students, it was difficult for them to consider in the everyday. However, Mia said that she was sceptical of the idea and did not think it would work. As someone who had experienced bullying, she wanted harsher and more punitive responses. Mx Brossard talked about a trickle-down process, where the office was using it and more classrooms, others would feel "compelled to use it." Overall, it was interesting that all the teachers expressed buy-in to expanding restorative justice. However, their understanding of the overall implications clearly differed. Mia also illustrated a desire for retribution and felt that talking was ineffective.

> When a problem pops up, they don't do anything about it, it's been that way since I was little. And I have gone to the principal so many times about like fights and stuff and no one's ever had like a detention or anything like that, it's just like, don't do that again. And they just say that over and over and over again.

6.3.9.4 Constructed in the everyday

Because of the overwhelming emphasis on restorative justice as a responsive instrument, several staff members stated it was used occasionally. Mx Wittenberg and Mx Montega (teachers) both said restorative justice was used a lot by the principal. As an illustration, Mx Wittenberg stated,

> It's never anything that's been, that I have encountered a lot a lot, like an on-going basis. You sort of hear about it every now and then…In terms of restorative practices at the school, I don't have to do a lot in my classroom because I, I don't have a lot of things come up in my classroom. Things that happen to my students outside and they are dealt with by the office, so I think it is more something that happens at that level.

S/he said, "in terms of actively seeing restorative justice on a continuous basis…it pops up now and then". Mx Montega, stated that it was a challenge to use restorative justice as school days were hectic.

> My days dictated by bells and I need to stick to schedules, so I don't have the luxury of saying, yeah come on in my office, um, we will sit down and talk. So, sometimes it happens at recess, sometimes it happens just when I am on duty and I pull them and er, um or in class time, before, before the learning starts.

S/he noted "I have been through two circles with this group of girls, clearly, this student isn't changing her behaviours. I think this needs to land on… [the principal's] desk." So, when restorative justice did not alter behaviour in the long term, they would fall back on the principal. Interestingly, Mx Montega and Mx Wittenberg (teachers) described restorative justice as external to learning, something that can happen in an office and was not commonplace. In contrast, Mx Brossard (teacher) who understood restorative justice as relational said, "It is every day." S/he described restorative justice as a language and as a collective way of being.

While many descriptions of restorative justice focused upon practices with students. Mx Montega, Mx Wittenberg (teachers), and Mx Chelton (principal) all discussed a staff circle that took place in the previous year. Mx Wittenberg stated, "I think last year there was an effort to get us to Do [emphasis added] some kind of circle. But it ended up being [bell rings]. Ahhh, everyone ended up crying and saying nice things about each other and it was fine, but I don't think that was the point." In contrast, Mx Montega viewed the circle as a positive community building experience.

> Last year…we did restorative circle… It was a PD [professional development, akin to inset] day and [s/he] dedicated the whole day to restorative, practices and we started the day off with a circle…that was, a very emotional day. But I think it was to breakdown, I think the goal was to break down barriers [slight pause]. Have an opportunity to shine a light on positive things that we have on each other that we would not necessarily have taken the time to, like um, share with that, uh colleague.

Mx Chelton did not participate in the circle but noted it happened. While the staff circle was experienced in different ways, its existence illustrates the various forms that restorative justice can take. Specifically, it is not restricted to encounters with students.

6.3.9.5 Moving forward and embedding

None of the interviewees suggested that restorative justice was embedded within the school. In contrast, half of the interviewees were unfamiliar with the concept or re-implementation. However, Mx Brossard (teacher) spoke of restorative justice embedded within her/his classroom. "Every day, so consistency, and just making sure that everyone knows that they, everything we do we need to make better or we need to keep everyone around us happy." However, s/he noted that school-wide embedment would take time. "Change is a really tricky thing so, I think [slight pause] it would take a few years. Several staff described the pilot as the future for restorative justice in Hummingbird PS. Mx Chelton (principal), said Hummingbird PS's restorative future was exciting and unknown. "I am waiting for it to unfold. I am so excited about that, I really don't, I don't know [where it will go]. It is kind of unknown territory. But I trust that it is going to be fantastic!! [With added emphasis]." The pilot project was also discussed by Mx Montega and Mx Wittenberg (teachers) as an opportunity to "refresh" restorative justice at Hummingbird PS. Mx Montega stated,

> I think it is time that I am refreshed. I am sure there is new thinking. There is new learnings. There is different ways that we can respond to things. Things that I was was never, you know, didn't have, so and that's just me, right? Who knows, maybe someone on staff, young that has never been involved in it, or maybe they missed it the first time around.

6.4 Documentary Information

Having considered observations and interviews, next, I will focus upon documentary information. The Ministry of Education collects data on every public school in Ontario. This provides some insight into the school demographics and overall structure. According to the Ministry of Education (2017[a]) statistics for 2015-2016, Hummingbird is close to the provincial average for students from

lower income households. Nearly all the students' first language is English, far below the provincial average of 24.5%. A below average number of students have a parent who has some university education. The school has a slightly above average number of gifted students. From kindergarten to grade three, all classes have twenty students or fewer (Ibid).

During my visit to Hummingbird PS, I obtained a copy of the student handbook for 2016-2017. The handbook contained the school's mission statement. While the mission statement did not mention restorative justice, it described the school as "caring" and "friendly" place to learn. The mission statement highlights learning in both French and English, as well as social and leisure abilities/capabilities. Lastly, Hummingbird's mission statement notes that all students are different and that learning is given by staff in collaboration with the wider community with the objective to help students to change and grow. The handbook stated that the school "works extensively" with restorative practice. Restorative practice was then described as a responsive encounter used when there are "problems or conflict". Under school safety, restorative practice was mentioned as a process that allows students to accept responsibility and "make things right". It was also described as a discipline tool that brings people together.

Restorative justice was discussed repeatedly in Hummingbird PS's code of conduct. In the code of conduct, like the student handbook, restorative justice was described responsively. The document stated that Hummingbird PS used restorative practices "frequently." Restorative practice was described as one of the strategies the school used to respond to bullying and exclusion. In addition, restorative practices were described as informal and formal encounters, a conflict management approach, problem-solving technique, progressive discipline and a practice that enables reparation. These encounters were said to take place in informal and formal settings, in order to

attend to problems, settle conflicts, gain understanding and encourage responsibility. The School Board's commitment to restorative practices is also noted.

The Hummingbird PS bullying plan also discussed restorative justice several times. Multiple restorative initiatives to prevent or respond to bullying were listed, including restorative classrooms, a restorative team, responsive circles, and circles to build positive relationships in classrooms and amongst staff. Several of these initiatives appear to suggest something beyond responsive action and steps towards relational restorative justice. However, no further descriptions were provided, and so the meaning of terms is unclear. For example, what would a restorative classroom look like, or how would circles build relationships? Are these examples referring to responsive practices for bullying, or something more pervasive? Having read the document many times, I cannot give a definitive answer on meaning, instead I want to highlight that again restorative justice is listed as important in Hummingbird PS.

Hummingbird PS has a strong presence online. There is a school website, Twitter and Instagram accounts. However, I was unable to locate any recent mention of the school's commitment to restorative justice in any of these sources. Unfortunately, I did not have full access to all the school's electronic media. Hummingbird PS used a social networking software application as one of its primary means of communication, which requires an official login. While I attempted to arrange full access, that was not possible. Instead, I was able to see how the system operated and examined a few notices and announcements. In addition, I received multiple printouts of messages that mentioned me and my research.

A search of electronic news media produced nearly 200 articles discussing Hummingbird PS. Initially, I sought reports and articles that spoke to the school and its culture, and then focused upon restorative justice. The recent articles portrayed the school as actively involved in community

fundraising and participating in different sports tournaments and competitions as well as gaining academic praise. Other reports covered safety issues such as safe school arrival, and the new building. They provided a picture of an active and engaged school community. In my searches for restorative material, I found several articles from 2007 detailing Hummingbird PS's initial implementation of restorative justice. One article (Name withheld, 2007) in a local newspaper stated that Hummingbird PS used restorative justice to resolve conflicts and that students learnt to care and respect one another. The principal at that time said restorative justice "transforms behaviour' (Name Withheld, 2007), and the use of restorative justice was directly related to improving student attitudes, grades, and school safety. In a second article (Name withheld, 2007[2]) restorative justice was described as a "new concept" for dealing with wrongdoing and conflict. While these documents provided some insights into the initial implementation of restorative justice, I was unable to find any recent reports.

Overall, documentary information mirrors the observational and interview findings. Restorative terminology was missing from some key sources, including the school's homepage and mission statement. Restorative justice was primarily constructed as responsive practice for conflict or problems.

6.5 Hummingbird Public Schools summary

Hummingbird PS was a large and active school that worked at promoting inclusion, respect and caring. However, there was evidence that divisions, exclusions and bullying still existed. While restorative justice was previously implemented in the school, it was not a priority and eventually faded out. With a new principal, restorative justice was being re-implemented, and the school had signed on to be part of a pilot project. While there were no physical indicators of restorative justice in most areas of the school, I did observe both proactive and reactive practices. Restorative justice

was directly related to circles. Significantly, there was not a unified understanding of the current role

of restorative justice in Hummingbird PS. During my visits, there was a range of views and

experiences. Students and non-teaching staff were mostly unfamiliar with restorative terminology.

However, students did illustrate some familiarity with restorative scripts and practices. Staff most

commonly described restorative justice as a responsive tool that allows students to be accountable

for their actions. However, relational understandings were also present and were clearly visible in a

few classrooms. Restorative justice was not considered embedded throughout the school, rather

Hummingbird PS was at the beginning of a new restorative journey.

Chapter Seven Case Study: Kingfisher Public School

We can use circles all the time in everything and help teachers understand that restorative practices is really a philosophy. It's not just a circle. Umm, I think to me it means that, it's a belief system and a philosophy, and a way of Being [with added emphasis]. In that you, you want to repair the harm that has been done and, and help kids learn from that, help them to do it on their Own [emphasis added] and, and coach them through it and help them, grow empathy through that process (Mx Toews, principal at Kingfisher PS discussing building restorative justice at the school.)

I have some discomfort with it. Just because [pause], it is hard to put into words. Um, I guess I am still stuck with, with thinking is that person really going to change? Well just, just can you do this and it can all just be words or is the thinking actually changing? And, I am not sure that I, I know, that I know that it has been affective in changing people's thinking. And, um, and I know that a lot of people are very good at saying what people expect to hear. Umm, and then I also [laughs a little] wonder about um, sort of resentful feelings of, of having been hurt and umm [pause] and not getting any satisfaction out of that. That it seems like you got off really lightly (Mx Miller, teacher at Kingfisher PS speaking about restorative justice.)

7.1 Chapter introduction

Following on from the previous chapter, this chapter continues to explore the data by focusing upon the second school, Kingfisher Public School. Again, my aim was to understand how the school constructed, and embedded restorative justice. I found that Kingfisher PS was a small semi-rural school with many close connections. Restorative justice had been introduced in the past but had largely faded away. The school had recently committed to participate in a pilot project to develop restorative justice. At the time of my visits, the pilot was in the planning stages. Restorative justice was not pervasive and was only visible in a few areas of the school.

This chapter explores Kingfisher PS within four distinct sections. I begin by considering my observations, including my first impressions, small local school, mindfulness, contrasting values and behaviour motivations. Then I explore my observations of restorative justice in Kingfisher PS. Next, I consider data from the interviews. In this section, I provide a brief overview of the interviewees,

then explore data on the small school community, caring and respect, consequences and restorative justice. In the following section, I consider all the documentary information, which comprises internal materials and news media. To finish, I summarise the chapter's findings.

7.2 Observations

I begin by considering my observations and experiences at Kingfisher PS. Initially, I will focus upon my overall experience including my first impressions, the small local school environment, mindfulness, contrasting values, and behaviour motivation. Then, I will explore my observations of restorative justice, physical indicators, meaning and everyday practices.

7.2.1 First impressions

Kingfisher PS was situated on a quiet street in a semi-rural area. When I arrived at 8:45am, buses were pulling into the parking lot and dropping students off, and there was a buzz around the main entrance. It was a bright spring morning, daffodils stood out brightly against the brown brick building and the Canadian flag fluttered in the wind. I walked in the open front door and found my way to the office. Mx Toews (principal) was held up at another appointment, so another staff member showed me to the staff room where I sat on a soft velveteen Chesterfield and waited. I immediately noticed two posters on the wall that listed restorative questions for when "things go wrong" and "when someone is hurt". The posters were a visible indicator of restorative justice and I was excited to know and see more. For the first twenty minutes, there was a buzz of staff entering, checking mail, putting lunches in the fridge and making coffee. Some greeted me with a "good morning" or "hi" and others hurriedly put items in the fridge and left.

When Mx Toews arrived, s/he apologised for the delay and we went into her/his office. We had a relaxed discussion about the school and my research. S/he then signed the school consent forms and then announced my arrival to the school on the public-address system (PA). I was

provided with a school lanyard with a whistle, so that I looked like "I belong." Then, Mx Toews gave me a brief overview of the school, and introduced me to a class where I stayed and observed.

7.2.2 Small, community school

I spent two weeks at Kingfisher School. During this time, I stayed in a local bed and breakfast, went to local shops and restaurants and visited local parks and attractions. I spent time in every classroom at every grade level (junior kindergarten to grade eight). In addition, I saw students in different environments including computer room, library, gym, clubs, as well as French, art and assemblies. Kingfisher PS was a small school, with less than 200 students from junior kindergarten to grade eight. The school had a small catchment area, so students lived locally, and took school buses, walked, cycled, or were driven to school. So, as I drove to Kingfisher PS each morning the local streets were dotted with students waiting for buses or making their way to school. Some students had deep rooted connections to Kingfisher PS, as their siblings, parents, and/or other relatives attended the school. Several staff members also had longstanding relationships with the school. One afternoon, a teacher pointed out the current and previous staff within the student graduation photos hung along the hall. A university student on a Child and Youth Work (CYW) placement, also noted that s/he was a former student at Kingfisher PS. The community feel was accentuated when I visited a local shop, and the owner spoke of her/his family connections with the school. So, there was a deep connection between the school and the surrounding community.

The small school size also meant students knew each other and on occasion interacted across grades. For example, during the morning breakfast club, students of different ages sat around tables and ate together and at recess students played games together such as soccer and basketball. On one occasion, a boy from a primary class played soccer with a group of older students. He played well, and scored a goal through the sweater posts, all players cheered and congratulated him.

Because of the school size, I also found that it was easier for me to familiarise myself with students and teachers, and vice versa as I saw them repeatedly throughout the days. As an illustration, after my first week in Kingfisher PS a student approached me and said, "Wow, you have been here forever". At the time, I chuckled to myself, and felt that he must be getting accustomed to seeing me around the school. The small size also meant that absences were more noticeable. As an illustration, one day three teachers were away, that represented nearly half of the full-time teaching staff and I felt a change in the school dynamics that day.

7.2.3 Mindfulness

Twice a day, prior to nutrition breaks, there was a school-wide mindfulness session.[12] Mindfulness can take many forms, at Kingfisher, for five minutes Enya (an Irish singer-songwriter) was played on the school PA. On one occasion, as I sat in a classroom, Enya could be heard with increasing clarity. A boy sitting nearby enthusiastically raised his hand and said, "I hear mindfulness, I hear mindfulness". To which the teacher responded, that the class could quietly put away their work. It was unclear whether the student was excited with mindfulness or to be finished the math assignment, but in either case he sat in silence with a smile. Mindfulness was a new initiative to give students an opportunity for quiet reflection before the nutrition breaks. In most classes during mindfulness, students were encouraged to stop working and sit quietly. However, on a few occasions, teachers instructed students to ignore the music and continue with classwork. Mindfulness was never discussed as restorative justice. In addition, during my visits it was unclear whether the initiative would continue. So, it is best considered as something the school was trying out. However, mindfulness was an example of an initiative to bring change to school.

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[12] Mindfulness is a practice of being conscious and aware in the moment, and "observing without criticism" (Williams and Penman, 2012, p.5).

7.2.4 A complex school with diverse relationships

I spent a substantial amount of time considering the school environment. While I viewed Kingfisher PS as a small community school, I felt that there were diverse relationships. Students commonly worked collaboratively, such as in group work projects, and yet at other times were encouraged to compete against one another such as in a spelling bee or math competition. The diverse relationships particularly stood out for me one day when I went to two very different classrooms. I spent the morning in a class where students selected one of several learning activities and worked collaboratively together. Students moved freely among the different stations if there was a space. They also went to the washroom without asking a staff member. The teacher emphasised the students as experts and said it was her/his job "to help them piece together their learning". Students were also active as teachers, and they shared what they had learnt with the rest of the class. At this time, other students asked the presenter questions or provided feedback. When students did not listen or misbehaved, the presenters were active in discussing the incident. As an illustration, one student was talking during another's presentation, and the teacher asked the presenter how this made him feel, to which the student presenter told his peer, "I feel angry because you are talking when I am showing off my learning". The student who had been talking, chose to say sorry, and the presenter continued. What I observed in this classroom was a focus on child-centred learning, students as experts, collaborative relationships and dialogic responses to wrongdoing.

After a nutrition break, I went to another classroom where there was a clearly different way of relating. When class began, students sat, the teacher gave instructions, and then students worked alone at their desks on the assigned sheet. When students wanted to go to the washroom, they raised their hand and asked the teacher for permission. On occasions when students were not paying attention or talking, the teacher raised her/his voice, and students were warned, or given punishments (sent out into the hallway). In this classroom, relationships were noticeably different

from the previous example. There was a clear power structure, the teacher was the authority, and students were not given autonomy and worked individually. When wrongdoing occurred, it was not discussed and there were clear consequences. I have mentioned these two examples, as they clearly illustrated different relationships, I do not infer that the former class was always interactive, and the latter was instructional. On the contrary, I want to highlight from my observations that the everyday reality of relationships in Kingfisher PS were more complex and variable.

7.2.5 Behaviour motivations

Throughout Kingfisher PS behaviour motivation, through rewards and consequences were pervasive. Several classes sought to encourage positive behaviour through different initiatives. As an illustration, in one classroom there was a kindness jar. After acts of kindness a pompom was placed in the jar and when full, the class would have a party to celebrate. Another classroom had a similar jar with popcorn kernels. At different points on the jar, there were reward lines such as free time, extra gym and class party. This class also had popcorn points (a reward system based on behaviour in table groups) and at the end of the week the group with the most points would receive popcorn. Other teachers rewarded students for sitting quietly or working well, for example those students could get their lunches first.

While rewards were used to encourage positive behaviour, punitive consequences were used widely for inappropriate actions. Sometimes teachers issued warnings, such as loss of recess time or no end of year trip. However, during my visits exclusions were highly visible at Kingfisher PS. As one teacher said to a group of colleagues in the hall, "If there is any problem, just exclude. Send them out into the hallway." One of the most memorable moments for me, occurred just before a spelling bee in the gym. A pile of stones was spotted near a group of students on the gym floor. A teacher asked who was responsible and one boy confessed. The teacher said, "You are not welcome

here" and the boy was sent to sit on a bench outside the gym for the remainder of the time. On

another occasion, an older student, Percy was excluded from class. I did not get a detailed

description, only there had been ongoing wrongdoing, and Percy had said something inappropriate.

Percy was later sent to a primary classroom for the remainder of the day. Among the staff, there was

very different explanations for the move, including that Percy was being punished, taking a time out,

or that he was being shamed. Another staff member described this response as "restorative." S/he

said that Percy was sent to "help out" in a lower grade. While this move was seen as some form of

reparation, from my observations, Percy sat alone at a desk and there was no indication that he

helped the class in any way. The primary teacher was also unaware of what happened and described

him as a visitor to the class.

7.2.6 Restorative justice

During my initial meeting with the principal Mx Toews, s/he explained that as part of the Board

wide initiative restorative justice was first introduced in Kingfisher PS over a decade ago. At that

time, all staff were trained, and restorative posters and cards were distributed. However, s/he

explained, "it has kind of died off, a little bit in recent years". Mx Toews was new to the school and

had been instrumental in committing to a pilot project to expand restorative justice. However, the

exact details were unknown during my visits.

7.2.6.1 Physical indicators

From my earliest introduction to Kingfisher PS, I saw visible physical indicators of restorative

justice. As I described earlier, when I first entered the staff room there were the two posters room

on the wall with restorative questions for when "things go wrong" and "when someone is hurt".

Restorative posters also hung in different areas of the school including in the office and two

classrooms. My initial thought was that the posters were an indication of the school's commitment

to restorative justice. However, there was no apparent connection between the classes with the posters and the use of restorative justice. There was also no mention of the posters being actively used or discussed. Correspondingly, several staff members said the posters were simply left on the walls from the initial implementation a decade ago. There was also no indication of restorative justice in many areas of the school, including the entrance, halls and library.

I searched through the student library, and I was unable to find any specific reference to restorative justice. However, I did discover several books on circles, healing, and reconciliation. One book titled, "The sharing circle" (Meuse, 2003), had a collection of stories about Indigenous practices. "When everyone sits in a circle, it's easy to see each other and to hear each other's voices. In a circle, everyone is treated as an equal. The circle teaches people to have respect for others. No one is allowed to talk or disturb the person who is talking" (Ibid, p.35). I also found a few books that discussed alternatives to violence and peacebuilding. In the staff room there was a large dark blue bookcase with resources, however, I was unable to find anything on either restorative justice or related topics. Equally, there was a parent bookshelf in the office, but I was unable to find any books on restorative justice. Overall, while there were a few physical indicators of restorative justice throughout the school, they were not pervasive and rather were remnants of the initial implementation, rather than reflecting the active commitment.

7.2.6.2 Meaning

Following on from physical indicators, I was interested in stakeholder's understandings of restorative justice. Overall, most students were unfamiliar with restorative terminology and practices, and most staff gave responsive descriptions. However, Mx Toews (principal) did emphasise a relational restorative justice.

Throughout my visits, students repeatedly said they were unfamiliar with the terms restorative justice and restorative practices. As an illustration, when discussing my research with two intermediate classes, I asked the students if they were familiar with restorative practices or restorative justice; not one student raised their hand. I then provided several examples, and again no hands were raised. On another occasion, I was in a primary classroom helping students, family members and staff to prepare for a class party. I purposively joined the class because I was interested in the role of community members in the classroom. I sat at a small table with a mother and several young students and introduced myself. When I mentioned I was a visiting PhD student, the Mum noted she had heard about me in the school newsletter (see section 7.4 on documentary information). Then she asked, "What was that word in there? I didn't understand what it was." I suggested it might be "restorative practices", to which she replied, "Yes! Yes, that's it. What is that? I was going to look it up". I briefly explained restorative practices and my research. From our short conversation, it was clear she was unaware of restorative justice and the school's commitment.

While students and some parents were unfamiliar with restorative terminology, staff favoured the term restorative practices and overwhelmingly described it as a behaviour management tool. Different teachers noted encounters that had taken place in the past for wrongdoing such as theft, however, they were uncommon. One teacher felt that sending a student named Percy to a primary classroom was "restorative," as he could "help out" in the class. This understanding also connected restorative justice with responsive practices but emphasised a goal of reparation. During email communication, Mx Toews stated, "I see some 'trends' toward the restorative philosophy, but still some punitive mindsets". During my visits, s/he also noted that most people in the school viewed restorative justice as a behaviour management tool.

Mx Toews was new to the school and had been instrumental in committing to the pilot

project to expand restorative justice. In contrast with the other staff, s/he emphasised relationships

and noted, "When we were first trained, it was more issue-based. This time it should be a much

more well-rounded approach". S/he felt that the school's commitment to restorative justice would

affect every area of the school. For example, s/he discussed buying tables that could be easily moved

to "get people in circles faster", as reflective of their restorative commitment.

7.2.6.3 Practices in the everyday

Throughout my time at Kingfisher PS I did not observe any restorative encounters (such as circles,

conferences). As I have noted, the main response to wrongdoing was punitive consequences.

However, I did hear about encounters that had occurred in the past for wrongdoing and several

teachers said that Mx Toews used restorative justice with students in her/his office. In two

classrooms, circles were used regularly for learning and communication. In these classrooms,

students were encouraged to resolve disputes through dialogue and use affective statements to show

other students the impact of their actions. However, these practices were never called restorative,

rather the teachers suggested they were reflective of good practice. Overall, like Mx Toews, I could

see that some staff members were using restorative justice relationally. However, for the most part

restorative justice was not visible as either a responsive encounter, or a relational ethos.

7.3 Interviews

After exploring my observations, I will now consider the interviews. To begin, I will provide a brief

summary of all the interviewees, then I will explore the descriptions of Kingfisher PS, and common

themes including the small inclusive school, caring and respect, and a school where consequences

were important. Next, I will explore understandings and usages of restorative justice. This begins

with interviewees descriptions of what constitutes restorative justice, buy-in, consequences and restorative justice in the everyday.

7.3.1 Introduction to interviewees

I conducted seven interviews at Kingfisher PS, including two students and five staff. The interviews ranged in time from twenty minutes to fifty-five minutes, with an average time of thirty-four minutes. Prior to considering the data from the interviews, I will provide a brief introduction to the different interviewees.

Jason was a 12-year-old student in grade 6 (comparable with year 7 in England and Wales). He had attended Kingfisher PS since junior kindergarten. Jason described himself as sporty, and said he tried out for all the school teams.

Rebecca was a 12-year-old student in grade 6 (comparable with year 7 in England and Wales). She was a new student at Kingfisher PS and enjoyed volunteering at school. She was also very inquisitive and asked numerous questions throughout the interview.

Mx Toews, was the principal of Kingfisher PS. S/he was new to the school and enthusiastic about building restorative justice.

Mx Miller was a teacher at Kingfisher PS. S/he had worked at the school for less than five years. S/he expressed some discomfort with restorative justice.

Mx Carter was a new teacher at Kingfisher PS. S/he spoke very passionately about teaching and the school.

Mx Doucet was a new teacher at Kingfisher PS. S/he suggested that a lot of what s/he did in her/his classroom could be considered restorative justice, but it was just good practice.

Mx Wheeler was a non-teaching member of staff who had worked at Kingfisher PS for less than five years. While her/his role was non-teaching, s/he had daily interactions with staff and students.

7.3.2 A small inclusive community

When asked to describe Kingfisher PS, all the interviewees mentioned the size of the school. Words such as little or small were used to discuss both the size of the building and the number of students and staff. Mx Toews, the school principal described Kingfisher PS as "a little country school". Jason, a student stated, "This is a small school, it's not a boring school." In addition, Mx Wheeler a non-teaching staff member said, "This is a small group, a small school". All the interviewees clearly saw the school size as an integral part of its identity, and many related size to closer relationships and an inclusive community. As an illustration, Jason, a student described Kingfisher PS as a small school community where,

> Everybody gets together, everybody gets to do it, it's [slight pause] nobody is discluded [sic] everybody gets to do, do it, um [pause] it's not focused in, in one group, it's, it's the entire, I don't know how to put it- it's like, everybody, everybody's included. Everybody's always connected and [pause] everybody's always so nice and they are all [pause] yeah! That's, that's about it!"

Another student, Rebecca said, "Here it's like really close, it's more like a family-ish." She also explained how the school size made it easier to build friendships when she first arrived at the school.

> When I first came here, it was kind of nerve racking. But [pause] I was really shy at first and I, and then what happened is, and then two girls came over to me and said "hey do you wanna go and do this at recess with us?" and I said "sure". And then I got to know them better as they asked me questions about where I came from and then I asked them how long they had been at this school. And so, I guess I was like nervous at first, but I feel like I was welcomed more than [at] a big school.

Mx Wheeler, a non-teaching staff member said the school was like a family. S/he stated, "all staff, parents, kids, kids they look like small family, not perfect but [like a real family]." S/he also said that

everyone is included and a team, encouraging, motivating and supporting each other. Mx Carter

(teacher) also noted the family atmosphere and highlighted the number of family relations in the

school. S/he said,

> Because it's a small school so you do create that inter-grade relationship or the kids create that inter-grade relationships. And so, it's the idea that you are always looking out for somebody else out there. Umm, and ………to me it seems like just that family kind of place. Cause we do have a lot of families here in the different grades.

Mx Toews, the principal, emphasised the importance of connections across grades in the school.

S/he noted,

> One of my, one of my favourite things this year was Thomas [identifying information not included; an intermediate student] …He uh, there was a big box. We got a rocking chair for one of the kids, so there is a big box outside, waiting to be, waiting to go in the recycling and Thomas got the box at first recess and he came in wearing it [I laugh]. And [pause] he if he could keep it and wear it second recess. And I said "sure" so he cut holes for his arms and stuff and I went in at second recess, and here was Thomas in the giant box running across the yard and all the little kids following him. It was awesome!! [We both laugh] It was just the best so, it was uh, yeah that was fun. So, we hope to make those connections between the big kids and the little kids and hope that that pays off."

While most interviewees emphasised a community or family feel within the school, this

sentiment was not unanimous. One teacher was unsure, and another was in clear disagreement. Mx

Doucet described community within Mallard School Board but had mixed feelings within Kingfisher

PS. S/he said there is a community feel "somewhat" and "sometimes", however s/he also felt

strongly that divisions did exist. In particular, Mx Doucet saw divisions between the different grade

levels, and felt that sometimes others are "far away," and that there is "definitely more room for

collaboration." S/he also said that in order to be an inclusive school, it must be actively engaging in

forums on diversity and s/he did not think that happened. Mx Doucet also noted that there were no

race awareness groups, or gender and sexuality groups, and felt more work was needed actively to

promote inclusion. Another teacher, Mx Miller noted the existence of outsiders and excluded

students in the school. S/he stated, "I have some cliques of students and some students who seem more alone." S/he did not see the school as a community, but thought that they were,

> Just more aware. But I would say we do have a lot of loners, still, even in a small group. You will see kids, that if you allow kids to choose groups, they are not chosen. You will see kids in at recess who are by themselves. Uh, [pause] so it's sort of, we are a microcosm of what is out there.

Thus, while most interviewees highlighted a strong sense of community in Kingfisher PS, this was not unanimous. One teacher identified areas of isolation and exclusion, another noted division and a lack of inclusive education.

7.3.3 Caring and respect

Caring and respect were mentioned repeatedly, however, the interviewees were divided on whether the values were present or lacking. Jason and Rebecca (students) spoke about caring for their friends. Mx Wheeler (non-teaching staff member), said the culture was open and caring. S/he said that "Kids they have respect," and teachers work to develop respect in the school. Mx Carter (teacher) stated it is, "a very friendly place and a very [pause] um, caring place. I would say that looking out for each other is an important thing, staff interact with each other. It's a nice joking rapport."

However, several staff members noted that students can be very individualistic and uncaring. Mx Toews (principal) noted that students, "go home and they hang out in their rooms and they play their video games and they are not socialising and [pause] and I don't see kids having as much empathy for each other. Umm, I don't see kids understanding how, what they do affects other people." Equally, Mx Miller (teacher) said students are not always aware of how their actions affect others. While, Mx Carter felt Kingfisher PS was caring, s/he also stated that students often said hurtful things without thinking. Thus, while caring and respect were important in Kingfisher PS, many suggested more work was needed in this area. In contrast, Jason (student) felt the school had

gone "over the edge" and "crazy" emphasising respect, when he felt, "We've always respected each other in a proper manner."

7.3.4 Consequences

Staff and students emphasised a laid-back atmosphere within the school without many conflicts. For example, Mx Miller (teacher) stated, "for the most part this is a pretty easy-going school [pause]. We don't have a lot of really difficult behaviour compared to bigger schools." Equally, Jason (student) said, "It's a pleasant school. There is not, there are no real problems with it. Um, the people here are okay. There's never been anything, major. There's no real fights around here." He continued, "so, most serious thing we have gotten is people cussing at people and a fight has broken out a few times and fisticuffs and there has been a few in school suspensions, out of school suspensions but that is probably the deepest thing we have gotten to." Like Jason, many interviewees discussed consequences when wrongdoing does occur. Mx Carter (teacher) described the school as a "send out happy place" (meaning that students were frequently sent out of the classroom) and said "there's a lot of just [pause] a lot of sending out. I find, it is a very send out happy place." S/he added, "I'm fine with that." Correspondingly, Jason (student) said, "if they [pupils] are disrupting class they won't, the teachers won't put up with it. They'll just send them out. It's either the hallway, or the office." Another student Rebecca stated, when students are "disruptive or they are trying to get attention or making people laugh" the teacher "will send them outside and then normally what happens is they have to wait out there for the period and then s/he talks to them after." So, students are immediately excluded from the classroom, but there is some discussion about what occurred. Mx Toews (principal) suggested that some teachers have punitive responses as their default.

> I still see them being a bit punitive. I see them…I also see them accepting…. some
> behaviours that I wouldn't accept. And I appreciate that they are trying to be patient,

but I don't know that they are really teaching the kids how to change their behaviour. So, they are putting up with it until they lose it. And then they are going punitive. And, and, and I see enough caring and patience there that I know that if they had some other tools, it would go better.

S/he believed that by expanding restorative justice within the school, teachers would gain other better tools to help them respond to challenging situations.

7.3.5 Restorative justice

7.3.5.1 Meaning

Mirroring my observations, both students (Rebecca and Jason) and Mx Wheeler (non-teaching staff member) stated they were unfamiliar with restorative terminology. However, in contrast after a brief description they were familiar with practices and so, could discuss the concept. Ultimately, every interviewee described restorative justice in relation to wrongdoing and conflict. In addition, most understood it as purely responsive. For example, one teacher Mx Miller stated, "It seems to be an after the fact type of thing to me. I don't know how I would put [restorative justice] in place as something I would use when things are going well. Uh, I don't see the application for that." Equally, another teacher, Mx Doucet described restorative practices as responsive as a way of dealing with "issues." S/he also noted that "lots of stuff in our class could be considered restorative justice," however, s/he saw it as "just good teaching".

Communication was an essential element of restorative practices. Mx Carter said "we give everybody a chance to speak and to talk and to listen." Mx Wheeler (non-teaching staff member) said, "they talk [about] how they [can] help. Sometimes if [it is a] big problem, they make a small meeting [in the] classroom and they talk" about how they are feeling, what they can do to help "or something like that". S/he stated the focus was on open discussion, rather than you are bad, "you must go out." Rebecca, a student also said that each person gets to speak and share their different sides of the story "and we would try to talk it out, mostly".

Like the other interviewees, Mx Toews (principal) also discussed restorative justice in relation to responsive encounters, however, s/he also considered restorative justice as an overarching philosophy

> We can use circles all the time in everything and help teachers understand that restorative practices is really a philosophy. It's not just a circle. Umm, I think to me it means that [pause] it's a belief system and a philosophy, and a way of Being [with added emphasis]. In that you, you want to repair the harm that has been done and, and help kids learn from that, help them to do it on their Own [emphasis added] and, and coach them through it and help them [pause] grow empathy through that process.

7.3.5.2 Buy in

Mx Toews (principal) was clearly passionate about building restorative justice at Kingfisher PS. S/he stated that s/he had volunteered the school for the pilot project, "Here I see that teachers know how important those relationships are. And, and that was a strong enough basis for me to volunteer for the pilot. And then when I let them know, they have all been really positive in reacting." However, s/he also acknowledged varying levels of acceptance or buy-in of restorative justice. "I see a mix. I see, I see teachers building good relationships with kids, but I also see teachers, and, and I know, they are wondering when [s/he] is going to suspend somebody." Correspondingly, the interviews showed varying levels of acceptance or buy-in of restorative justice. Mx Miller a teacher at Kingfisher PS, clearly expressed some discomfort with restorative justice.

> I have some discomfort with it. Just because [pause], it is hard to put into words. Um, I guess I am still stuck with, with thinking is that person really going to change? [pause] Well just, just can you do this, and it can all just be words or is the thinking actually changing? And, I am not sure that I, I know, that I know that it has been affected in changing people's thinking. And, um, and I know that a lot of people are very good at saying what people expect to hear. Umm, and then I also [s/he laughs a little] wonder about um, sort of resentful feelings of, of having been hurt and umm…and not getting any satisfaction out of that. That it seems like you got off really lightly…I am sceptical that, that it creates a real change, especially with someone who does the same thing over and over again. I know some class do sort of a group chat sort of thing. Where people are able to raise concerns. I have never done that…It just seemed a little touchy feely [s/he laughs, then I laugh], which isn't my style.

Mx Miller, had multiple concerns with restorative justice. S/he questioned its effectiveness and whether the process could be manipulated. Mx Miller also questioned the substance of restorative justice. S/he also felt that retribution was needed, and the dialogic interaction was not way of doing things. Mx Carter (teacher) called restorative practice a "buzz word" and said restorative justice, "was one of the buzz words that came up a lot in teacher's college." As a result, s/he researched restorative justice as part of her/his job application process and concluded, "It seems like logic to me, I feel that everyone should be doing that without it having a name." Whereas, another teacher Mx Doucet, clearly bought into restorative justice, s/he said that a lot of stuff in her classroom could be seen by others as restorative justice. However, s/he was not clear how restorative justice differed good teaching practice. Significantly, both students, and Mx Wheeler (non-teaching staff member) understood restorative justice as something that staff used with students. Jason stated that after a conflict, "now getting them to talk to each other- that's the principal ['s job]. That's not our problem." Thus, they felt that restorative justice was not something they would use.

Thus, there were a range of support for restorative practices. The principal was clearly passionate and would like to see it expanded throughout the school and used everywhere by everyone. Both students and non-teaching staff accepted it as something that is done by others, but not as something they use themselves. Two teachers (Mx Carter and Mx Doucet) had some questions about the concept and whether it was trendy or conversely "just good practice." Lastly, one teacher (Mx Miller) was clearly uncomfortable with some aspects of restorative practices and has some questions about its utility. Mx Toews (principal) noted the different points of view and said,

> I think like anything new-ish, you have to stick with it before you get buy-in. So even with the kids. I think they may not see a point at first. On teachers- you know taking the Time- they get very protective of their curriculum time. And, we have to let that go, because there are more important things and there are no curriculum police. So, I think if we can get into that mindset of how important it is and how we can learn through circles, but it might take some learning how to do that at first.

7.3.5.3 Consequences

Multiple staff members discussed the importance of consequences within or in addition to restorative justice. Mx Carter a teacher, suggested restorative justice was both a consequence and reparative. S/he stated, "Instead of just, you know, just consequence, consequence, consequence [pause] Its, it's it's a consequence but you are also trying to build the relationship back. So, you are not just trying to, to punish. It's trying to restore the relationship that you had and restore the, the, a positive side of the relationship." Mx Miller, expressed some doubts about restorative justice because wrongdoers might "get off really lightly," in other words without consequences. Mx Toews suggested that consequences aid the effectiveness of restorative justice.

> Sometimes, the problem is sometimes, some people where restorative practice didn't work for them .... They did away with consequences. So, kids and parents started to restorative practices as an easy way out. And we get to go around the table and we sing kumbaya and they we go off and we do it again. I don't believe in that. I don't, you know, I remember B (trainer name) saying early on that it doesn't do away with consequences. You can decide as a group on consequences. You can decide separately if you are the authority figure on what consequences need to happen.

Thus, consequences were viewed as important by several staff members, who suggested that restorative justice and punitive punishments be utilised together.

7.3.5.4 Restorative justice in the everyday

All interviewees were aware of restorative encounters in Kingfisher PS, and Mx Toews (principal) was identified as the key person using restorative justice. For example, Mx Miller said, "I know that the principal runs less formal ones when an issue has come up. S/he usually gets the group of kids involved, they come to her/his office and everyone gets their chance to speak. Um, I haven't sat in on any of those. But I, I do know that sort of, the format." Both students (Jason and Rebecca) directly related restorative justice to the principal. Jason said, "Now getting them to talk to each other- that's the principal. That's not our problem." Rebecca described a previous incident, where the principal got a group together to resolve a problem. "S/he got us into, uh, so s/he heard our

different side of stories, like what happened. And then what happened, like s/he kind of get like the

gist of it. And then s/he would bring us in all one group and we would try to talk it out most, um,

mostly."

None of the teachers or students mentioned talking circles, or other proactive approaches.

Mx Toews (principal) said s/he saw a "mix", but that restorative justice was primarily used

responsively for significant issues. "So, there is some circles, some small things but they are not used

regularly through the school." S/he added some staff members are using restorative justice "but for

big problems, and that's it! But again, it was to solve a bullying issue. That's usually where they go.

For that, for those bigger issues." Equally, Jason (student) stated restorative justice had been used a

few times for very serious incidents, but it has never been something the school had "concentrated

on." In contrast, another student, Rebecca felt that restorative justice was used to respond to minor

incidents such as arguments or disagreements, as well as major incidents. Several staff members

talked about the use of restorative justice "formally" and "informally." For example, Mx Carter

(teacher) stated, "I see there is a lot more of the one-on-one conference and the, maybe less so the

talking circles [s/he laughed] and those kind of things, it is more the informal." S/he continued,

> Just the one-on-one conversations or the three-on-one conversations or the, just the, getting people to communicate with each other. That's what I see a lot of. Umm, and, and there is the overarching feeling that we, where we don't accept treating people poorly. And we, we we give everybody a chance to speak and to talk and to listen. So, there is that kind of overarching theme that I feel here. I, I think the biggest thing that helps the, the, that I do that could be seen as restorative is just trying to remain positive and keep that level of positivity with them. So, so whenever people are freaking out or getting upset it's just trying to remain positive, happy and show them that you know it is okay [s/he laughs a little], you know you are allowed to feel that way. But we are going to try and get you back to where you should be.

In contrast, Mx Miller said s/he had a formal restorative approach for wrongdoing.

> I know we have used it formally a couple of times. Particularly, uh with some things going on in [a specific class]. Um, and it seemed. Yes, where uh, we had an incident, Uh, I think 2 years ago where a cell phone, two cell phones were stolen. And so, they did have a formal

restorative circle with that. Umm, they had one last year I believe between the teacher and the students over some things that were on Facebook and some things being said.

Aside from Mx Toews, the remaining interviewees reported very little experience with restorative justice. Restorative justice was not discussed as embedded within Kingfisher PS, rather it was discussed as a tool that was used occasionally rather than every day.

7.4 Documentary information

Having explored observations and interviews, the following section considers the documentary information. This includes internal materials such as newsletters, student handbooks, code of conduct and electronic materials as well as external news media.

According to the Ontario Ministry of Education (2017[b]) statistics for 2015-2016 fewer students at Kingfisher live in lower-income households compared to the provincial average. There is also a below average amount of students who's first language is not English, and a below average number of students whose parents have some university education. From kindergarten to grade three Kingfisher has more students per class than the provincial average, with only half of classes containing 20 or fewer students. However, all classes within this bracket have less than 23 students (Ibid).

During my visits, Kingfisher PS produced a newsletter, and printed copies were sent home at the beginning of each month. In April, the month that I arrived, the newsletter covered upcoming events, news items, and provided a calendar with key items noted. The front page of the newsletter had a write up on my visit and my research. The notice explained that I was a visiting PhD student from England, and that I am "leading a study in restorative practices," It also mentioned the Board's history with restorative practices and school's involvement in the pilot programme and ended with, "we're very excited."

I initially obtained a print copy of the Student/Parent Handbook 2016-2017 from the school; it was a collection of white pages stapled together. The main body of the handbook covers general information about the school, and there is a small section about building respectful and inclusive groups. The handbook included three references to restorative justice. Restorative justice was listed as one of many "consequences" for aggressive behaviour, and restorative justice questions are listed as one of several prevention, and supportive intervention strategies. Notably, in all three sections restorative justice was discussed as a strategy or consequence. In addition, it was listed as one of many different options, thus suggesting they are akin to a tool in the chest. Furthermore, restorative justice was not at the top of two out of three lists (none of these lists are alphabetical), perhaps suggesting it was not the most preferred or principle tool.

An appendix in the student/parent handbook contained the school code of conduct. The code of conduct mentioned the word "restorative" in multiple sections. However, the vast majority of these references described restorative justice responsively. As an illustration, it was described as "one strategy" to address "bullying and exclusion," as a "supportive intervention strategy". There are also a couple references to restorative justice under consequences for inappropriate behaviour. However, again this is listed one of many possible consequences.

I did not have full access to all of Kingfisher PS's electronic media. During my visits, the school used a social networking software application as one of its main means of communication and it is limited to registered users. I was not able to obtain access. The greatest electronic source of information was the school website. The home page contained photos of the school and a short welcome message that described Kingfisher PS as "fun" and "busy". However, there is no mission

statement, ethos or school values listed. The school's website also made no reference restorative practices.[13]

Kingfisher PS did not have a strong online presence, and did not have an official YouTube, Twitter, Facebook or Instagram site. However, I completed numerous searches of these sites for relevant information posted by other users. I conducted several Twitter searches using keywords such as "Kingfisher PS" and "Kingfisher School" and found many posts from other schools with similar names. I only found one tweet that was clearly connected to the case study site and that was a local event post which highlighted a spring sale. Also, a search of the school on the Board's Twitter page in various forms and abbreviations produced no results. I did not uncover any information on Kingfisher PS from YouTube, Facebook or Instagram searches.

In addition, I conducted numerous searches of electronic news media. Ultimately, multiple searches only produced six results clearly connected to the case study school. There was a report an act of vandalism at the school, but no reports of the wrongdoer being discovered or how the matter was resolved. The remaining reports spoke about a student outing, fundraising for charity, honouring a teacher's long service, and performances or presentations in the community.

7.5 Kingfisher Public School summary

Kingfisher PS was a small school covering junior kindergarten to grade eight. Staff and students discussed a community, or family feel within the school. Interconnected relationships across grades were also visible. However, some divisions and exclusions were also noted. Restorative justice was previously implemented as responsive practices in the school. However, from staff reports, it was not a priority and eventually faded away. During my visits, Kingfisher PS was never described or

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[13] A link to an electronic copy of the 2016-2017 student/parent handbook is available on Kingfisher PS's website, which discusses restorative justice as outlined above.

portrayed as a restorative school. On the contrary, from my initial contact with Mx Toews, the school principal, s/he clear noted that there was still work to be done. The school had signed on to a pilot project to expand restorative justice and was in the early stages of implementation. Students were unfamiliar with restorative terminology. After an explanation they related restorative justice to practices used by the principal in her/his office. This was also a common description provided by most staff. Staff also had varying levels of buy-in, one teacher in particular was not comfortable with the concept. Across the three data sources the predominant understanding of restorative justice was a responsive tool. In addition, restorative justice was not the predominant tool used for wrongdoing. As my observations and the interviews indicated, punitive punishments were the common response.

Chapter Eight Case Study: Sycamore Public School

> So, like, when I think about restorative circles or practices and I heard that term a number of years ago within our School Board and I thought oh, that's kind of nice or interesting. We have been doing that, we haven't been calling them restorative circles, those are like talking circles or healing circles [we have been doing that] in our culture for, since forever (Mx Cooper, an Indigenous Elder at Sycamore PS).

> I think you have to allow, you have to have enough respect for the individuals um, on a daily basis so that they know no matter what, their voice is heard. No matter what [emphasis added]. If they turn around and then they, you know uh, I never had this happen. But, say they, they hit you or they swear at you, or something like this, it is like, you know what? That just happened, we are going to have to deal with it, but you know once we deal with it, you and me, we are still good. Because this is, this is, where, this is what we do. This is where, you know, we are going to be learning together, this is, this is our safe place (Mx Jackson, a teacher describing restorative practices at Sycamore PS).

8.1 Chapter Introduction

In the preceding chapters, I discussed the first two case study schools; Hummingbird Public School and Kingfisher Public School. In this chapter, I explore how restorative justice was constructed, and embedded in the final school, Sycamore Public. Ultimately, what I discovered was a welcoming, and proud school community. Sycamore PS had a strong commitment to integrating Indigenous culture throughout the whole school and restorative justice was seen as a part of this. Restorative justice was frequently described by staff as a way of interacting and relating to one another within the school. Restorative justice was embedded throughout the school through daily use and an ongoing commitment. However, what occurred was not overtly called or labelled "restorative justice," and so students were unfamiliar with the term.

This chapter discusses Sycamore PS within four distinct sections. Initially, I consider my observations, including my first impressions, the importance of First Nations culture, school history, and the significance of food. Following, I will focus upon restorative justice within my observations including physical indicators, meanings and descriptions, circles, and embedding practice. The next

section focuses upon the interviews, and includes an introduction to the interviewees, common themes including school journey, pride, Indigenous culture, relationships and treat day. Then, I focus upon the discussion of restorative justice within the interviews, including meanings, how they are implemented, constructed in the everyday, circles and embedding. Subsequently, I consider all the documentary information, including internal materials and news media. Lastly, I will discuss all the data sources collectively and summarise the chapter's findings.

8.2 Observations

I begin my discussion of Sycamore Public School by exploring my observations and experiences. In this section, I consider my first impressions, the connection and commitment to Indigenous culture, school history, and the significance of food. Secondly, I will explore how my observations relate to my research question by focusing on how restorative justice is constructed at Sycamore PS, through physical indicators, understandings and circles. Then I will consider how restorative justice was embedded in the everyday life of the school.

8.2.1 First impression

A cloudless, sun-drenched morning greeted me as I approached Sycamore PS. Sycamore PS is in a hamlet in rural Ontario. The school was located adjacent to a First Nations Reserve, while the immediate area contained houses and businesses, the surrounding countryside had winding roads, with rolling hills and farmed fields. I pulled into the large parking area in front of the school at 8:45 am. There were several trees on the front lawn. As I approached the front doors, I walked past a large maple tree with four plastic sap buckets hanging from spiles. This caught my attention because, while Canada is known for its maple syrup, I had never seen a school collecting sap. I walked into a small foyer and was greeted by the principal, Mx Gillis. We talked for over two hours in which time

s/he reviewed the research information sheets, signed the school consent form and gave me a tour of the school.

I spent two weeks as a participant observer at Sycamore PS. During this time, I observed each classroom in every grade level (junior kindergarten to grade eight). In addition, I observed the Indigenous culture and language class, gym, library, clubs, recess, the hallway and before and after school. Sycamore PS was a small split-level brown brick building. It was easy to navigate with all classrooms and facilities located off a central hallway. There were less than 200 students from junior kindergarten to grade 8 (aged 4 to 14). During the tour, Mx Gillis (principal) brought me into every classroom and introduced me to the students and teachers inside. I was also introduced to individuals passing in the hall. At one point, we stopped and spent some time talking to a teacher who was planning a field trip. Having just arrived at the school, my intention was to observe the interaction. However, I was actively invited to participate in the conversation, by being encouraged to share my suggestions and thoughts on potential excursions. This small moment combined with the introduction to each class made a lasting impression upon me. I felt included. The open, welcome was reaffirmed throughout my visit. As an illustration, sometime later, a teacher approached me in the hall and said, "We are a very friendly and low-key group here. So, if you need anything at all just let us know." My introduction was open and inclusive and this on its own was telling. Yet, notably this endured throughout my visits until my departure which was even more indicative of the school community. As an illustration, at 2:45 pm on my last day an announcement was made on the PA thanking me for spending time "in our little school". It continued, "We really appreciate her and wish her the best."

<u>8.2.2 Indigenous connection and commitment</u>

My first impression of Sycamore PS was as welcoming and inclusive school. This inclusion extended to the outside community. Sycamore PS was located adjacent to a First Nations Reserve and a majority of students were Indigenous. The school had a strong commitment and connection to Indigenous teachings. Sycamore PS actively worked to acknowledge and promote awareness of Indigenous culture and values as part of developing and celebrating connections with the surrounding community. This commitment was evident throughout the school, from the morning announcements, posters and art on the walls, circles, Indigenous ceremonies, celebrations, and every day lessons. Each school day started with the playing of the national anthem, O Canada. However, in addition to the typical English and French recordings, Sycamore PS also used one in the local Indigenous language[14] and a version comprising all three languages. During the morning announcements, there was an acknowledgement that the school was located on territory of Indigenous peoples who "share this land with us historically and to the present." This was a relatively new practice and during my visits several staff members described the acknowledgement as both significant and important. So, from the start of the school day the school's connection and commitment to Indigenous culture was pronounced. There were also numerous physical indicators displayed throughout the school including Indigenous art, posters on treaties, signs in the local Indigenous language, student projects exploring Indigenous stereotypes, a timeline of colonisation and images of the medicine wheel. While there were specific classes focusing upon Indigenous culture and language, there are also efforts to incorporate Indigenous teachings into everyday lessons. As an illustration, a module focusing on the environment included Indigenous perspectives. So, Indigenous teachings were also brought into the wider curriculum. Elders and guests from the surrounding community were also invited into the school to share knowledge and continue to

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[14] To ensure the anonymity of the site and the participants I have not included the specific language.

develop positive connections. Sycamore PS's connection and commitment to Indigenous culture was obvious, it was integrated into the whole school. While there was a sense of pride in what existed, several staff described this as an ongoing journey. Thus, there was also a feeling of looking forward and continuously developing the Indigenous connections and commitment.

As part of my observations, I approached Mx Gibson, a teacher, about visiting her/his classroom. When we arrived, the students were occupied with an independent study and, so we sat and talked in the room for approximately forty-five minutes. Of my time at Sycamore PS, this conversation has stood out as being the most challenging to reflect upon and accurately describe. I have spent many, many hours sitting uncomfortably with my thoughts and feelings, writing and rewriting this section trying to properly capture the complexities. Like other staff members, Mx Gibson (teacher) spoke about the importance of Indigenous culture in Sycamore PS. S/he stressed how Indigenous culture was "woven" throughout Sycamore PS and was not something that was simply taught in one classroom or lesson. However, s/he also noted the presence of direct and indirect discrimination. Clearly angered and upset, Mx Gibson described how some non-Indigenous students had been picked up before a school pow wow (an Indigenous gathering and celebration that combines music and dance), a clear sign that parents did not want their children to participate. When I questioned if there could be another explanation, s/he explained how some non-Indigenous students deliberately avoided the celebration, by attending regular classes in the morning, and then leaving just prior to the gathering. In contrast to my welcoming and inclusive understanding of Sycamore PS, this example highlighted the presence of intolerance and division.

Mx Gibson (teacher) also spoke about the lasting effects of residential schools and contrasted public schooling with traditional Indigenous approaches. S/he related schooling to factory production. In residential schools, Indigenous children were taken from their homes and

placed in institutions, they were processed, manipulated, and certain outcomes were expected. S/he noted that even today, children are mechanistically picked up from home (by a school bus), dropped at school, separated by age, instructed and directed, and then returned home (for a detailed discussion of this idea please see Robinson, 2010). In addition, staff can be too busy trying to meet the needs of the curriculum, that they are unable to develop bonds which can have a significant impact, on community and connections. Mx Gibson also described how some caregivers and relatives do not come to Sycamore PS, or step foot on school ground, because it feels unsafe, and for them, school was a very damaging place. Again, this illustrates that Sycamore PS was not always seen as a welcoming and inclusive place. Mx Gibson contrasted current educational practices, with one Indigenous way of learning in which children are separated by clan names such as turtle, bear or deer, that describe different personalities and learning types. As an illustration, a turtle is a very independent learner, they go into their shell and work away without needing a great deal of encouragement. Overall, Mx Gibson's insights added to complexity of the Sycamore PS tapestry; it was a school that actively worked to build a welcoming, inclusive environment that was committed to weaving Indigenous culture throughout, however there was still evidence of discrimination and enduring damage of schooling on Indigenous communities.

8.2.3 School history

Sycamore PS's open welcome and connection to First Nations culture were explicit and observable. I would not have known of the school's history without speaking to staff. At different points, over the course of my visits, different stakeholders noted that Sycamore PS used to have many conflicts and problems. As an illustration, one windy and overcast morning, I stood outside in the parking lot with a small group of staff, as students practiced bus evacuation drills. The conversation gravitated towards the school and its culture. The group noted that that climate at Sycamore PS had changed significantly. Less than a decade ago the school was very "rough"; there was a great deal of

disrespectful language, misbehaviour, fighting and student divisions. During my visit, I did witness and hear a few incidents of wrongdoing, including, students taking a teacher's sweets that were hidden away, school supplies being used without permission, disrespectful language, throwing a chair and disruptive behaviour. However, these instances were not the pervasive archetype of the school, and the image of Sycamore PS as a rough school contrasted strongly with what I observed.

I was surprised by descriptions of Sycamore PS's past and questioned the source. Staff provided many different explanations for what happened. The most prevalent justification was staff changes, previous staff left, and new staff arrived. These arrivals formed a new collective of like-minded people, and so the dominant punitive, authoritarian attitudes of the past dissipated. Some staff also credited specific individuals, such as the principal or specific teachers who they saw as making a difference in the overall culture. These individuals were described as leaders, who affected change by influencing others. A few teachers also identified key group activities such as sports or communal meals for bringing people together as a team. When, I listed these descriptions (staff changes, leaders, activities) it was clear that change came from different sources. Yet, significantly all the explanations emphasised a change in relationships. There was a move from a punitive, individualistic culture to a community of respect and caring, where people worked collaboratively.

8.2.4 Food

Food also stood out throughout my time at Sycamore PS. I felt food was used to illustrate caring, sharing and inclusivity. Mx Gibson (teacher), emphasised how Sycamore PS had used food to both "nourish bodies and relationships." S/he explained that many students lived in poverty and did not have enough to eat. Breakfast and lunch programmes at the school helped to nourish students and brought people together. There were many different opportunities for students and staff to eat, such as the morning hot breakfast programme, the student lunch programme, bake sales, popcorn or staff

treat days. Importantly, eating was not a solitary or individual act. When I joined the breakfast club, students sat at tables together. They shared stories and talked about important upcoming events like birthdays. In the lunch club, students also discussed shared interests, such as video games like Minecraft. Equally, in the staff room, there seemed to be an endless number of "treat days." On my first day a teacher mentioned that there was a treat day in the staff room and I was welcome to attend. Later, upon entering the staff room, a teacher turned and said, "there is chilli here, help yourself if you want some." I half-filled a bowl with the warm stew and joined the group seated at a long rectangular table. The repeated invitation to share in food, illustrated a sense of caring and inclusion. The bowl of food on its own could perhaps be rather insignificant. Within it, was an invitation to come join the group, to share from the same pot, to be included in the experience and the conversation. Eating my chilli with the other staff members I felt included and connected. This was particularly meaningful for me on my first day at a new school, without any prior acquaintances and being at a distance from my children and home. Similar instances occurred throughout my visit, I would pass a staff member in the hall in the morning and I would hear "There are doughnuts in the staff room, you should grab one before they are gone". Again, this reinforced the feeling of being welcomed and included. One afternoon, I remarked on the sharing of food to which a teacher replied, "That's our motto, we are very well fed". Like Mx Gibson (teacher), I saw food as important in feeding bodies as well as community. Food was never specifically related to restorative justice. However, it was discussed as a way of getting people together and building community. I felt the sharing of food was a further illustration of caring and inclusion.

8.2.5 Restorative justice

Restorative justice was initially introduced in Sycamore PS as part of the Board-wide implementation over a decade ago. From staff reports, restorative justice was initially introduced as a tool to respond to conflict and wrongdoing. However, since that time it has expanded to a whole school relational

approach. In this section, I will discuss my observations of restorative justice at Sycamore PS. Initially, I will explore the physical indicators and understandings of restorative justice, followed by how they were introduced and constructed in the every day.

8.2.5.1 Physical indicators

To start, I was interested in the visibility of Sycamore PS's commitment to restorative practice. So, I began by exploring the overt physical indicators of restorative justice within the school. I wanted to know if visitors could observe the school's commitment to restorative justice through signs, posters or other materials. From an initial search, I discovered restorative posters and materials in a few classrooms and the staff room. One classroom had posters on restorative questions clearly and visibly placed next to the classroom door. However, in another classroom a large portion of a restorative poster was almost entirely obstructed by a bookcase and in the staff room one poster was covered up by newer materials. In addition, there were no visible "restorative" materials in most areas of the school, including in the halls, library, office and most classrooms. In the student library, I was not able to locate any books that specifically discussed restorative justice. The staff room did have a shelf with restorative resources, including different instructional videos and several copies of Howard Zehr's (2002) *Little Book of Restorative Justice*. However, when I looked closer, the pile was covered in thick dust and it was clear these materials had not been reviewed in some time. Mx Gillis (principal) stated that some years ago when restorative justice was officially implemented, many posters and materials were posted throughout the school. However, over the years they had fallen or been removed, and only a few remained.

To begin, I sought physical indicators that clearly carried the restorative label. This initial search produced some overt indicators of restorative justice; however, they were scarce, old, obscured, or like the books in the staff room not regularly utilised. As my understanding of

Sycamore PS increased and I realised that restorative justice was related to Indigenous traditions, I performed a secondary search looking for indicators of restorative justice without the label. Significantly, circle imagery and the inter-connectedness of people was prevalent throughout the school. They were visible in many formats from images of the medicine wheel, circular tapestries and illustrations of people sitting or standing in circles. As an example, a poster which illustrated a circle of people encompassing the medicine wheel and with the caption to live in peace (written in the local Indigenous language) was hung in several different areas of the school, including the hallway, gym and library. Alongside this image were lists of values including kindness, sharing, caring, truth and respect. While I was unable to discover texts in the student library specifically discussing justice, there were many different texts that discussed circles, reconciliation and Indigenous healing. The results were startling. Had I maintained my focus on restorative terminology, I would have missed many, meaningful indicators that existed throughout Sycamore PS. Perhaps, I could have concluded that physical indicators of restorative justice were minimal in the school. This was clearly erroneous. While the term restorative justice was not pervasively advertised, Indigenous circles and practices did feature predominantly. This illustrated how Sycamore PS constructed, and embedded restorative justice; what occurred was rarely labelled as restorative, rather it was related to and presented as Indigenous culture and traditions.

8.2.5.2 Meaning

While I found physical indicators of restorative justice, the terminology was not pervasive in Sycamore. However, the practices and images were prevalent within Indigenous posters, prints and literature throughout the school. Given this distinction within physical indicators, I was interested in whether this distinction translated to understandings. To what extent were staff and students familiar with the language of restorative practices and was it significant to them? What I discovered was that students were not familiar with restorative terminology. Rather, they were accustomed to

the practices, such as circles. As an illustration, when visiting a grade 7 and 8 class the teacher invited me to share a few words about my research. I asked the students if they had heard of restorative justice or practices, and no hands were raised. The teacher explained that the students "may not know it in terms of restorative practice", but in terms of circles. S/he added that the class had used circles on several occasions throughout the year. While this class had clearly used the practices in the past, they were understood in a different manner and not knowingly labelled restorative. Over the course of my visit I had other similar conversations with students. When I described my research, they asked what restorative practices meant or said they had never heard the term. However, after some explanation they stated they were familiar with circles. Like the students at Sycamore PS, some visiting staff were also unfamiliar with the terminology. On two separate occasions, when I explained my research to supply teachers they said, they were unfamiliar with restorative justice.

In contrast, all the school staff that I spoke with were familiar with restorative justice. During my introductory tour Mx Gillis (principal) explained that, s/he was initially worried that I would not see any big restorative encounters and be disappointed. S/he explained they used to have set responsive encounters. However, now restorative justice had evolved into more "the way we do things around here". Other staff members also described restorative practices relationally. One teacher asked me about my research, when I explained s/he replied, "That's a really big area". Then he continued to say he understood restorative justice as giving and receiving respect. On another occasion, a regular school volunteer suggested that if I was interested in restorative justice, I should spend all my time in the principal's office and not in classrooms. Clearly, in her/his view restorative justice was a responsive practice solely used by the principal to respond to wrongdoing.

8.2.5.3 Circles

As an observer, the most visible form of restorative justice at Sycamore PS was circles. Circles were used throughout the school by many different people. I observed circles within different classrooms, the library and the school yard in different forms. As an illustration, circles were used for storytelling in classrooms, to discuss activities at the beginning of gym class, to resolve problems or increase communication. Circles were clearly an important way that Sycamore PS did things. During the initial tour, Mx Gillis (principal) showed me the library. S/he explained that it had been recently remodelled into a "flexi-space." The book cases were located around the perimeter, against or near the walls and the centre of the room had circular tables and chairs that could be easily moved to the sides. S/he described the library as a "restorative" and "open" space, this was directly related to circles. Mx Gillis (principal) said they have had circles there and Elders had spoken with the students in circles. He hoped to continue to expand the use of circles throughout the school. I witnessed different talking circles where classes or small groups sat together to discuss different topics or issues.   Two circles stand out for me, the first because it was spontaneous, responsive and very effective. The second because it was a talking circle that I initially viewed as unsuccessful.

8.2.5.3.1 Responsive circle

The most memorable circle in Sycamore PS occurred spontaneously in a classroom that I was observing. A student, April had brought a turtle into class and upon returning from the library she discovered that the towel covering the tank had been removed. The teacher interrupted the planned lesson to allow for a discussion about what happened and how everyone felt. April spoke first. She explained why it was important for the tank to be covered and that she felt upset because she had asked the class not to touch. Others were then invited to share their thoughts and feelings. The students were very engaged in the process, they spoke and listened respectfully. They were also connected and worked together to try and resolve the problem. Several students said they felt

uncomfortable and that the classroom trust was broken. They questioned whether they would feel safe bringing in items from home. The focus then moved forward to rebuilding the trust and safe space in the classroom. The class spent thirty minutes discussing the incident. At the end, one student asked, "Are we going to do science now?" to which the teacher replied, "We are not going to have time now, but I think this was very important. I hope we all got something out of this conversation. I think we did." Throughout the discussion the terms restorative justice, practices, or circles were never mentioned. I was very interested in the teacher's understanding. While I did not have a chance to talk with her/him immediately following the discussion, a few days later I asked for her/his understanding of the discussion, and if s/he saw it as restorative practice. S/he replied, "Absolutely, that was my intention. I see that as restorative practice. I wanted the kids to recognise the impact" of what happened. S/he stated the students were very involved in the conversation and s/he was very pleased with how it went.

I also viewed the discussion as restorative, however was left questioning whether what occurred could be called a circle, as it did not fit my image of a circle. Students remained seated in their rows of desks and not assembled in the round. In addition, they repeatedly had to shift in their seats to see different speakers, and objects such as desks and chairs separated them. So, this led me to question, what is a circle? Is it more than a shape? Can a circle exist without a set form of seating? The more I reflected on the experience, and the interactions, the more apparent the connections became. Rather than a set form of seating, the circle was formed from the interconnected relationships of the students and the teacher within a dialogue that was respectful and open. Participants had an equal voice, and everyone was invited to participate. While the teacher facilitated the discussion, the emphasis was on the students' voices and the students were empowered to resolve the issue. The circle was formed through something deeper, as a type of connected and equal dialogue.

8.2.5.3.2 Talking circle

The second circle was a talking circle initiated to discuss how the class can play tag safely. While the students in the class enjoyed playing tag, in the past the game had become overly aggressive and ended in accidents and injuries. Students who had completed an assigned piece of work were invited to sit in a circle and discuss the issue. The teacher helped start the circle by taking a wooden talking stick out of a cloth pouch. S/he explained that the talking stick should be used to take turns, only the person with the stick speaks and the others listen with an "open heart". S/he then returned to her desk and assisted other students with their work. I took a seat on the classroom floor along with six students. As more students completed the assignment the circle slowly grew. The students chose to list problems and then solutions on a large flip chart next to the circle. Then they shared ideas. However, there was a lot of talking over others, interrupting, rushing or laughing. In addition, at a few different points the talking stick was harshly slapped into someone's hand, used to poke another student or thrown. As a participant in the circle, this felt extremely uncomfortable. Ultimately, the circle produced a list of options, but the group was unable to fully resolve the issue of playing tag safely. The bell rang, and the circle, and class ended. I left feeling frustrated, uneasy, disappointed and dissatisfied. This feeling weighed on me for the remainder of the day. As a participant, I considered what I could have done to change the interactions and the outcome. I was torn between feeling that I could have potentially led them to a resolution and that I did not want to dominate the process, take over or push rules upon the students. For several months I viewed the circle as entirely unsuccessful and the memory sat uncomfortably with me. However, after some discussion with my PhD advisor, I began to acknowledge and consider what positives occurred. At a minimum, by using the circle process, the idea that circles are important was reinforced. The message that problem-solving is important was also strengthened. In addition, the collaborative discussion reinforced the notion that this is the way things are done at Sycamore PS, and that this is the way

problems and issues are addressed. Furthermore, the discussion also reinforced the importance of the student voice. The circle was empowering in that the students were given the opportunity to make decisions. They chose to list problems and solutions and they took ownership and responsibility for how the issue was resolved. The fact that the issue was not resolved in this circle does not negate these effects. These outcomes are significant. While my initial lens focused upon the flaws of the circle, which were undeniable, the circle was actually very successful in many other senses. With this insight, my perception of the circle was completely altered. It reinforced and reminded me that the encounter was important in its own right.

8.2.5.4 Embedding restorative justice

Staff suggested that restorative justice was continuously and conscientiously embedded within Sycamore PS. Restorative justice was pervasive and visible through the resolution of problems, connections with Indigenous practices, talking and healing circles, and through ways of relating. However, they are rarely introduced as restorative justice. There were also a few physical indicators that emphasised restorative terminology and many students and visiting staff were unfamiliar with the term.

While regular members of the school community illustrated an awareness and commitment to restorative practices, many visiting staff did not. Several visiting or support staff were not aware of restorative practices or viewed it as a tool the principal may use. Others, illustrated a noticeably different way of being and relating to students. On one occasion, a visiting instructor spoke with students in a rigid and authoritarian manner. Her/his style of teaching was noticed by others. Another observer suggested that her/his style was akin to an army sergeant. On another occasion, I was walking down the busy hallway one afternoon, between learning blocks. When I observed a supply teacher compel one student to apologise to another. I had not witnessed what had just

happened or why s/he felt the student should apologise. The boy appeared to reluctantly say "sorry" to the other student. The supply responded "okay" and walked away. This very brief encounter stuck with me, for several reasons. There was no discussion of what happened, no questions, neither student expressed themselves, the wrongdoer was induced to apologise, and it was the supply teacher who decided that was sufficient. It was also interesting because just the day before a teacher had explained that s/he never compels students to apologise. S/he said s/he will invite them to say anything they would like but explained that an apology should come from the student to be genuine? In contrast another teacher told me how s/he never forces an apology but asks them to describe how they think and feel. On another occasion, a student on placement said s/he was unsure how to respond to disrespectful students. S/he explained that at her previous school if there was any problem, students were automatically sent to the principal's office. However, s/he was not sure if the same policy existed at Sycamore PS and did not wish to burden school officials.

Interestingly, while many staff described a broad commitment to restorative practices, there was not a universal buy-in to all practices and several staff members stated that they felt "formal" restorative practices were ineffective. Formal practices were described as encounters for more serious incidents, involving multiple participants, and planned in advance. They were contrasted with informal encounters that occurred regularly, spontaneously or casually. A teacher, Mx Saunders described how some years ago s/he was involved in a formal circle to resolve a staff conflict. S/he recalled being "thrown into" the meeting, which s/he said was not properly organised. Mx Saunders described the experience as "horrible" several times. This experience had a powerful impact upon her/his views of formal encounters. Mx Gillis, the principal shared a similar story from some time ago. S/he had just entered a new position in another school and was newly trained in restorative practices when s/he was required to lead a "formal" encounter for a student conflict. Mx Gillis said s/he would not have personally chosen restorative justice to respond and s/he described the

encounter as a negative and unsuccessful experience. As a result, s/he concluded formal encounters "don't work." I was particularly surprised at Mx Gillis's point of view because s/he was such an ardent advocate and leader of restorative practices in the everyday working of the school. While s/he described restorative practices as the way we do things around here, s/he did not buy-in to every aspect of restorative practices. Mx Saunders and Mx Gillis's experiences with formal restorative practices share several similarities. Both were reluctant to participate, however they were compelled or thrown into the process, both described the experience as negative and unsuccessful and view formal encounters as ineffective.

Ultimately, Sycamore PS embedded restorative practices through the use of informal encounters, relationally and to repair harm. However, these actions were not typically labelled as restorative, and as a result many students and visiting staff were unaware of the term. There were also multiple incidences were visiting staff demonstrated a different way of being. In addition, even among school staff that endorsed restorative justice as a way of being, there were limitations, with several staff members describing formal encounters as ineffective.

8.3 Interviews

Having considered my observations with Sycamore PS, the following section explores interviews with students and staff. Initially, I will provide a brief introduction to all the interviewees. Then, I will examine the interviewees' descriptions of Sycamore PS, the school's journey, school pride, Indigenous culture, relationships, and treat day. Then, I will focus upon descriptions of restorative justice in Sycamore PS, including the meaning, implementation and buy-in, constructed in the everyday, circles and embedding practices.

8.3.1 Introduction to Interviewees

I conducted seven interviews at Sycamore PS, including two students and five staff. The interviews ranged from twenty-five to 100 minutes, with an average time of 51 minutes. To give the reader some insight into the different individuals that I spoke with, I will begin this section by introducing the interviewees.

Florence was a 13-year-old girl in grade eight (comparable to year 9 in England and Wales). She had been a student at Sycamore PS since Kindergarten. She was very active and participated on numerous school sport teams.

Lily was a 7-year-old, grade two student (comparable to year 3 in England and Wales) who had been at the school since kindergarten. She spoke softly and smiled frequently. Lily enjoyed school, had good friends and liked the staff.

Mx Jackson was a teacher. S/he had been at the school for less than ten years. S/he was easy going and made frequent jokes. S/he began the interview by providing me a large desk chair and saying, "Okay, you are in charge now."

Mx Ashby had been teaching at Sycamore PS for less than ten years. S/he spoke loudly and assertively throughout the interview and asked numerous questions.

Mx Bailey was teacher at the school. S/he is also an Indigenous woman. S/he brought posters and books to the interview that s/he thought might be of interest. I interviewed Mx Bailey and Mx Cooper simultaneously.

Mx Cooper was a First Nations Elder, who had a longstanding relationship with Sycamore PS. Mx Cooper had worked in the school in different capacities for many years. S/he was a

passionate speaker who at times became emotional when discussing the school and its

accomplishments.

Mx Gillis was the principal at Sycamore PS and had been there for less than five years. S/he

had an outgoing personality and spoke easily and confidently.

8.3.2 School journey

To begin, almost all staff members spoke passionately of the school's journey and they detailed a

past highlighted with conflicts and problems. Mx Gillis (principal), Mx Cooper (Indigenous Elder),

Mx Jackson and Mx Ashby (teachers) all spoke about Sycamore PS's poor reputation in the past.

Mx Gillis recounted that former colleagues commiserated with her/him when they found out s/he

was going to Sycamore PS.

> Well, anecdotally from my previous school when they heard that I was coming here… two
> of them cried because they felt so bad for me. Because of the reputation of this place. And
> in my first year I called up one of them who was a [non-teaching] staff and asked her to
> come [pause]. And she wasn't going to come because she had only been here one time and
> she left part way through the day in tears.

Staff members went into great detail describing the challenges that the school experienced, conflicts,

violence, divisions, an abhorrence of the school, a poor reputation and no sense of accomplishment

or pride. Mx Jackson (teacher) said, "people viewed this school as, as, as a terrible thing." S/he

discussed some of her/his earliest introductions to Sycamore PS. When s/he first walked into the

school he was informed,

> By the way there is going to be some fights in the yard and there's mini gang activity
> [different communities] battling it out, like this, um, you know they rip things down. They
> said kids will rip things down off the walls if they don't like them and stuff like this. And it's
> a, and it is a real show….and their sports programmes were uh, were almost non-existent.
> Kids did not like the school. They hated the school. [In a youthful angry voice] I hate
> [Sycamore PS]. They suck.

Mx Ashby (teacher) also discussed the divisions and abhorrence that existed within the school,

>The reputation from everyone I had talked to was a really tough school. Like my parents hate your parents and I hate you. And we have been in the same small school and like, they all thought that we had the worst school. [Sycamore PS] sucks!!! It is the worst school! You know, anywhere! All the other schools, are better, you know? And we are the worst and it is like we don't have sports teams; we don't have anything! We Suck! At everything right?!

Mx Cooper (Indigenous Elder) spoke about the distress of hearing Sycamore PS slighted.

>There was always that notion that oh [Sycamore] school you know, you don't want to work there. You don't want to go there, you know, and I used to be very upset by that and think, you know and sometimes we even had our own staff who would contribute to that.

The past problems were mentioned repeatedly, and there was also a real sense of pride and accomplishment in overcoming some of those challenges. The interviewees described how far the school had come, and so the current accomplishments were more pronounced. Mx Cooper stated,

>And so, then over the last number of years, the staff that we now have they are just like advocates they are out there. You know like, speak so lovely, I have never heard them speak a bad thing and that's, and I think, That is key [emphasis added] you know having this staff that- they are of the school that they are here, they are proud, of, the, the of what we do and, um and so that was a lovely change of what I saw over the last number of years to see people who care about being here. Who love being here.

All the interviewees discussed Sycamore PS as a positive place. Mx Ashby described the feeling of "pride in our place." Equally, Mx Jackson stated,

>So now they were seen that they were being, this teeny school you know, was, was successful and uh so it kind of changed that climate around…the culture has completely it, it's night and day, since, since we ALL came together as one unit…. it is just kind of hard to talk about it [tears come to her/his eyes] because I mean it, in my, like the way I look at it, I see that as an achievement we have had. And sometimes it is the Canadian way, or it is difficult to talk about achievements. You know and feel comfortable talking about that. And I think this, I think this school is an achievement I think something really really positive has happened.

Both students, Lily and Florence said they were happy at school. Florence, stated "I find that we're a lot less worse now," and described it as "a good place to be". Lily, stated that school is "really, really fun". Equally, Mx Gillis (principal) stated, "It is just a really nice place to be!" While Sycamore PS was a small school, it was viewed as a place of achievement and activity. As an illustration, Mx Ashby (teacher) described Sycamore PS as "The small school that did achieve big things". Equally,

Florence (student) stated, "There's not many people here. It's a small school, but you know we do a lot, lots of things happen."

It is important to note that while there was a sense of pride and achievement at Sycamore PS, there was also an acknowledgement that some challenges and divisions still existed. Mx Ashby (teacher) said, "It is not an easy building still after all this time. I think just because of the area that this school is in and [pause] um all the different factors, I think, socio economic, cultural and historically in this area." Lily, a student discussed some bullying and teasing "sometimes they get really mean when people say bad stuff, and whisper stuff about them a lot." Florence had mixed feelings. "I don't know like, sometimes I think that [there are divides between groups of students], but then sometimes I don't like, I don't know". However, she was unable to elaborate further or provide examples. Ultimately, Sycamore PS was described as a school that had undergone a journey from negative school climate to a positive one and while some challenges still existed the school was described as much improved.

When asked about the source of the changes, the interviewees provided many different explanations, including new staff, key leaders, extra-curricular activities, restorative justice, and changes in values, dialogue and relationships. At the time I was conducting the interviews, I was surprised at the many different views on the source of the changes. However, these different explanations all emphasised people getting together, building connections and relationships. As an illustration, when Mx Jackson (teacher) was asked about the change in school culture, s/he responded, "I think it happened organically because of the people, because of the change in the players. Uh, like the change in the teachers, the various, some very hard lined people left, and some people you know with some different attitudes came in. It just became natural." S/he described the staff and school coming together as a collective.

> We ALL [emphasis added] came together as one unit on that day when, some new people came in and we mixed in with the people who had been around here. And the culture just, in my opinion changed, it is difficult to talk about it because its [pause] You know I, it is like we all just do what we do, but it's not, it's not anybody doing anything like spectacular that is game changing. It's just, it just happened it was really neat the, the, the group of staff that, uh, the changes in the group of staff. That we got here and some of them, some of them who have helped make those changes, contributed to culture are not with us anymore, they've, they've moved on. But just changing the staff here and being, the personal approaches of these individuals as a unit. And uh, uh, has changed the entire culture of this place.

Mx Ashby (teacher) discussed changing the dialogue within his classroom.

> What I made sure to do, is I had to put a stop to the way they were speaking to each other. I was like, you can't do it. You can't talk to me that way, you can't talk to each other that way. You don't have to be friends, you don't have to – but you can't, like I am not having it. It is not okay, you can't be yelling at each other you know speaking like the way you are putting each other down all the time.

Mx Jackson and Mx Ashby (teachers) also discussed the importance of group activities in changing the school culture. Mx Jackson highlighted how sports helped build relationships and school pride.

> Spending a lot of time with sports uh, making sure that the teams were working and getting that going again and then it felt like it built a sense of pride and brought some students together…. It was, it was that moment in time when there was just that shift in culture. Uh, it needed a name and that name was increasing the value through sport.

Likewise, Mx Ashby noted sports teams helped build morale and also spoke of different collective activities such as theatre performances.

> We started having these things where we would do, we did a couple performances at assemblies, uh, we did a play we just did a few things. We had a couple sports teams that did, ok. Not, like not terrible-which was a step up [with a laugh] and so there started to be a little bit of [pause] we are maybe not that bad. Just a little, and we still had challenges and stuff. But ya, by the end of the year there was a lot more kids that were happy, you could tell.

Sycamore PS's journey was pronounced in the interviews, the descriptions of the school in the past, strongly contrast with those of the present. Central to this change, was people getting together, and working collaboratively. I will speak more about the importance of relationships in a subsequent section, however it is important to note how relationships have changed in Sycamore PS.

8.3.3 Indigenous culture

The staff at Sycamore PS understood the school as having gone through a significant journey. This

journey included an expanded commitment to integrating Indigenous culture throughout the school.

All interviewees discussed the importance of the Indigenous connection and commitment. Mx Gillis

(principal) also spoke about the positivity of indigeneity woven throughout the school. "It is just a

really nice place to be! It is nice, and the Indigenous piece that Ontario is doing as a province and we

are doing as a Board, just makes it that much easier because the Indigenous teachings and stuff just

go hand and hand with that." So, he understood the Indigenous values and teachings within the

school as part of the overall positive climate within the school. Mx Cooper (Indigenous Elder),

described Sycamore PS's developing Indigenous commitment and s/he highlighted how the school

had adopted an inclusive integration of Indigenous teachings and perspectives within the curriculum.

> Cause our goal is to try to um, with the First Nations piece, with the education piece is to
> have them embed that in throughout curriculum. It doesn't have to be just a unit, you know
> how it use to be just a unit and pull out their bin, and then you are done. It is, cause we
> know it can be in there, those perspectives can be in there in all subjects, and so I am seeing
> examples of that here. When it comes to the environment, global warming, climate change, I
> have been in, I have been in the classes to speak on those kinds of things and, and I Love
> that! Like I love that it is not just, I love speaking about all kinds of things, but I am loving
> that piece, so I am seeing that in being very inclusive.

At a later point, Mx Cooper also discussed the inclusion of an Indigenous way of being and the

impact of upon the students so see their culture within the school.

> I just I like to see that inclusion and um, that interaction and uh, ways of connecting and you
> know, bringing that um, you know just bringing that into the every day. You know and as
> much as possible. And so, it is good. I like it for the children to see themselves reflected here
> [emotional, clears throat], which you know it boosts that self-esteem. And, and uh,
> empowers them.

Both students discussed the importance of Indigenous culture at Sycamore PS and they described

their enjoyment attending a school pow wow. For Lily it was an opportunity to celebrate her

Indigenous culture and she described the joy she felt at participating in the gathering. Lily proudly

described the different types of dancers and the regalia that she and her friends wore. In addition to

celebrating, Lily described the event as an important gathering for the whole school. She spoke

about how everyone is included, "Everyone gets up to dance, even if they don't have a regalia or

nothing everyone gets to come up and dance." Florence (student) described this gathering as "fun."

She also described how the whole school got together in a circle and everyone was included. So, for

both staff and students' Indigenous culture was integral to Sycamore PS and a source of pride.

8.3.4 Relationships are central

As I discussed earlier, Sycamore PS had undergone a significant cultural change and essential to this

change, was people getting together, and building relationships. Correspondingly, all the interviewees

discussed the importance of people and relationships at Sycamore PS. With a broad smile, Lily a 7-

year-old student described Sycamore PS as "a really nice place and everyone is nice to each other,

the kids and the teachers. And we have like a really great principal." She recounted her first day of

kindergarten when she met her best friend. "One of my favorite times is when I met my first best

friend at school. I was really excited, we played the whole day together. We were playing fairies and

stuff like that." Students described Sycamore PS as a caring place. Another student, Florence spoke

about the importance of student teacher relationships. She said,

> It's a place that supports people. Like if you have issues or need help with an area, they
> are going to help you out. And you probably feel like the teachers here you want to talk
> to them [pause] because I know some people don't want to talk to teachers or parents
> about certain things. But this is a place where you could definitely talk to someone.

All the staff also spoke of their role in building relationships, and community. Mx Ashby, a school

teacher stated, "It is a very positive school culture. That the staff we foster it, we generate it and we,

we often talk about how it is like good for kids to see us laughing and talking and joking with each

other." Mx Cooper an Indigenous Elder discussed the school staff as caring team, "I see this staff

team today that we have as just absolutely awesome. I see them as folks that are really together um, I feel like they bring heart to the school. I feel like we have got people on staff who just-I feel all emotional." Equally, Mx Jackson (teacher) said, "we are good because [pause] look, look at the people that we have, that we get to work with. They are just, they are just like brilliant, brilliant people." Significantly, Mx Gillis the school principal, said that caring and respectful relationships were more important than grades or test scores.

> I think together we have created a situation where you know, we don't have the greatest test scores…It may be because we could work a little harder on some literacy and numeracy goals, but our focus is more on climate of caring and respect and looking after each other and that to me is always more important!

Thus, relationships were not just important at Sycamore PS, they were paramount.

Staff and student interviewees all noted that caring relationships were extended to those visiting or new to the immediate school. Mirroring what I reported in my observations, they described Sycamore PS as a welcoming place and said it is important for guests and visitors to feel at home. Florence said "um, it is a very welcoming place I think, you know we kind of welcome everyone and there is always room for people." Mx Ashby a teacher said, "it is important to us that" guests and visitors feel welcome from the beginning. Mx Gillis the school principal stated, "It is just a really nice place to be! This is a place that supply teachers like to come to and they feel supported and respected."

8.3.5 Treat day

Building on the centrality of relationships in Sycamore PS, different staff members discussed the importance of food in bringing staff together and for welcoming visitors to the school. In particular, staff described how relationships are fostered with treat days. Mx Jackson, a teacher, described how treats days bring the staff together as a collective.

> That's one of the biggest things about treat days for us. It's like, even if we don't get all together all the time, you know like, you know, we might not really see, might not really talk to each other as a staff for like a day or so, have a real conversation. Treat day is a big deal for us, so we have come together as a staff.

Furthermore, Mx Ashby, a teacher discussed how treats days help welcome and include visiting staff.

> It is it is important to us and even the supply teachers will often talk about um, just how, they are invisible at some schools and here it is like we take time to talk to them, to ask them how it is going. To offer them food, like same thing it is like, if we have food and there is a supply, we are always telling them. Like hey you can have this too like, eat, share.

Mx Gillis (principal) provided a similar picture of the importance of food for welcoming visitors and building community.

> Mx Gillis: It is really cool when people come in and say [pause] they talk about how our school feels
>
> Meara: What sort of things do they say?
>
> Mx Gillis: Well, just that everybody is supportive, it is very friendly. It is very collegial. Like supply teachers that come in, there are staff rooms that teachers don't want to come into. And they come in here and if it is a treat day and Everybody [emphasis added] is eating.

So, treat days brought people together. Food was shared as a means to welcome visitors and to develop connections within the school. Community building through food was never related to restorative justice, however, it is further example of the importance of relationships and inclusion at Sycamore PS.

8.3.6 Restorative justice

8.3.6.1 Meaning

To begin, the interviewees related to restorative justice in different ways. They had different histories and relationships with restorative justice, which influenced their understandings of the concept. Both Mx Bailey (teacher) and Mx Cooper (Indigenous Elder) discussed restorative justice as a new name for traditional practices, philosophies and values. For both Mx Bailey and Mx Cooper, restorative justice philosophies and practices were an important part of their Indigenous culture.

However, as I noted in the origins of restorative justice (chapter two), when they were first

introduced to "restorative justice", it was presented as a new concept, without an acknowledgement

of its Indigenous origins. Mx Bailey, said that s/he received training from "a really great guy" who

discussed circles and other areas, "But I, but I don't think that he was really I should say voicing the

idea that this is something that with you know has been used by Aboriginal people for a long time.

Especially on THIS land [emphasis added] to, to have that not acknowledged is… a little bit of a

downfall." S/he explained that restorative justice, "are part and parcel of our, of uh, the values that

the Elders always spoke about." They are practices and values that have been used by Indigenous

people on this land for centuries. S/he equated the re-branding without any acknowledgement of its

roots to cultural appropriation, and another example of colonisation of Indigenous practices.

Equally Mx Cooper (Indigenous Elder) stated,

> So, like, when I think about restorative circles or practices and I heard that term a number of years ago within our School Board and I thought oh, that's kind of nice or interesting. Cause we have been doing that, we haven't been calling them restorative circles, those are like talking circles or healing circles [we have been doing that] in our culture for, since forever. Well when I first heard it, (clears throat) the first time I heard it I felt almost like um, yeah, I did feel almost like funny, like a little bit. Because it was like, it was something new coming out a little bit. And so, being a First Nations person I, you know I automatically took it a bit…I thought WHAT?? WHAT???? Like I have to be honest, I did feel a bit of that, because lets be honest- this is not new! Give acknowledgement to peoples who have been using this practice for thousands of years. [Pause] so really those circles have been a part of my life so uh, you know since my whole life, I guess. And Um, yeah so, I feel really blessed to be in the community that I am and my family that I come from and the teachings that I have and that I have been blessed to have.

For Mx Cooper and Mx Bailey, the Indigenous origins of restorative justice were fundamental to the

concept and its meaning. Notably, all the other staff members (Mx Ashby, Mx Jackson (teachers)

and Mx Gillis (principal)) also acknowledged the Indigenous origins of restorative justice and they

suggested restorative justice made sense at Sycamore PS given its commitment to integrating

Indigenous culture.

Both the students that were interviewed said, they were unfamiliar with restorative

terminology. However, after a description they provided examples of restorative encounters at

school. Both students, Florence and Lily, directly related restorative justice to responsive circles. In

addition, they suggested circles were only used occasionally. Staff also discussed restorative

encounters, they emphasised restorative responses as oppositional to punitive punishment. As an

illustration, Mx Bailey (teacher) discussed restorative encounters, "rather than some kind of a

punitive discipline, you know like punishment." Mx Gillis (principal) noted when wrongdoing

occurs the emphasis is upon repairing, while maintaining the child's sense of belonging.

> Rarely have ever suspended kids. Um, [with a laugh] I don't think I have done a suspension
> in three years or something. And even when they go away, it's an informal thing and it is
> trying to find ways to bring them Back [with added emphasis] and get them in the building
> and re, Um, and the staff appreciate that. The staff…. Know that I'm going to deal with
> stuff, but they know that I am going to do it in a way that the child is going to be able to
> come back to class and as quickly as possible. We fix things.

Equally, Mx Ashby (teacher) stated, "trying to you know look at them as a whole student and not

just as a bad kid who is misbehaving, and we have to punish them."

While all the staff interviewees note responsive encounters, they emphasised restorative

justice relationally. Mx Jackson (teacher), defined restorative justice as a "way of being." Equally, Mx

Gillis (principal) stated,

> I am so proud here to be part of something where…it is just the way we are. Is the….
> Indigenous piece part of it? [Pause] Probably it has something to do with it- but it is a
> collection of people, who together, I would say pretty much to a person uh, aren't about the
> old, like are about the looking at this like this is the philosophy of how we deal with kids.

Equally Mx Bailey (teacher) stated, "restorative practices and they just kind of are, are part and

parcel of our, of uh, the values that the Elders always spoke about." Both Mx Bailey and Mx Cooper

(Indigenous Elder) emphasised interconnected relationships. Mx Cooper said, "Interconnectedness

is a big part of [pause] the teachings, you know. That interconnectedness of every, of, of all." As I

mentioned earlier, Mx Cooper and Mx Bailey were interviewed together and at one point they spoke

about the meaning of restorative justice.

> Mx Bailey stated: I think that like in the Board that, uh they are using it as a response to deal with with uh, you know issues between students or you know, rather than some kind of a punitive discipline, you know like punishment. So, but I think that in a general sense that um, in the way that we would have used it in, in uh a traditional way would have been more to restore balance, restore harmony and, um, you know to, to really   become aware of how interconnected we are…

> Mx Cooper said: Yeah and it is like um, cause some of the traditional circles that I have been in in my community is like that and it is also, we, we, we, we you know in the past we would have some where there was no talking like it would just be a circle so that could be just like you choosing to go, thinking of maybe that would be good for me to maybe just go and you know do a check in because it is like you are doing a check in with yourself.

Interestingly, Mx Bailey and Mx Cooper distinguished between restorative justice as a responsive

process and one that emphasised the interconnectivity of all things. Mx Cooper also emphasised the

use of circles in the past as a space for self-reflection.

Ultimately, there were clear differences in understanding restorative justice. Students viewed

restorative justice as occasional encounters, whereas staff stressed relationships and values.

8.3.6.2 Implementation and buy-in

Restorative justice was implemented in Sycamore PS a decade before my visits. As a result, most of

the interviewees had not been present or were not involved, so they did not have any direct

knowledge of the initial implementation. However, they did discuss how restorative justice had

developed at the school. Mx Jackson (teacher) stated,

> I think it happened organically because of the people, because of the change in the players. Uh, like the change in the teachers, the various, some very hard lined people left and some people you know with some different attitudes came in. It just became natural. This is where we are-restorative practices. Yeah, it makes sense. It is an automatic and we feel good about it.

 S/he added, that building restorative justice was a conscious decision and directly related to the

commitment to integrate Indigenous culture. "It was conscious, it's like we, we decided that we

wanted to really, really focus on uh, and it was promoted as uh, the idea was promoted more heavily because the community, the communities that we are in." Mx Gillis (principal) felt that her/his influence had encouraged the development of restorative justice. "I hate this [pause] this is going to sound pompous, I think they needed me [emphasis added] to come and show a different leadership style in order to feel like they could do that." However, s/he noted that "I think a lot of you, a lot of the reason it works here is because we have people who were already leaning that way or, were very, wanting permission, to do that."

Before visiting Sycamore PS, the idea of buy-in fit well with restorative justice, as individuals actively committed to the concept or expressed some concerns or doubts. However, at Sycamore PS, it became clear that the idea of buy-in was based upon restorative justice as something external to the individual, and that was not always applicable. For two interviewees, Mx Bailey (teacher) and Mx Cooper (Indigenous Elder), the idea of buy-in did not make sense, because what is now called restorative justice was related to their Indigenous culture. Mx Bailey said, restorative justice embodies "the values that the Elders always spoke about." Equally, Mx Cooper emphasised that "circles have been a part of my life so uh, you know since my whole life I guess." S/he continued, to note that her/his culture "This is who I am an extension of who I am and my ancestors, and my home." Thus, there was no conscious commitment or buy-in, restorative justice was fundamental to their identity.

Significantly, all staff interviewees expressed a commitment to restorative justice. As I illustrated under meaning, restorative justice was commonly understood as a philosophy that informed the whole school. However, Mx Gillis (principal) noted there were limits to restorative justice. S/he stated in the past "the formal process didn't work." Mx Gillis suggested that one of the reasons everyday restorative justice was so important was "a) to get to hope you don't get to have a

formal one, but b) also knowing that the formal one is not necessarily going to get the results… Well, if anything it didn't work nearly as much as we thought it would." S/he added, "over the years you would hear of, other principals doing them [formal encounters] and (pause) I, I would say more often than not. They did not have the successful conclusion umm, especially the victim, parents, would like often times they felt that, that written agreed upon piece- wasn't enough." Mx Gillis stated that these lessons, "pushed" him and other principals "to adopt (pause) the good parts, the good parts, that's wrong, the, restorative practice thinking." Florence, a student also noted restorative justice does not always work, "I don't know sometimes it can work and sometimes it doesn't." So, while there was a broad commitment to restorative justice at Sycamore PS, it was not boundless.

Mx Gillis (principal) and Mx Jackson (teacher) also spoke about how alternative views and ways of being were treated at Sycamore PS. Mx Gillis spoke about a newer staff member who had a different approach. Mx Gillis noted, "I think s/he will come [around] [pause], I just think her/his default is [punitive]…I just know it will be hard for her/him, it will create dissonance in her/him." Mx Gillis suggested that viewing other staff members and the impact of restorative justice would lead to a change. However, s/he noted that buy-in would take time. Mx Jackson, discussed a different scenario where a staff member is speaking disrespectfully.

> It's, it's almost militant in that if you, if somebody in the staff room says something about uh, the students, and there are still people who do this. Where they, where they say "uh, so and so was just driving me crazy. You know that family, or this or that or this" and it's like, "you know what, you know that's just them they are going to be, like they are never going to make it in life." Like if any of those types of attitudes it's like…and, and it does still happen every once in a while, um, people don't really address it directly. Um, but it gets addressed. You know and, and uh, you know some people may, you know speak up like modify the conversation or moving like "yeah but I have seen a thing with that kid did a few days ago and that was so much fun." Then I think people see that that is not allowed. You know [there is somebody] [pause] and it's like, you know, "they will never amount to anything," "you know what just give them a calculator" "just do this and that" and, that is just

untolerable! [Sic] [Emphasis added] You know to say, to say that um, that kids are limited. In any aspect! [Her/his voice is cracking towards the end of this comment and s/he is clearly emotional.]

Mx Gillis and Mx Jackson provide different scenarios for how alternative views are treated. On one hand there is acceptance for some punitive approaches and time is allotted for an individual to change (but the assumption is they will change), on the other hand, there is a line of acceptance and if an individual is actively being disrespectful that will not be tolerated.

8.3.6.3 Circles

Every interviewee discussed circles. Both students, Florence and Lily, directly related restorative practices to circles. After a description, Florence said, "yeah we have done that in our classes before. We have had circles and talked about our feelings about certain problems." Lily also spoke about circles and discussed a circle she had in the school yard with friends. "I've been in one with one of my friends at school. I think it was in grade one, outside. [My friend] was really sad this one day." She described how several students had a circle to discuss how she was feeling and how to help. While, Florence and Lily were both familiar with circles they said they were used infrequently. Florence said, that circles are not used in the everyday but "it is usually just if a problem has come up". While Florence and Lily recounted the use of circles at school, for them they were peripheral and not an important part of the school.

In contrast with the student interviewees, staff viewed circles as an important part of responding to behaviour and building community. Mx Jackson said circles are often spontaneous, "if things get really weird in a classroom um, then, it's not uncommon or not like whoa! [s/he lists different teachers and classes that use responsive circles] … Then we will just, we'll do a circle." In addition to responsive circles, Mx Gillis stated circles happen "every day". S/he listed a variety of circles and locations were they are used for different purposes; in the office there are informal

"circles" to respond to wrongdoing, equally, different teachers use them responsively both in their classes and other spaces, "Whereas in the younger grades a lot of times the kids are sitting around and they will have their morning um, morning routine which can be restorative." Several interviewees emphasised the values in circles. As an illustration, Mx Cooper (Indigenous Elder) said, "Everyone together and everybody just being equals. And that is part of that circle too, when you are in a circle setting, nobody's above you or below you, or in front of you or behind you. Right and our First Nations teachings are so all about all of that."

8.3.6.4 Embedding restorative justice

At Sycamore PS, staff discussed embedding restorative justice by using it on a daily basis. As an illustration, Mx Gillis (principal) stated that restorative justice informed relationships and how things were done "in general". S/he explained that restorative justice was deeply engrained within the school, so that there were so many things that are being done without even thinking of them or labelling them as restorative justice. Restorative language was seen as a contrast punitive, adversarial language.

> You are not starting …a conversation about an incident with words or questions that automatically put the other person in a place where………the first response is to …deflect or to be defensive, or to LIE [emphasis added], or to whatever… the word choice is all different and now it is just the cards are long gone and I think that just makes a huge difference.

Mx Gillis added, "So when like even sitting here right now, and I look at it, there is are lots of little things. That I think if I had to write a paper and defend and justify, I would probably come with all kinds of ways I am not thinking about right now, but it's just ingrained." Mx Jackson (teacher) echoed a similar sentiment. S/he suggested it is not about consciously building or creating community, rather embedding restorative justice is embedding values.

> You have to build. No, I think you have got to create a community um, you don't create anything you, [actually] I think you have to allow, you have to have enough respect for the

individuals um, on a daily basis so that they know no matter what their voice is heard. No matter what. If they turn around and then they you know uh, I never had this happen. But, say they, they hit you or they swear at you, or something like this, it is like, you know what? That just happened we are going to have to deal with it, but you know once we deal with it you and me, we are still good. Because this is, this is, where, this is what we do. This is where, you know we are going to be learning together, this is, this is our safe place.

Mx Ashby (teacher) stated that restorative justice was tangible within the school.

They felt it. They like all believed that it was, it was like things were starting to change and uh, yeah that's just it. It was year after year we had something to build on, you know. And, um, as a staff, you know the people that we work with over the years we have been able to keep that momentum and keep that consistency and keep that, um [pause] keep that moving forward in some kind of way.

So, embedding restorative justice was a continuous effort, working collaboratively and keeping the pressure on.

8.4 Documentary Information

Thus far, I have explored my observations and interviews with Sycamore PS. In this third section, I will consider documentary information. I begin by examining school materials and then focus upon external sources including information about the school from the news media.

According to the Ontario Ministry of Education (2017[c]; 2015-2016 statistics under the school name) Sycamore had a slightly above the provincial average number of students who live in lower income households. Nearly all the students have English as their first language. A large amount student's parents have not had some university education. All classes from kindergarten to grade three have twenty students or less (Ibid).

Throughout my visit with Sycamore PS, I gathered a substantial amount of school documentary information both in paper and electronic formats. To start, Sycamore PS had a daily email review that was sent to staff. The school review included daily actions and information, important upcoming dates mixed in with humorous cartoons, inspirational quotes or informative

articles (such as on mindfulness or a poisonous caterpillar in the province). I was added to the email

listing during this time in order to explore the content. On my first day, my arrival was mentioned,

"Meara (PhD candidate) arrives today for her two-week visit; please join me in welcoming her :)"

Throughout my visits, the newsletter never mentioned restorative justice, yet it further emphasised

the importance of staff connections and relationships.

I was interested in how Sycamore PS discussed restorative practices in its policies and official

school documents. Was the school's commitment evident in these documents and if so in what ways

and contexts they were described? During my visits, the school did not have a current student

handbook. However, I did review the school improvement plan, two different school codes of

conducts, and the bullying and intervention plan. The school improvement plan was divided into

different headings including a needs assessment, climate survey findings, goals, strategies and

actions, and professional learning. I was not able to find any reference to restorative terminology. In

addition, I was not able to find a school mission statement in any document. However, the school

improvement plan highlighted the important school values including respect, empathy and inclusion.

In addition, the school's commitment to Indigenous culture and values were prominent throughout

the document. I feel that both the values and the commitment provide a strong insight into

Sycamore's mission.

I was able to obtain two different code of conduct summaries from the school. During my

visits, I was told one document was a year old and the other approximately four or five years old.

Notably, both documents mentioned restorative justice, however, the older version only discussed

restorative practices once. The newer code of conduct discussed restorative justice repeatedly as a

strategy to prevent and respond to bullying, as a tool to manage conflict, as reparative, a problem-

solving technique, and a form of consequence. Significantly, throughout the document restorative justice is framed as a responsive practice.

Unfortunately, I did not have full access to all the school's electronic media. Sycamore PS used a social networking software application as one of its main means of communication, which requires an official login, and I was not given access. In addition, Sycamore PS has a strong presence online, and used social media to "promote school events" and build "positive school culture" (description from the school improvement plan). I was able to find a school website, Twitter, and Instagram. Within my searches, I did not find any school reference to restorative justice. However, I was able to find many references highlighting the school's commitment to Indigenous culture, school pride, notices on school activities, trips, sporting accomplishments and gatherings.

Lastly, I completed a search of Sycamore PS within the news media. Again, I was not able to find any reference to restorative justice. However, multiple articles described school activities and initiatives such as, students learning from a First Nations Elder, significant events at the school, trips, and in several articles school staffs highlighting racism.

In summary, restorative justice did not feature predominately in Sycamore PS's documentary information. In addition, when restorative justice was discussed it was as a responsive practice, which differs significantly from both my observations and interviews. The documents do however, confirm Sycamore PS's commitment to Indigenous culture, the school pride and connections.

8.5 Sycamore Public School summary

Sycamore PS presented as a welcoming and inclusive school. This inclusion extended to the outside community. Sycamore PS was located adjacent to a First Nations Reserve and a majority of students were Indigenous. As a result, Indigeneity was woven throughout the school and not restricted to one area or lesson. However, there was also some evidence of discrimination and division. The school

was a proud place, that staff and students described as overcoming a "rough", authoritarian, conflict-ridden past. Across all data sources, the importance of relationships was emphasised. Restorative justice was initially implemented in the school a decade before my visits. From all available information, restorative justice was introduced as responsive practices but grew and developed over the years. Staff frequently, described restorative justice as a relational ethos that influenced the whole school. Staff also suggested restorative justice was embedded through their daily use and an ongoing commitment. As Mx Gillis, the principal noted, "I am so proud here to be part of something where…it [restorative justice] is just the way we are." However, students were unfamiliar with restorative terminology, and ultimately related to circles. In addition, restorative terminology was not overtly advertised throughout the school, or within documentary information. The Indigenous origins of restorative justice were seen as essential to the concept and several staff noted the importance of that acknowledgement. Significantly, in contrast, I also found the Indigenous origins of restorative justice were not always recognised. Several Indigenous staff members described how restorative justice was re-introduced to them as something "new". Interestingly, while Sycamore was frequently described as having a whole school approach, buy-in was not boundless. Several staff members stated they felt formal conferencing was not effective and, so restorative justice focused on the relational and small response level. In addition, new and visiting staff members and students, meant that building buy-in was a continuous process.

Chapter Nine: Discussion of findings

There is an expanding body of literature on the potential positive effects of restorative justice in education (Brown, 2018; Hendry 2009; Hopkins, 2002; Cameron and Thorsborne, 1999; Thorsborne and Blood, 2013; Karp and Breslin, 2001; McCluskey et al., 2011; Morrison, 2006). However, there are considerable gaps in our knowledge of how restorative justice is constructed in the everyday operation of schools. My overall aim in pursuing this research was to build conceptual clarity on how restorative justice in education is characterised and operationalised. To obtain the "thick description" needed to explore the phenomenon properly (Geertz, 1973), my research involved a multi-site case study of primary schools committed to restorative justice. In the previous three chapters, I detailed the results from the individual case study schools. The three schools were all co-educational, public, primary schools (provincially funded education, comparable to early years, key stages one, two and three in England) located within one school board in Ontario, Canada. However, the schools had unique physical structures, sizes, student populations, they provided instruction in different languages (apart from English) and were in varied geographic areas. In addition, the schools had different relationships with restorative justice. Hummingbird PS and Kingfisher PS were in the early stages of re-implementation, whereas Sycamore PS was described as having a whole school approach.

In this chapter, I consider the school findings in relation to the wider literature and the research questions. I begin by discussing the research findings in relation to the primary research question, how is restorative justice constructed, and embedded within primary schools? To answer this question, I consider the findings on the meaning of restorative justice, implementation and buy-in, language and terminology and restorative justice in the everyday. The research findings are highlighted throughout this text. Next, I explore the results in relation to the second research

question, how does restorative justice interact with the school's educational mission? This question

is answered by considering restorative justice in relation to social control and then radical change.

9.1 How is restorative justice constructed and embedded within primary schools?

As a social construction, restorative justice gains its meaning through behaviours, actions and beliefs.

In primary schools, restorative justice is "built up and constituted in and through interaction"

(Bryman, 2012, p. 34). Thus, I begin this discussion by considering how restorative justice was

constructed and embedded in primary schools. By exploring the findings on meaning,

implementation and buy-in, terminology and language and restorative justice in the every day, I will

illustrate how restorative justice is characterised and operationalised in primary schools and will

enhance conceptual clarity.

9.1.1 The meaning of restorative justice

9.1.1.1 Restorative justice was an essentially contested concept; one that was complex, appraisive, and open. However, this led to a lack of definitional clarity. The appraisive nature of restorative justice led to a clear, even unconditional trust in the concept.

The essentially contested nature of restorative justice was an obvious finding, and so, my initial

inclination was to overlook it within this discussion. As Richard et al. (2001) reported, researchers

can favour unusual results, and obvious findings can be considered unimportant. However, this

discovery is both interesting and significant. There is an ongoing debate on the characterisation of

restorative justice. Daly (2016), MacAllister (2013) and Marshall (1999), defined restorative justice as

specific practices or processes, whereas, Hopkins (2004), Morrison (2005b), Van Ness (2013), and

Wachtel (1999) all introduced different models illustrating the complexities of restorative justice in

schools; a jigsaw puzzle, a pyramid, different conceptions, and a continuum. In line with Johnstone

and Van Ness (2007, p. 6-8 using Gallie's 1956 framework), this study found that restorative justice

was complex, open and appraisive. Significantly, this finding contradicts claims restorative justice

can be comprehensively defined (Daly 2016; MacAllister, 2013; Marshall, 1999), as a fixed definition cannot capture the complexities and open nature of the concept. Furthermore, it supports models that illustrate the complexities of restorative justice in schools (Hopkins, 2004; Morrison, 2005b; Van Ness, 2013; Wachtel, 1999).

In the everyday reality of the three case study schools, restorative justice was complex and multi-dimensional. Hummingbird and Kingfisher which were at the beginnings of their implementation and conceptualisations were mostly affirmative. These understandings reflect the responsive process orientated descriptions provided by Daly (2016), MacAllister (2013) and Marshall (1999). Whereas, Sycamore had a more established restorative justice that emphasised transformative understandings, which aligns with Van Ness (2013, p.33) description of restorative justice as "a perspective that changes how we view ourselves, others around us and the structures that influence and constrain us". However, there were differences within the schools themselves, that illustrate a richer diversity. As an illustration, Mx Brossard a teacher at Hummingbird emphasised a relational ethos, whereas Mx Wittenberg another teacher described restorative justice as a "discipline tactic". Adding to this complexity, restorative justice was seen to be developing and changing. All three school principals discussed restorative justice in relation to a journey. Hummingbird and Kingfisher were said to be at the beginning of a journey, somewhat uncertain of how restorative justice would develop. Whereas, Mx Gillis, the principal at Sycamore stated that restorative justice was still evolving at the school. Significantly, her/his statements mirrored those of Thorsborne and Blood (2013) discussed, embedding restorative justice was viewed as a journey that never ends. Or, as McCluskey (2013, p.140) stated, "becoming restorative is a process, not a goal."

Regardless of how restorative justice was conceptualised, it was frequently described as appraisive ("better," "good," "helpful," and "positive"). This finding reflects an extensive body of

literature (see for example, Palermo, 2013; Hopkins, 2002; Johnstone and Van Ness, 2007; Reimer, 2015; Zehr, 2005) However, significantly, my findings illustrate that the appraisive nature of restorative justice led to a clear, even unconditional trust in the concept. On implementing restorative justice at Kingfisher PS, Mx Toews, the principal noted, "I knew I was in, I didn't, honestly I didn't care what it looked like I was in." Equally, Mx Chelton, the principal of Hummingbird stated, "I am waiting for it to unfold. I am so excited about that, I really don't, I don't know [where it will go], it is kind of unknown territory. But I trust that it is going to be fantastic!! [With added emphasis]" The strong trust in restorative justice clearly illustrated the stakeholders' commitment to the concept and belief that it represented an esteemed accomplishment (Gallie, 1956). However, the statements "I didn't care what it looked like" and "I don't know [where it will go]" from school leaders is notable, as it suggests the aspirational nature of restorative justice can lead to a blind faith in the concept. This is particularly significant as there can be substantial gaps between the aspirations and realities of restorative justice (Zernova, 2007), and some literature suggests that restorative justice can be utilised to fulfil different missions in schools (Reimer, 2015; Vaandering, 2009; Woolford, 2009). As restorative justice was developing in these two schools, it is unknown how and in what ways the strong faith in the concept may impact operationalisation. Furthermore, I was unable to locate any empirical studies in this area. Thus, further research is needed.

On one side, my findings illustrate the complexities of restorative justice and strengthen the argument that restorative justice is "too diverse to capture… in any simple classification" (Zehr, 2002, p.44). However, significantly, the essentially contested nature of restorative justice led to a lack of definitional clarity. There was confusion, even amongst school leaders on what restorative justice really means. Like MacAllister (2013, p.105), some key stakeholders saw the idea of transformative restorative justice as "logically paradoxical." As an illustration, Mx Chelton, the principal at

Hummingbird PS described transformative aspects of restorative justice yet stated, "It is interesting because when I think of the word restorative, there is an implication that something is needing to be restored…. so, I see it as very responsive." Equally, Mx Doucet a teacher at Kingfisher described restorative justice as a way of dealing with "issues," but also noted that "lots of (proactive) stuff in our class could be considered restorative justice". Reflecting this confusion, I was repeatedly asked the true meaning of restorative justice, or stakeholders would share their understandings and ask, "is that right?" This represents a new and important contribution to knowledge, as it illustrates that within schools committed to restorative justice there is still a lack of conceptual clarity. This finding illustrates that theoretical tensions on the meaning of *restorative* are being played out in practice. As Cremin, Sellmen and McCluskey (2012, p.430) stated, linguistic contradictions within restorative justice are challenging definitional clarity, and reducing its "power". This appears to support Daly's (2016, p.13) claim that without a definition "we are bobbling on a raft in a sea of hopes and dreams". However, notably, these tensions were not present in Sycamore. Rather, supporting Cremin, Sellmen and McCluskey (2012, p.430) these inconsistencies were overcome when restorative justice was understood as "restoring communities to a place where conflict is non-destructive or restoring conflict to a non-destructive level" (Ibid, p.434). Significantly, in Sycamore, efforts were focused on restoring the whole school community which meant the linguistic tension was mostly non-existent.

9.1.1.2 Schools did not initially consider how their values corresponded with restorative values. Rather, restorative justice was contextualised to fit the unique needs and populations of the schools.

In the literature review, I noted that one of the central concerns of restorative justice in schools is the context in which it is being implemented. There is a growing body of literature that suggests restorative justice should be implemented within a positive learning environment, where interconnectedness and cooperation are emphasised, and there are high levels of support (Llewellyn,

2008; Johnson and Johnson, 2013; Wachtel, 1999). Correspondingly, Hendry (2009) argued that prior to implementation schools should first consider if restorative values correspond with the school values. He suggested that restorative justice is not compatible with all learning environments.

During my visits, the school contexts were multifaceted. In each school, there was evidence of respectful, caring and inclusive relations. Through interviews and observations students overwhelming described their schools in positive manners, as fun, friendly and welcoming. However, there was also contradictory indications of homophobia, racism, bullying, divisions and exclusion. Significantly, there was not a sense that restorative justice should be implemented within a particular environment or that restorative values were required first. Conversely, in line with its appraisive nature, it was suggested that restorative justice would bring change. This is interesting for two reasons, firstly there was no mention that practices might be vulnerable to co-option, assimilation or misuse (McCluskey, 2013; Vaandering, 2009; Zehr, 2008). As Vaandering (2009) noted, the aims of restorative justice can "easily… be misconstrued, co-opted and used to control others through the practices embedded in institutional structures." However, in contrast at Hummingbird and Kingfisher there was strong faith in the potential of restorative justice, without any mention of a potential misuse. As I mentioned earlier, this is particularly concerning as there can be substantial gaps between the aspirations and realities of restorative justice (Zernova, 2007).

Secondly, in each case study school, restorative justice was contextualised. This meant that restorative justice was constructed to fit the unique needs and populations of the schools. The idea that restorative justice is contextually specific and responsive is not new (Blood and Thorsborne, 2005; Llewellyn, 2008; Vaandering, 2009; Woolford, 2009; Zehr, 2002). Notably Zehr (2002, p.10), stated that "restorative justice should be built from the bottom up… by communities … assessing their needs and resources and applying the principles to their own situations." However, the

individual case studies provide unique insights into how restorative justice was contextualised in three distinct schools in one school board. As an illustration, Hummingbird PS was a large school that underwent a significant transition, moving into one large building. In this context, restorative justice was described as a way to bridge divisions amongst students and staff and build an inclusive school community. In Kingfisher, staff and students noted the importance of discipline and restorative justice was viewed through this lens and often related to a discipline mechanism. Sycamore PS had strong Indigenous connections and indigeneity was built into every area of the school. Correspondingly, stakeholders at the school viewed the Indigenous roots of restorative justice as fundamental to the concept. Significantly, by being contextually specific, restorative justice became more relevant in each school and thus further embedded. Thus, reflecting Russell and Crocker (2016, p.210) restorative justice "came to make sense" in the schools because it was congruent with the context. Notably, affirmative restorative justice was used to respond to wrongdoing within existing structures. During my visits to Hummingbird and Kingfisher, there was not a sense that restorative justice should be implemented within a particular environment or that restorative values were initially required (as Hendry, 2009; Llewellyn, 2008; Johnson and Johnson, 2013 all suggested). Conversely, restorative justice was constructed to fit the unique needs and populations of the schools. While it was believed that restorative justice would improve the school culture, there was no mention that practices might be vulnerable to co-option, assimilation or misuse (McCluskey, 2013; Vaandering, 2009; Zehr, 2008).

9.1.1.3 Circles were the most visible form of restorative justice in all three schools. Circles were used responsively as well as to build relationships and facilitate learning.

Circles were the most visible form of restorative justice in all three schools. From my first day at Hummingbird PS, staff suggested that if I was interested in restorative justice, I should look at circles in a specific class or space. Furthermore, areas were considered restorative in relation to their

capacity to hold circles. As an illustration, the Sycamore PS library was called a "restorative" space because its flexible design meant it could easier transform into an open space to hold large circles. Equally, Mx Toews, the principal of Kingfisher PS, discussed buying tables that could be easily moved to "get people in circles faster" as part of the school's commitment to restorative justice. For many, restorative justice directly equated with circles and other encounters were not prevalent. Mediation was never mentioned, and conferences/conferencing were rarely discussed (restricted to formal, large scale encounters). For some, the emphasis on circles came from a commitment to Indigenous practices and philosophies. Circles originated in Indigenous communities in Canada (Pranis, 2005; Woolford, 2009; Zehr, 2008) and have deep roots in this land. This sentiment was especially expressed at Sycamore PS, where circles were seen as one way of bringing Indigenous culture into the school. However, it was also discussed in individual classrooms in Hummingbird PS and Kingfisher PS and within Board literature. Thus, restorative justice was contextualised and directly related to Indigenous culture in Canada.

There was also an apparent blending of restorative practices. On numerous occasions, practices which could be understood as conferencing or mediation were called "circles". As an illustration, an encounter at Hummingbird PS to resolve student conflict (detailed in 6.2.4.3.1) was called a circle, participants sat in a circle and took turns speaking. However, the structured format and use of a restorative script clearly reflected conferencing and the bringing together of a wrongdoer and person who has been wronged, in a dialogue facilitated by a trained individual to resolve the problem reflected mediation. So, what was called a "circle", could also be seen to reflect conferencing and mediation. There are clear similarities across the different restorative practices. In 2000, McCold presented a tripartite typology illustrating how different restorative practices overlap in bringing the victim, offender and community together to respond to an incident. Johnstone and Van Ness (2007) also noted the similarities between mediation, conferencing and circles, under the

heading restorative encounters. However, what stands out in this study, is the overwhelming emphasis on circles and lack of other practices. This is interesting because modern restorative justice began in Ontario with mediation (Van Ness, Morris and Maxwell, 2001), and restorative justice in schools began with conferencing in Australia (Thorsborne, 2000; Varnham, 2005). There is also a substantial body of research that has directly related restorative justice in schools to conferencing (Drewery, 2004; Drewery and Winslade, 2003; Kaveney, 2012; McGrath, 2002; Shaw and Wierenga, 2002;), mediation (Papakitsos and Karakiozis, 2016; Wong et al., 2011; Haft, 1999) or a combination of circles, mediation and conferences (Morrison 2005b; Wachtel, 1999). Significantly, this research illustrated something different that circles were key to restorative justice.

9.1.1.4 The Indigenous origins of restorative justice are not always recognised

I began the literature review noting the Indigenous origins of restorative justice. While contested (Daly, 2002), these roots are well documented (Braithwaite, 2002; Consedine, 1995; Johnstone, 2011; Mulligan, 2009; Pranis, 2005; Wonshé, 2004; Woolford, 2009; Zehr, 2008). I have also noted how some stakeholders saw circles was one way of bringing Indigenous culture into the schools. Significantly, in contrast, I also found the Indigenous origins of restorative justice were not always recognised. I found several examples where restorative justice was re-introduced to Indigenous people as something "new". As Mx Bailey, a teacher at Sycamore PS voiced, restorative justice "is something that with you know has been used by Aboriginal people for a long time. Especially on THIS land [emphasis added] to, to have that not acknowledged is a little bit of a downfall." Equally, Mx Cooper an Elder at Sycamore stated,

> Well when I first heard it, [clears throat] the first time I heard it I felt almost like um, yeah, I did feel almost like funny, like a little bit. Because it was like, it was something new coming out a little bit. And so, being a First Nations person I, you know I automatically took it a bit…I thought WHAT?? WHAT???? [Emphasis added] Like I have to be honest, I did feel a bit of that, because let's be honest- this is not new! [Emphasis added] Give acknowledgement to peoples who have been using this practice for thousands of years.

Thus, contrary to what Daly (2002) suggested restorative justice was not presented as anti-colonial practice, rather Indigenous philosophies and practices were being "appropriated in an act of neo-colonialism" (Woolford, 2009, p.46). This has significant ramifications for restorative justice, as a respectful and inclusive concept. Specifically, if restorative justice is to progress authentically, it must acknowledge the Indigenous origins and the colonisation that "forcibly replaced" them (Woolford, 2009, p.45). This is a significant finding, and I am not aware of any studies that have considered how and to what extent the Indigenous origins of restorative justice are acknowledged in schools across Ontario, or more broadly. Thus, it is not known how pervasive such practices are in schools, and more research is needed.

9.1.2 Implementation and buy-in

9.1.2.1 Restorative was implemented in a top-down manner. Leaders were essential to the construction and embedment of restorative justice.

In all three case study schools, restorative justice was implemented in a top–down manner. The schools were in a School Board that expressed a longstanding commitment to restorative justice. Directed by the Board, restorative justice was initially implemented in the three schools over a decade ago. Principals played a central role in this implementation. This top-down initiative reflects research by Reimer (2011), Crowley (2013), and Thorsborne and Blood (2013) that suggested key people are essential to the embedment of restorative justice. It also mirrors some literature on organisational culture change, which suggests change must be pushed by leaders (Lee, 2004). At Sycamore, the principal, Mx Gillis felt that her/his influence had encouraged on the development of restorative justice. "I hate this [pause] this is going to sound pompous, I think they needed me [emphasis added] to come and show a different leadership style in order to feel like they could do that." During my visits, Hummingbird PS and Kingfisher PS had recently re-committed to restorative justice. Both schools had new principals who were influential in this reimplementation.

They were visionaries who were interested in participating in the pilot project and were instrumental in sparking interest in other stakeholders (Hopkins, 2009). This reflects Russell and Crocker's (2016) research that a change in school leadership can be an influential catalyst for restorative justice. Ultimately, in all three case study schools, the principals were committed to restorative justice and instrumental in implementing and/or sustaining its existence.

9.1.2.2 Stakeholders related to restorative justice in different ways. Gaining buy-in was a process that took time and continued far beyond implementation. However, complete buy-in was not visible in any school.

The inclusion of three schools at different stages of implementation provided unique insights into building buy-in and addressing opposition. This adds a significant contribution to knowledge in an area where there is minimal research.   In their current implementation, Hummingbird PS and Kingfisher PS approached buy-in in different ways. Initially, Hummingbird PS took a staged approach to gauging potential buy in. It mirrors Rinker and Jonason (2014) that gaining buy-in took careful consideration and planning. The principal Mx Chelton consulted with key individuals who were considered leaders in the school and could determine support within their grade divisions. Once there was evidence of initial support, then a general email was sent out to staff, and the potential pilot project was raised at a staff meeting. Staff had time to reflect on the initiative and provide any feedback before a commitment was made. Mx Chelton emphasised that restorative justice was a collective decision, "If we are not in consensus it is not happening. And that's ok, I am ok either way." This approach is reflective of Blood and Thorsborne (2005) who suggested staff buy-in should be obtained before implementation. It also reflected the dialogic process that was proposed by Cameron and Thorsborne (1999). At Kingfisher PS a more directive approach was taken. The Principal, Mx Toews, stated, "I see that teachers know how important those relationships are. And, and that was a strong enough basis for me to volunteer for the pilot and then when I let them know, they have all been really positive in reacting." While considering teachers broadly, this

reflects a more directive top-down approach, which illustrates a different approach to gauging initial buy-in. However, in both cases, students and parents buy-in was not obtained prior to implementation.

Across the schools, stakeholders related to restorative justice in different ways and there were varying levels of commitment. Several staff and students in Hummingbird PS and Kingfisher PS fundamentally disagreed with restorative justice, others questioned its sustainability or its significance. One of my most memorable interviews was with Mia, a student from Hummingbird PS who described ongoing homophobic bullying. Openly and expressively, she detailed how she dreaded coming to school or hid in the washrooms at recess. She was hurt and angry and wanted harsh punitive responses (both as a deterrent and for retribution). She viewed restorative justice as a soft option, where wrongdoers would get off lightly without a real reprisal. Her opposition to restorative justice was deeply rooted and formed through painful experiences. I wondered how buy-in could be built with her, and if any attempt would be disempowering and a further wrongdoing. In another interview, Mx Miller a teacher at Kingfisher PS expressed discomfort who with restorative justice stated, "it just seemed a little touchy-feely (she laughed), which isn't my style." For her, restorative justice was contrary to her style of teaching and her way of interacting with students. Again, how could buy-in be built respectfully? Both examples illustrate how opposition to restorative justice can be deeply rooted in one's identity. I have shown that restorative justice was implemented through a top-down approach, so how were alternative views treated?

While buy-in can be difficult, it is considered essential to the long-term sustainability of restorative justice. As a result, the restorative literature has been increasingly emphasising a whole school approach (Cremin, 2002; Hopkins, 2004; McCluskey, 2013; Shaw and Wierenga, 2002) which requires universal support. As Cremin (2002, p.142) stated, "Initiatives do need the support of the

whole school community in order to achieve success." This raises significant questions on how different perspectives are treated, how buy-in is built in a manner that reflects restorative principles. The principals of Hummingbird PS and Kingfisher PS spoke passionately about restorative justice and were clearly a commitment to building it in their schools. However, they acknowledged some resistance and noted that adopting restorative justice would be challenging for some. This is consistent with Green et al., (2013) who illustrated restorative buy-in can be more difficult for some individuals than others. Again, it was believed that key people would influential in building buy-in. Resisters would observe early adopters using restorative justice successfully which would ultimately influence their thinking. As Shaw and Wierenga (2002) found that a leader's buy-in directly influenced other interests. Equally, as Kane et al. (2009, p.247) found restorative justice "champions" could be influential in bringing others on Board. They suggested that building buy-in takes time. For example, Mx Toews, the principal of Kingfisher PS stated, "I think like anything new-ish, you have to stick with it before you get buy-in. So even with the kids. I think they may not see a point at first." This mirrors Martin (2012) who found gaining buy-in in Singapore schools took time. However, that restorative justice was the best way of doing things and that resisters will come around.

While the findings from Hummingbird PS and Kingfisher PS provide insights into buy-in at early implementation, results from Sycamore PS provide insights into a whole school approach. This is significant as there is a shortage of research on buy-in within established initiatives. In addition, as Thorsborne and Blood (2013) noted the entry of new stakeholders can challenge restorative justice. In Sycamore PS, this meant that building buy-in was a process without end. During my visits, I observed two staff members that clearly held different perspectives. On one occasion, a supply teacher forced one student to apologise to another. This caught my attention, as the previous day a full-time teacher had explained a child-centred perspective that invites rather than compels students

to speak. On a different occasion, an adult provided a brief, one-off instruction to students. S/he called out commands to students in a dictatorial manner and chastised them for making mistakes. I was standing next to several school staff who noted the approach was not in line with the way things were done at Sycamore. The instructor was not interrupted but two staff mixed in with students to offer support and assistance.

During an interview, Mx Jackson, a teacher at Sycamore PS stated that disrespectful attitudes or negativity was not tolerated. S/he spoke passionately about the intrinsic value of individuals.

> It's, its almost militant in that if you, if somebody in the staff room says something about uh, the students … like they are never going to make it in life. Like if any of those types of attitudes … and it does still happen every once in a while, um, people don't really address it directly. Um, but it gets addressed.

Mx Jackson suggested that staff approached negative attitudes in different manners including, redirecting the conversation, highlighting the positive or providing a contrasting perspective. S/he concluded that "people will see that, that is not allowed." In another example, Mx Gillis the principal at Sycamore PS discussed a staff member whose default was a punitive approach. Mx Gillis noted that a restorative approach was "hard for [one staff member]" and created "dissonance" within her/him. Mx Gillis described how s/he reassured the staff member, that "it is going to be fine". Mx Gillis noted, "I think s/he will come," but Mx Gillis emphasised allowing the staff member the time to see and experience restorative justice for her/himself. This finding reflects Lillard (2007) who noted that there will always be resisters who are not ready to adopt restorative justice. Mx Gillis' actions also mirror Lillard's (Ibid) recommendations for a leader to reassure and support those not prepared for the change. The findings illustrate that building buy-in was a process that continued far beyond implementation. As Thorsborne and Blood (2013) discussed, embedding restorative justice was a journey that never ends.

While Sycamore had a whole school restorative approach, interestingly, buy-in was not boundless. This finding was particularly surprising given how passionately staff spoke about how restorative justice had transformed the school. However, several staff members questioned the efficacy of "formal" approaches. Formal practices were described as encounters for more serious incidents, involving multiple participants, and planned in advance. They were contrasted with informal encounters that occurred regularly, spontaneously or casually. Mx Saunders, a teacher at Sycamore, described how some years ago s/he was involved in a formal circle to resolve a staff conflict. S/he recalled being "thrown into" the meeting, which s/he said was not properly organised. Mx Saunders described the experience as "horrible" several times. Similarly, Mx Gillis the principal also discussed a formal conference that "didn't work". S/he added, "over the years you would hear of, other principals doing them [formal encounters] and (pause) I, I would say more often than not. They did not have the successful conclusion umm, especially the victim, parents, would like often times they felt that, that written agreed upon piece- wasn't enough." Mx Gillis stated that these lessons, "pushed" him and other principals "to adopt (pause) the good parts, the good parts, that's wrong, the, restorative practice thinking." Significantly, while Sycamore was described as having a whole school approach the commitment to restorative justice was not boundless. In relation to Morrison, (2005b) pyramid, restorative justice was pervasive on the primary (restorative justice builds social and emotional competencies) and secondary levels (restorative justice involved individuals or a small group within the school, using a circle to resolve problems and repair relationships), but not at the tertiary level (which would involve conferencing with a large group of people).

9.1.3 Restorative terminology and language

9.1.3.1 "Restorative" terminology was scarce in all three case study schools. However, the lack of terminology did not reflect a lack of commitment or practices. Stakeholder's familiarity with restorative terminology differed based upon their role.

In all three schools, committing to restorative justice did not mean a widespread adoption of restorative terminology. I struggled to find "restorative" indicators. There were no visible "restorative" materials in many areas of the schools, including key locations such as main entries or foyers. "Restorative" terminology was not visible in many key documentary sources, such as the schools' homepages, school mission statements, school logos, any school-specific social media or current news media reports on the schools. In addition, while I observed restorative justice in the schools, it was rarely labelled as "restorative", rather they were discussed as circles, gatherings, meetings, or most frequently not labelled at all. Thus, across observations, interviews and documentary information in all three schools, there was a lack of "restorative" terminology.

The lack of "restorative" terminology in the schools was completely unexpected. In my Master's research (Sullivan, 2014), I had found that a primary school in Hull, England overtly advertised its "restorative" commitment around the school (a plaque, signs or posters) and in documentary information. Equally, Kane et al. (2007) found when restorative justice was established in a school there were clear examples of restorative terminology. This study found something new and significant, the construction and embedment of restorative justice without the terminology. This is interesting because there are currently two central debates on the use of "restorative" terminology. The first revolves around the scope of what should be labelled "restorative." Restorative justice has expanded in upward and downward directions (Johnstone, 2011) and it has come to include various ideas and practices. As Wood and Suzuki (2016, p.160) noted, restorative justice "has become an appealing 'brand' that is being applied to an ever-increasing scope of programs and practices." Thus,

there is a concern it has become a "catchall concept" (Gaudreault, 2005, p.9). As Zehr (2002, p.57) noted, "'restorative' has become such a popular term that many acts and efforts are being labelled 'restorative,' but in fact they are not" (Zehr, 2002, p.57). This argument suggests that the scope of what is labelled "restorative" is too expansive and comprises many un-restorative practices. However, significantly, my findings contradict this literature. In the everyday operation of three schools, many restorative ideas and practices were *not* labelled as such. This suggests an opposite trend, rather than being boundless, the use of restorative terminology can be minimal.

The expansion of restorative justice into schools led to the development of new terminology (Morrison, 2009) and the second debate is concerned with the most appropriate term. As an illustration, McCluskey et al. (2008a) argued that restorative *practice* is preferable because justice is not always applicable in schools.   In contrast, Evans and Vaandering (2016) differentiated between types of justice (primary/social justice and secondary/judicial) and therefore concluded restorative justice is the most suitable. Others have advocated for different terms such as restorative discipline (Amstutz and Mullet, 2005), restorative education (Winn, 2013) or restorative approach (Crowley, 2013). However, within this literature, there is no discussion of restorative justice without terminology. Again, this study showed something unique, the presence of practice and ideas without restorative terminology.

The three case study schools illustrated that restorative terminology was not essential to the construction and embedment of restorative justice. So, why was restorative terminology scarce? One could perhaps question the true nature of restorative justice within these schools. Clearly, Kingfisher PS and Hummingbird PS were in the early stages of re-implementing restorative justice. It could be argued that the terminology had not been introduced. Correspondingly, when I returned for a one-year follow-up visit, there were some new posters in these schools, and yet restorative terminology

was still scarce in key documentary information. Furthermore, it was clear the practices were being utilised during my initial visits and not being labelled as restorative. Additionally, Sycamore PS was described by some stakeholders as having a whole school restorative approach, yet, the terminology was still not prevalent. Thus, the lack of restorative terminology did not reflect commitment or practices, and significantly, terminology was not essential to the construction and embedment of the concept.

I wondered, to what extent the scarcity of restorative terminology really mattered? I raised this question during a presentation of early findings with Mallard School Board, and the responses were mixed. On one side, Board staff stated terminology did not matter as long as restorative justice was still being used. As an illustration, restorative justice was clearly widespread in Sycamore PS without terminology. This shows that a whole school approach can be operationalised without being overtly called "restorative". However, others at Mallard School Board argued that restorative terminology was essential to the construction of the concept. In line with Wood and Suzuki's (2016, p.160) discussion of the restorative "brand", I relate this second argument to merchandise marketing. "Restorative justice" is a label that identifies a product and speaks to the quality and prestige of the broader movement. Both these points have some substance in the schools. Without clearly identifying restorative justice, how do stakeholders relate to the concept or distinguish it from others?

Interestingly, I found that stakeholder's familiarity and understandings of restorative terminology differed based upon their roles. Students and non-teaching staff were initially unfamiliar with "restorative" terms. Conversely, all principals emphasised transformative conceptualisations and teachers gave mixed descriptions. This was a significant finding, as it indicates a hierarchy of understanding. While it has been suggested that restorative justice "means different things to

different people" (Fattah, 1998), and Reimer (2015) found students can be unfamiliar with

restorative terminology, there is no previous research illustrating such a role-based diversity of

understanding. Thus, this represents a new and significant contribution to knowledge.

9.1.3.2 The use of restorative language was essential to the construction and embedment of restorative justice.
Restorative questions were connected to affirmative restorative justice, and respectful, non-judgemental words were key to
transformative understandings. Restorative language plays an essential role in culture change.

As a photographer, Zehr (2005), noted different lenses influence what is seen. He suggested, "the

choice of lens, then, affects what is in the picture" (Ibid, p.178). Equally, by changing my lens from

"restorative" terminology to restorative language, a comprehensive picture emerged.[15] I found that

restorative language was essential to the construction and embedment of restorative justice. This is

interesting for two reasons. First of all, it provides a stark contrast to my finding on the scarcity of

"restorative" terminology. While "restorative" terminology was not essential to the construction of

the concept, restorative language was. Secondly, language was central to both affirmative and

transformative understandings. This supports a large body of literature on the importance of

language to restorative justice (Hopkins, 2009; Kane et al., 2007; Morrison, 2005b; O'Connell, 1998;

Ross, 1996; Shaw and Wierenga, 2002, Wachtel, 1999; Wonshé, 2004). However, my findings

provide unique insights into the role of language in the operationalisation of restorative justice.

In line with the wider literature (Hopkins, 2009), restorative questions[16] were influential in all

three case study schools. All three schools had posters which listed the questions. While they were

not prevalent, they were the most visible indicator of "restorative justice" in the schools. Restorative

questions were directly related to affirmative restorative justice. Furthermore, restorative encounters

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[15] In line with (Kane et al., 2007, p.59), I understand restorative language as "promoting effective listening, open-ended questioning, empathy and using non-judgemental words."

[16] Restorative questions originated with the scripted conferencing model adapted by O'Connell (1998) (see section 2.2 for more information). The questions can include: What happened? Who has been affected and how? How can we put right the harm done? (Hopkins, 2009, p.22). However, there are many variations on the exact questions used.

were structured (either formally or informally) according to the questions. For example, as part of the implementation of restorative justice at Hummingbird PS, staff were given cards with restorative questions. This illustrates that for the school restorative questions were essential to the process. According to Mx Montega a teacher at Hummingbird, the little cards were given "to keep in our pockets for, umm (pause), you know outside at recess if we run into conflict". The questions were like steps in the process, first the facilitator asks what happened, and then follows each question until the end. This meant the cards were a helpful resource for staff (Shaw and Wierenga,2002). Akin to Kane et al. (2007), when conflict occurred, staff could easily consult their cards and the process was clear to follow. Equally, Vaandering (2014, p.523) stated restorative questions provide an important guide for "shaping thinking and dialogue in challenging situations". Correspondingly, during a responsive circle at that school (detailed in 6.2.4.3.1), the principal Mx Chelton facilitated the conversation by consulting a manual and asking restorative questions. Mx Toews, the principal of Kingfisher PS also mentioned the importance of restorative questions, but s/he noted s/he no longer consulted the cards. In Sycamore, where restorative justice was more established "the cards [were] long gone," however, restorative questions and words still informed the conversation (Mx Gillis the principal). Significantly, for many restorative questions provided a clear resource in which to structure encounters from initial implementation to a sustained whole school approach. Several staff members suggested restorative questions were important to differentiate between doing practices "with" students, rather than "to" them. This clearly reflects Wachtel's (1999) language within the social discipline window. Students showed some familiarity with restorative questions. For example, a grade four class at Hummingbird PS, presented a short play on cyberbullying using the restorative script. Also, Rebecca a student, described how after a conflict the principal brought everyone together and asked questions following the script beginning with what happened. So, while students were unfamiliar with "restorative" terminology, they illustrated some knowledge of

restorative language. Notably, restorative questions were not an everyday language, but rather used only when needed (in response to an incident, such as a conflict or wrongdoing).

While restorative questions were associated with affirmative restorative justice, the broader use of empathic, respectful and non-judgemental words were related to transformative understandings. This study found that when "restorative justice is not only a way of work; it is a way of life" (Wonshé', p.254), the everyday use of restorative language is essential. Mx Brossard a teacher at Hummingbird described restorative justice as a language and as a collective way of being that is used "every day". S/he also noted that when the language is regularly used, students learn it. "I feel like after the kids are kind of trained in what language to use and to talk about feelings and to make things better that they don't always need an adult." This is significant as it illustrates that restorative language is not something simply used by adults (such as perhaps with questions), but is used by students and is part of student learning. This shows that restorative justice is internal to learning. Similarly, in a class circle (6.2.4.3.3), a teacher at Hummingbird spoke about restorative language as one that embodied equality and respect. S/he suggested that there is an equal opportunity to speak, students took turns and listened to each other. That meant that everyone's voice was valued, and everyone in the class listened to each other respectfully. It was also a language which recognised the collective whole while appreciating diversity. Again, this illustrates students as active participants, learning restorative values through language. In line with transformative restorative justice when people are seen as interconnected and viewed as subjects to be honoured, everyday language is impacted.

There is lack of literature on whole school approaches to restorative justice. The findings from Sycamore PS provide significant insights into the role of restorative language in culture change. At Sycamore, staff and students both noted a big change in the type of language used at the school.

In the past there was a great deal of disrespectful and hurtful language. Students insulted each other, teachers, and the school. In addition, staff often used harsh, punitive and authoritarian language ("do this or else"). A whole school restorative approach grew because many previous hard-line staff left and new staff arrived with a collaborative mindset. Mx Ashby (a teacher) described the changing students' language. "I was like, you can't do it. You can't talk to me that way, you can't talk to each other that way." At the same time, staff modelled and encouraged respectful, non-judgemental words. Another teacher told me how s/he never forces a student to apologise, but asks them to describe how they think and feel. Significantly, the implementation of restorative language was alike Morrison's (2005b, p.152) discussion of an "immunisation strategy" (Morrison, 2005b, p.152). Restorative language helped to build social and emotional competencies, and ultimately led to a reduction in the number of "outbreaks".

9.2 How does restorative justice interact with the school's educational mission?

I began this chapter by discussing the research findings in relation to the primary research question; how is restorative justice constructed, and embedded within primary schools? In the next section, I will explore the secondary research question; how does restorative justice interact with the school's educational mission? Education is a social institution that can be considered in relation to two opposing functions; to support or challenge society. In the literature review, I examined education as a means of socialising students (of any age) into social norms or is about producing radical change. Correspondingly, I will consider the study result on restorative justice in relation to social control and radical change. The research findings are highlighted throughout this text. By considering restorative justice and these missions, I am able to explore how restorative justice is being used to support contrasting interests. In extremes, restorative justice could become a practice of liberation or a tool for social control. As I noted in the literature review, there is a shortage of empirical

research in this area, and so the insights from the case studies make a significant contribution to advancing our knowledge of restorative justice in schools and how it relates to theories of education.

9.2.1 Restorative justice and social control

9.2.1.1 Restorative justice was a tool, that was used by trained staff within the existing school culture.

In both Hummingbird and Kingfisher PS, restorative justice was most frequently described as a responsive instrument. As an illustration, Mx Montega a teacher at Hummingbird PS, stated, "It is a tool, right, to get to the issues faster, I think it typically comes when there is conflict." Similarly, Mx Miller a teacher at Kingfisher PS stated, "It seems to be an after the fact type of thing to me. I don't know how I would put in place as something I would use when things are going well." Similarly, restorative justice was also described in the student handbooks and the codes of conduct responsively. This finding is consistent with previous research from McCluskey (2013) and Reimer (2011) that showed restorative justice is most frequently constructed responsively in schools. As a responsive tool, restorative justice had a peripheral or superficial influence on the school; used if and when it was needed, along with other tools (MacAllister, 2013; Stinchcomb et al., 2006). As Mx Wittenberg, a teacher at Hummingbird PS said, restorative justice was something that "pops up now and then." This constructs restorative justice as "an object of its own," something "we look *at* rather than *through*" (Reimer, 2005, p.320) and as a mechanism, or a process (Daly, 2016; Marshall 1999). Restorative justice was being used to respond to wrongdoing and increase compliance, without challenging existing structures. This posits restorative justice as external to education, as an instrument to manage issues so that learning can occur. Like Vaandering (2014, p.65), these findings show that restorative justice "situated in the discourse of behaviour and classroom management, inadvertently reinforces an agenda of compliance and control."

Interestingly, affirmative restorative justice was frequently described as something used *by* staff *with* students. For example, at Kingfisher, the principal, Mx Toews, was repeatedly identified as the key person using restorative justice. As Jason, a student at Kingfisher PS stated, "now getting them to talk to each other… that's the principal. That's not our problem." Equally, Mx Miller said, "I know that the principal runs less formal ones when an issue has come up. S/he usually gets the group of kids involved, they come to her/his office and everyone gets their chance to speak." Similarly, when cards with restorative questions were recently distributed at Hummingbird, they were only given to staff members and not students. The dependence upon experts was surprising. Restorative justice was born in response to the professionalisation and systematisation of crime control at the expense of community competency (Braithwaite, 1989). And advocates such as Braithwaite (Ibid) and Christie (1977) called for a communitization of justice where stakeholders own their conflicts. However, in contrast my findings show practices were consistently being led by adults which demonstrates a clear hierarchy. In addition, staff at all the schools received (or were going to receive) formal training in restorative justice from an outside agency. There was never any mention of students receiving this formal training. Thus, significantly, in contrast with Braithwaite (1989) and Christie (1977) there was still a dependence on experts and adults were being professionalised to run restorative justice with students. Reflective of social control, adults are still in charge, and they are the experts in restorative justice who lead students.

9.2.1.2 Authority figures were essential to the construction and embedment of restorative justice.

In all three schools, people in positions of power (principals) were essential to the construction, implementation and embedment of restorative justice. As I detailed in the section on implementation and buy-in (9.1.2), restorative justice was implemented in a top down manner. Principals at Kingfisher and Hummingbird were responsible for bringing forth the idea of restorative justice to the school. And in Sycamore, the principal, Mx Gillis felt that her/his influence

had encouraged the expansion of restorative justice. Principals were also key to building buy-in. Mx Gillis reassured and supported those not ready for change. In addition, Mx Toews, the principal of Kingfisher PS and Mx Chelton the principal at Hummingbird also discussed similar strategies. This finding research by Reimer (2011), Crowley (2013), and Thorsborne and Blood (2013) that suggested key people are essential to the embedment of restorative justice. However, critically, the dependence on authority, and a top-down approach, reinforces a power base and hierarchy, that is essential to social order (Bourdieu and Passerson, 1990). Furthermore, it further normalises hierarchy as a taken for granted structure.

9.2.1.3 Punishment was oppositional to restorative justice but still used.

In the school literature, restorative justice was frequently described as a form of "progressive discipline". However, among stakeholders, restorative justice was commonly contrasted with punishment. For example, Mx Miller a teacher at Kingfisher viewed restorative justice as a soft option and contrasted it with retribution. In comparison, Mx Bailey a teacher at Sycamore PS stated that restorative justice was often utilised, "rather than some kind of a punitive discipline, you know like punishment." Significantly, while restorative justice was frequently contrasted with punishment, all three schools held onto punitive responses. The principals stated that they felt that suspensions were still necessary, and exclusions were witnessed at all schools during my observations. Students also reported wrongdoing was addressed in a variety of ways, including punishments. So, restorative justice was seen by stakeholders as something very different from punishment, however punishment was still present. This illustrates that when operationalised restorative justice did not mean a complete shift away from punitive measures, and was not a complete change.

This is a significant finding, because there is an ongoing debate on the relationship between restorative justice and punishment. In Ontario, where this study is situated, restorative justice

developed out of the failures of punitive measures (OSSA). Furthermore, restorative justice is often framed as an alternative to punishment or retribution. For example, Wachtel (1999) portrayed restorative and punitive approaches as different windows of social discipline (see Figure 1). However, some argue that restorative justice and punishment are comparable or even compatible (see for example Daly, 2002; Johnstone, 2011; Zehr, 2002). For example, Zehr (2002) noted the commonalities between retributive and restorative justice. He claimed that both approaches acknowledge wrongdoing causes imbalances, the victim and offender have unique needs and responsibilities, and the response should be proportional. Equally, Johnstone (2011) suggested commonalities, such as punishment can be productive, morally educative, communicative and reintegrative.

Significantly, in this study restorative justice was never described as similar to punishment. Instead, contrary to the developing literature, restorative justice was contrasted with punishment. However, in practice, both were utilised. Notably, there were differences with the implementation of restorative justice. At Sycamore PS, restorative justice was the dominant response to conflict and wrongdoing. This was a significant change from the previous punitive culture, where wrongdoing was routinely punished. At Hummingbird PS and Kingfisher PS, similar patterns were developing. The schools were building restorative justice it was increasingly being used instead of punishment. However, it was not a full change. This illustrates restorative justice is just one of many tools or practices that can be utilised in schools (Stinchcomb et al., 2006). This finding also supports Morrison and Vaandering's (2012, p.148) argument that while schools welcome restorative justice, "they are reluctant to let go of the option to punish and exclude." McCluskey et al. (2011, p.112) also noted this reluctance and called punishment a "default setting" in schools. Significantly, reflecting social control, this study found there was still some focus on rules, and a dependence on professionals to enforce the rules with punishment.

9.2.1.4 Restorative justice was not directly related to alternative education

Lastly, restorative justice was never directly related to alternative education. Even when specifically asked about restorative justice and peace studies, liberatory education or democratic education, stakeholders stated they were either unsure or it was something different. This is an interesting and unexpected finding as an increasing body of literature has related restorative justice to alternative education (Bailie, 2012; Moore, 2014; Vaandering 2010) and specifically peace education (Bickmore, 2012; Cremin, 2016; Cremin, Sellmen and McCluskey, 2012; Rinker and Jonason, 2014; Vaandering, 2014). That literature suggested that restorative justice is a radical perspective in education. However, what my research illustrates is that in everyday life, restorative justice is not consciously considered in such a manner. While this does not mean that a link does not exist or is unhelpful, it does raise more questions that should be explored by future research.

9.2.2 Restorative justice and radical change

9.2.2.1 Restorative justice was a relational ethos, that impacted the whole school.

In Sycamore PS, restorative justice was frequently described as a relational ethos that impacted the whole school. As Mx Gillis, the principal Sycamore PS stated, "I am so proud here to be part of something where…it is just the way we are." Equally, Mx Jackson a teacher at Sycamore said, "it is a way of being…Huge. I think it is Huge [emphasis added]." This finding is consistent with the transformative conception discussed by Van Ness (2013, p.33). "Restorative justice is more than a process and /or an outcome. It offers a perspective that changes how we view ourselves, others around us and the structures that influence and constrain us." Transformative restorative justice has implications beyond responding to behaviour, it impacts the whole school (Amstutz, 2005; Hopkins, 2004; Karp and Breslin, 2001; Llewellyn and Llewellyn, 2015; Llewellyn 2015; Thorsborne and Blood, 2013). Restorative justice was being used as a "political project" or a social movement to

produce social change (Woolford, 2009, p.19). Significantly, Mx Gillis the principal at Sycamore, said that caring and respectful relationships were more important than grades or test scores.

> I think together we have created a situation where you know, we don't have the greatest test scores…It may be because we could work a little harder on some literacy and numeracy goals, but our focus is more on climate of caring and respect and looking after each other and that to me is always more important!

In this sense, restorative justice *was* learning (based upon Bragg and Manchester's, 2011 discussion of ethos). It was not learning that was found on tests, but learning on interconnected relationships, respect and care. This reflects Reimer (2015, p.32) who argued, transformative restorative justice challenges oppression while emphasising "relationships, mutuality, a broad focus beyond harm, and attention to power relations". In addition, as Vaandering (2014, p.77) noted transformative restorative justice connects with Freire (1993, p.70), and "a commitment to humanization".

9.2.2.2 *Restorative justice was part of a greater change movement.*

Restorative justice was part of a greater change movement. Interestingly, in each school, there were many different programmes and initiatives designed to bring change. This reflects Blood and Thorsborne (2005), who suggested implementing restorative justice was connected to acknowledging the need for culture change. As Mx Chelton the principal of Hummingbird PS stated, "this [restorative justice] won't be the only way that we do it, like, I think there are lots of other things already in the works. That are already beginning to transform." Correspondingly, the schools had many different programmes to bring change, such as self-regulation initiatives, treat days, staff outings, yoga, mindfulness, gender identity groups, presentations on inclusion, girls' group, Indigenous speakers and gatherings. These other initiatives all recognised the importance of interconnected relationships, respect and inclusion. It was never suggested that any of these initiatives were restorative justice. Yet significantly, they were directly related to restorative justice as part of a network for change. Restorative justice was part of a bigger change movement, that

challenged racism, colonialism, sexism, and homophobia. As Webb (2018, p.55) argued, "An organisation that engages in dynamic change is always undertaking new change in order to avoid status quo."

During the 1980s and 1990s there were many initiatives that were operating in schools that sought to resolve conflicts, improve relationships and encourage peacebuilding in schools, such as peace education, peer mediation, and conflict resolution. As restorative justice developed in schools, it merged with these existing programmes, and they helped facilitate its growth (Evans and Vaandering, 2016, p.18). Significantly, this study found that restorative justice was still interacting with other programmes to bring greater change to schools.

9.2.2.3 Restorative practices could empower students and promote individual change.

In line with Reimer (2015) and Vaandering (2014), thus far I have discussed affirmative practices with social control and transformative approaches with radical theory. However, this study found the interaction was complex and multidimensional. Under radical change (section 4.1.2), I discussed theories by Freire (1993, 1996) and hooks (1994) that suggested individual change was necessary to create greater social change. Correspondingly, I found that restorative practices could empower students, provide an opportunity for self reflection, enhance democratic potential and promote individual change. I recognised that connecting restorative practices with radical change, may be somewhat contentious. However, significantly I found evidence that restorative practices could give students the necessary tools for liberation.

In chapter eight, I discussed a talking circle that I regarded as a failure because the problem was not resolved. The overall objective was to resolve how the class could safely play tag. A consensus was not reached, and the problem was not solved, so on the control level, it was unsuccessful. However, on another level, the circle had an internal, moralising impact. In line with

Freire (1993, 1996) and hooks (1994), the circle emphasised individual capacity and problem-solving. Students were empowered to be active participants, owning their own challenges, making their own decisions and deciding outcomes. The encounter also reinforced the importance of the student's voice. As Freire (1993, p.70) described dialogue was utilised to support, "action-reflection…to transform the world." The message that problem-solving is important was also strengthened. In addition, the collaborative discussion reinforced the notion that this is the way things are done at Sycamore PS, and that this is the way problems and issues are addressed.

In other responsive practices, such as the responsive circle at Hummingbird (detailed in 6.2.4.3.1), I found similar results. Furthermore, this circle illustrated that people are not merely objects of control but are to be valued (Crowley, 2013) and the practice involved doing things *with* the student rather than *to* them (Freire, 1998; Wachtel, 1999). Students were provided a space for self reflection, to consider their own position, and learning from their experiences (hooks, 1994). Schools are unique microcosms that provide children with an opportunity to develop their understanding of relating to those within the school and the wider world. (Bragg and Manchester, 2011). As Mx Montega, a teacher at Hummingbird stated, restorative justice enables students to look at how their actions affect others. "I think it is important to develop citizens who understand another person and it's not just them thinking about their world, right?" The democratic potential of their students was enhanced by providing them with the necessary skills to participate, question and challenge within a democratic context (Giroux, 2006). Citing Barber (1992), Braithwaite (1999, np) argued, "Democracy is something that must be taught. We are not born democratic. We are born demanding and inconsiderate, disgruntled whiners, rather than born listeners. We must learn to listen, to be free and caring, through deliberation that sculpts responsible citizenship from common clay." With such insights, the encounters took on an entirely new meaning and significance. In addition, the complexities of restorative justice and its roles in education were further elucidated.

<u>*9.2.2.4 Affirmative restorative justice was a catalyst for whole school change.*</u>

One of the most significant findings from this study was that affirmative restorative justice was a catalyst for whole school change. This is a surprising finding given the literature suggests that in order for restorative justice to be sustainable, a whole school approach must be implemented (Cremin, 2002; Hopkins, 2004; McCluskey, 2013; Russell and Crocker, 2016; Shaw and Wierenga, 2002). For example, McCluskey (2013) stated that as a responsive instrument, restorative justice would be blended with other approaches, weaken and ultimately end. She (Ibid, p.134) argued that restorative justice can bring change "only where it is more than a rewording of a school discipline of behaviour management policy." However, at Sycamore PS restorative justice was initially implemented as a behaviour management tool, and contrary to McCluskey (2013) it did not assimilate, weaken or end. In contrast, it grew and developed into a whole school approach and was sustained for a decade. This is a very exciting finding as it illustrates that affirmative restorative justice can act as a starting point for significant change.

9.3 Discussion summary

This chapter has considered the key findings in relation to the research questions. Initially, I considered how restorative justice was constructed and embedded by exploring the findings on meaning, implementation and buy-in, and terminology and language. I found that restorative justice was an essentially contested concept, that was contextualised, circles were the move visible practice, practices were sometimes described as "new", leaders were influential, stakeholders had different levels of buy-in, "restorative" terminology was scarce, but restorative language was essential. Next, I considered the secondary research question on how restorative justice interacts with a school's educational mission. I showed how restorative justice can support social control through affirmative practices that did not challenge existing structures, professionalisation, dependence on experts and

hierarchy, enforcing rules, multiple practices including punishments, and stakeholders did not directly relate restorative justice with to alternative education. In contrast, restorative justice can also support radical change as a philosophy, part of a greater change movement, affirmative practices that can empower and act as a catalyst for change. The final chapter concludes the research.

Chapter Ten: Conclusion

Within the preceding chapters, I introduced the study, reviewed the relevant literature, detailed my methodology, explored the three case studies and discussed the overall findings. In this final chapter, I will conclude the research. I begin by providing a general summary of the study and then the final conclusions in relation to each research question. Then, I discuss the contributions this study makes to different areas. Next, I explore the quality of the research in relation to Lincoln and Guba (1985) trustworthiness criteria; credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and reflexive journal. Then, I consider the limitations and weaknesses of the research design and methodology. Followed by the research implications and recommendations for future research.

10.1 Overview of the study

While contested (Daly, 2002), restorative justice is frequently acknowledged to be rooted in Indigenous communities. Contemporary restorative justice was born out of dissatisfaction with the criminal justice system and developed as an alternative response to crime. As restorative justice grew in popularity within the criminal justice system, proponents began exploring its suitability in other areas, and restorative justice expanded in both upward and downward directions (Johnstone 2011, p.144). The upward expansion moved restorative justice into areas such as human rights abuses and genocide, such as in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Canada. The downward expansion brought restorative justice into community settings such as schools, religious groups and the workplace (Ibid). Restorative justice was initially implemented in schools as an alternative to exclusionary practices (Johnstone, 2011). In Ontario, where this study is situated, restorative justice expanded because of the failures of the Ontario Safe Schools Act (2000). Restorative justice is increasingly being implemented in educational settings. However, there are considerable gaps in our knowledge of how restorative justice is constructed in the everyday operation of schools. In

particular, there remains a lack of conceptual clarity on how restorative justice in education is "characterised and operationalised" (Morrison and Vaandering, 2012, p.148). This is significant because while restorative justice began in schools as a behaviour management mechanism, some proponents now argue that to challenge injustice it must be transformative. My overall aim in pursuing this research was to build conceptual clarity and gain "a deeper understanding of the richness of the concept" (Johnstone and Van Ness, 2007, p.19). To achieve that objective, I sought to answer the primary research question: how was restorative justice constructed, and embedded within primary schools? And the sub-question: how did restorative justice interact with the school's educational mission? To obtain the "thick description" needed to properly explore the phenomenon (Geertz, 1973), my research involved a multi-site case study of primary schools committed to restorative justice in Ontario, Canada. Using a multi-site case study approach, I selected three primary schools within one school board in Ontario, Canada. The three schools had differing histories with restorative justice and were at different stages of implementation. Methods of data collection included participant observation, interviews and gathering documentary information. Data were analysed thematically primarily through manual analysis. I consulted and was guided by the Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research produced by BERA (2018) and the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2014). Ethical issues were considered, including consent, anonymity, harm and benefit. I received ethical approval from the University of Hull and from Mallard School Board. In addition, each principal provided research consent for the school. All interviewees also provided written consent, and parental consent was also received for all students.

10.2 Final conclusions

Restorative justice in education is now the fastest developing area of practice (Morrison, 2015), however, research has been "gradual" and "disappointingly" lacking (Reimer, 2015 p.4; Ortega et al., 2016 p.467). This research adds to the knowledge of how restorative justice is characterised and

operationalised in schools. In addition, by considering restorative justice in relation to the educational mission, I was able to explore restorative justice as both a method of social control and radical change. In this way, I was able to consider to what extent restorative justice represents a real change for schools. As I noted within the methodology, I do not suggest that my findings relate to *all* other schools using restorative justice. Rather, these conclusions enhance the current understanding of restorative justice and provide insights from the unique, particular, contexts of the case studies.

10.2.1 The construction and embedment of restorative justice in schools

This study discovered eight central findings on the construction and embedment of restorative justice in schools.

- Restorative justice was an essentially contested concept; one that was complex, appraisive, and open. However, this led to a lack of definitional clarity. Stakeholders questioned the meaning of restorative justice and the compatibility of transformative understandings. In addition, the appraisive nature of restorative justice led to a clear, even unconditional trust in the concept.

- Schools did not initially consider if their values corresponded with restorative values. Instead, restorative justice was contextualised to fit the unique needs and populations of the schools.

- Restorative justice was often synonymous with circles. Circles were seen by some stakeholders as bringing Indigenous culture into the school. While other practices were largely absent, there was an apparent blending of practices were features of conferencing or mediation were used and called circles.

- The Indigenous origins of restorative justice were not always recognised. I found several examples where restorative justice was re-introduced to Indigenous people as something "new."

- Restorative justice was implemented in a top–down manner. Principals were essential to introducing the idea of restorative justice, implementation and encouraging embedment.

- Stakeholders related to restorative justice in different ways. Gaining buy-in was a process that took time and continued far beyond implementation. However, complete buy-in was not visible in any school. In a whole school approach, restorative justice was most visible in everyday interaction and informal practices, while formal conferencing was not used.

- "Restorative" terminology was scarce in all three case study schools. Yet, the lack of terminology did not reflect a lack of commitment or practices. Stakeholder's familiarity with restorative terminology differed based upon their role. Students across all three schools were unfamiliar with "restorative" terminology.

- The use of restorative language was essential to the construction and embedment of restorative justice. Restorative questions were connected to affirmative restorative justice, and respectful, non-judgemental words were key to transformative understandings. Restorative language plays an essential role in culture change.

10.2.2 Restorative justice and educational missions

To what extent and in what ways does restorative justice represent a change in schools? By exploring restorative justice in relation to the educational mission, this study revealed important connections between restorative justice, social control, and radical change. There was substantial evidence that restorative justice could be used for social control. However, this interaction was complex and multidimensional. It is important to note that, implementing restorative justice was viewed as a

commitment to change. However, the level and type of change differed significantly. Affirmative restorative justice was one of many tools including punishment, that could be used in schools. Practices were typically used by staff with students, in the existing school culture. Authority figures were essential to the construction and embedment of restorative justice. In addition, stakeholders did not consciously relate restorative justice to alternative education. In this sense, the resulting implications of such processes were "modest and specific" (MacAllister, 2013, p.105). Affirmative restorative justice did not seek to challenge the school, was dependent upon experts and hierarchical structures, and did not entirely replace all punitive measures. Ultimately, such practices re-enforced the social order and social control. At Hummingbird and Kingfisher PS, the commitment to restorative justice was new, and stakeholders had a great deal of hope that it would eventually bring a significant change. And so, while the predominant finding in those schools during my visits was that restorative justice did not bring a significant change, there was an expectation that over time it would develop and the schools would be transformed.

There was also evidence that restorative justice was used for radical change. Restorative justice was a relational ethos and part of a greater change movement. The implications for transformative restorative justice were far beyond responding to behaviour, they impacted the entire school. This represented a significant change in language, relationships and everyday interaction. Significantly, while this study found affirmative practices had modest implications for the schools and were used for social control, there was also evidence to the contrary. Restorative practices could empower students and promote individual change. In addition, they could act as a catalyst for radical change. Thus, there was some evidence that restorative practices could create lasting change.

10.3 Contribution

This study responds to calls for research on the characterisation and operationalisation of restorative justice in schools (Anfara et al., 2013; Hurley et al., 2015; Lillard, 2017; Morrison and Vaandering, 2012; Ortega et al., 2016; Reimer, 2011). Furthermore, this study responds to Reimer's (2011) call for more research on the use of restorative justice within the Canadian context.

This research has made a significant contribution to knowledge in two ways. First of all, this study provides several new contributions to knowledge. For example, there was a lack of "restorative" terminology across the case study schools, I found several examples where restorative justice was re-introduced to Indigenous people as something "new," stakeholders did not consciously connect restorative justice with alternative education, and affirmative restorative justice was a catalyst for radical change. Secondly, other findings make a substantial contribution by supporting existing literature. For example, this study found that restorative justice was essentially contested, was implemented in a top-down manner and interacted with other programmes to bring greater change to schools. The findings have significant practical and theoretical implications, for the case study schools and Mallard School Board, other schools using or interested in restorative justice, educational theory, restorative justice broadly.

This study adds important empirical research on restorative justice in schools and the experiences of stakeholders. This has direct significance for Hummingbird, Kingfisher and Sycamore schools and Mallard School Board. Understanding how different stakeholders understand restorative practices and how amenable to it are, will be highly beneficial to the respective schools. The commitment to restorative justice was described as an on-going journey. I hope that this research will provide important insights that inform further practice and development. As Pranis (2009, p.59) suggested, "restorative justice is a field [that] flows back and forth between practice that

informs philosophy and philosophy that informs practice." In addition, this study can act as a marker of where the schools were at one point in time. This may provide a valuable point of comparison as restorative justice grows and changes within the schools.

There is a growing awareness that preparation is essential to success within restorative encounters (such as conferencing and circles). Preparation is equally essential in the implementation and embedment of restorative justice. Correspondingly, Reimer (2011) suggested that the experiences of stakeholders can provide important insights from which others can learn. By exploring the thoughts and experiences of stakeholders at three distinct schools, this research provides valuable examples for other schools using or interested in restorative justice.

In addition, this study has significance for education more broadly by providing insight into a popular growing approach. Restorative justice has been called a radical alternative, and a paradigm shift in schools (Eyler, 2014; Morrison and Vaandering 2012; Vaandering, 2010), however, few studies have explored the nature of this change. By exploring restorative justice in relation to education theory, I was able to explore how restorative justice can be used to fulfil the contrasting missions of social control and radical change.

Restorative justice in education is not isolated, but part of the broad restorative movement. As such, advances in our knowledge of restorative justice in schools have application for the broader concept. By enhancing the current knowledge of restorative justice and how it was characterised and operationalised at different stages of implementation, this research provides important insights into the concept. Furthermore, an increasing number of advocates argue for transformative restorative justice (Braithwaite, 2003; Cremin, 2002; Hopkins, 2004; Johnstone, 2011; McCluskey, 2013; Russell and Crocker, 2016; Shaw and Wierenga, 2002; Reimer, 2015; Vaandering, 2013), however, there is a lack of real empirical research of what this looks like in the everyday. By exploring a whole school

approach to restorative justice, this study adds important insights into an area where there is little research. This contribution to conceptual clarity has real practical significance, as before further research can take place on the how can we encourage the implementation and development of restorative justice, we must first understand what it is.

Lastly, by providing new contributions to knowledge and supporting existing literature this research provides significant insights into restorative justice. This information can fulfil an important "enlightenment function" for policy (Weiss, 1977). As research which adds to conceptual clarity can inform understanding and policy (Ibid).

10.4 Trustworthiness

Having noted the significant findings that this study produced, it is essential to illustrate that quality criteria have been met. Conventionally, research is often explored in relation to internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity. Particularly, in quantitative research, such gauges are important for determining quality research. However, their applicability in qualitative research is questionable. In this study, using a case study strategy and constructionist theory, such criteria are inappropriate as objectivity is not possible. The theoretical paradigm suggests there are multiple ways of constructing reality, and the research aim was to explore unique individual cases. Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggested that the quality of such research should be evaluated in terms of trustworthiness and authenticity. Trustworthiness is defined in relation to credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability), and confirmability (objectivity) (Ibid, p. 114). While Guba and Lincoln (Ibid) discussed trustworthiness and authenticity distinctly, Rodwell (1998) argued that if the criteria for trustworthiness are met than authenticity is also inferred. Accordingly, I will focus my discussion upon the criteria for trustworthiness.

<u>10.4.1 Credibility</u>

Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.314), claimed that member checks are the "most crucial technique for establishing credibility." Member checks involve checking with stakeholders on the accuracy of data. In this study, I completed member checks throughout the data collection stage to confirm the accuracy of the findings. I viewed this as congruent with my collaborative research values and reflective of doing research *with* the schools, rather than *upon* them. At each school, I sought clarity on observations and interpretations with members of the school community. I recurrently asked stakeholders for their views on what I was observing. As an illustration, after a circle in Sycamore PS responding to harm caused when the covering of a turtle tank was removed (this incident is detailed in full in chapter eight), I spoke directly with the classroom teacher about her feelings and understandings. During interviews, I used reflective listening, a technique of voicing what has been heard in order to ensure its accuracy and to allow participants to correct any misconceptions. In addition, one year after the initial school visits I met with each principal to discuss my findings and confirm their accuracy. I also spent the day in each school, revisiting classes and speaking with teachers and students to corroborate my findings.

Another technique for establishing credibility is data triangulation. Data triangulation involves gathering data from multiple sources (Yin, 2003). This is a significant strength because in comparing results from different sources the evidence can be corroborated (ibid). Fundamentally multiple sources consider the same phenomena in different manners providing a "chain of evidence" (Ibid, p.36). As Webb et al., (1966, p.3) suggested, "once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced." This study utilised both a triangulation of sources and methods. Multiple research methods were utilised, including participant observation, interviews and documentary information, and multiple sources were included throughout the different methods.

10.4.2 Transferability

As Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued, true transferability within naturalist inquiry is impossible. For example, within this study restorative justice was socially constructed and influenced by each context. Thus, it was not possible to infer the findings to *all* other schools using restorative justice. Instead, the aim was to explore the particular, contextualised features of the case studies as a base of data that makes a transferability exploration possible within future research (Ibid). To achieve this aim, I have provided the thick description needed to properly explore the phenomenon (Geertz, 1973; Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

10.4.3 Dependability

Dependability is comparable to the reliability technique used in quantitative research (Bryman, 2012). Thus, detailed records were maintained throughout the research process, allowing for the study to be repeated (Ibid, Shenton, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985) also emphasised the close connections between dependability and credibility. They claimed that illustrating credibility makes inroads in inferring dependability. As I have detailed above, credibility was shown through member checks and triangulation of sources and methods.

10.4.4 Confirmability

Confirmability relates to the objectivity of the research. As reality is subjective, neutrality within qualitative research is not possible. While, I used my positionality as a resource to build understanding (Olesen, 1994), I was deeply concerned with case studies and the views of their stakeholders. In line with Lincoln and Guba (1985) I used two major techniques for confirmability, triangulation (as detailed above) and a reflexive journal (detailed below).

10.4.5 Reflexive journal

Thus far, I have illustrated the trustworthiness of the research in relation to credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) discussed one additional technique for trustworthiness that applies to all four areas, a reflexive journal. A reflexive journal is akin to a diary in which the researcher records information about herself and the chosen method (Ibid). I maintained a reflexive journal throughout the research process, from negotiating access, to data analysis and confirming conclusions. These thoughts are included within the individual case studies and the discussion chapter. This practice of being open about my own subjective reality is also consistent with the values and principles of restorative justice that emphasise communication, honesty and humility. In addition, through the journal, I could work through my personal feelings on observations and experiences. At first, I found it challenging to expose myself completely in the journal. Some of my thoughts and experiences felt silly or were embarrassing. However, as the research developed, I felt increasingly comfortable, and the open and very intimate details expanded. I wrote about my thoughts, but also my emotions and feelings throughout the research process. This included the overwhelming stress of gaining access, the heartbreak of leaving my children for extended periods of time to collect data, my anxieties at entering a new school, feelings of welcome and inclusion, and even exhaustion at always being "on" for long periods as a researcher. Ultimately, the reflexive journal allowed me to acknowledge my subjective reality but also functioned as an outlet for me to share without fear of judgement or criticism.

10.5 Limitations and weaknesses

Like all research, this study has limitations and weakness that are noteworthy. To begin, this study involved three cases, from one school board in Ontario, Canada. As a social construction, I have illustrated how restorative justice has developed and changed over time. Thus, my findings reflect restorative justice at one set time within the schools. Hummingbird PS and Kingfisher PS had both

committed to a pilot project to develop restorative justice in the schools, and during a follow-up

visit, it was evident that the role of restorative justice in the schools had altered. Furthermore, during

a follow-up visit to Sycamore PS, that school was also considering further trainings in restorative

justice, which could have altered their use of restorative justice. Ultimately, this study provides

significant insights from unique cases at one set period in time.

Secondly, I did not have full access to the school's electronic media. The three schools used

a social networking software application as one of its main means of communication, which required

an official login, while I attempted to arrange access, this was not possible. Not having access to the

materials and the communications on this network was clearly a weakness in this case study, as I am

not able to provide a fully complete picture of the school's documentary information. However, I

was able to obtain several print outs during my visits, which provided me an overview of how the

school communicated through the software. In addition, this study also included observations and

interviews which added to the fullness of the findings.

While searching for physical indicators of restorative justice at Sycamore PS, I noticed signs

of restorative justice without the label, which propelled me to conduct a secondary search. This

search produced numerous Indicators that would have been otherwise hidden. Sycamore was the

third school I visited, so unfortunately, this insight came too late to inform my practice at the other

two schools. I did go back and review all my observational notes from Hummingbird and Kingfisher

schools and have included information on the values expressed in those posters. However, if I could

redo my research, I would have also completed this secondary search at all three schools.

Across the three case study schools, students reported a lack of familiarity with restorative

terminology. This was surprising as each school was actively committed to restorative justice.

Ultimately in both observations and interviews, I provided students with descriptions and examples

of restorative justice to see if perhaps they were aware of the practices and philosophies, but not the terminology. Clearly, my descriptions influenced their recognition. Furthermore, I found it was much easier for students to recognise concrete practices (affirmative restorative justice), rather than potentially nebulous relational understandings (transformative restorative justice).

At Hummingbird PS, Kingfisher PS and Sycamore PS, the preferred term was restorative practices. Thus, my chosen term restorative justice was inconsistent with the case study schools. It could be argued that in a respectful, collaborative approach, my terminology should reflect the research context. Indeed, I spent a considerable period of time debating terminology and did consider aligning my terminology with the schools. However, I disregarded the change for two reasons. Firstly, as I have illustrated through the case studies and discussion, restorative practices lacked consistency in meaning. So, the term restorative practices meant different things to different stakeholders. In addition, restorative terminology was contextualised. If the case study schools were located in the UK, where my university is situated, it is likely restorative approaches would be the preferred term (McCluskey, 2011). Thus, I wondered if perhaps my terminology should instead be tailored to this British audience? Ultimately, I decided that given the ambiguity and variance in terminology I would maintain my own subjective preference.

In hindsight, I have mixed thoughts about the open interview design. Clearly, without rigid structures, the interviews progressed organically and brought unexpected insights, which added to the study. However, the interviews also progressed and developed in different manners, which meant interviewees were asked different questions, and the lack of a clear, constant format made the analysis of numerous interviews more challenging.

Lastly, I designed my interviews as inclusive; comprising teaching and non-teaching staff, principals and students. However, upon reflection, I would also have included caregivers. While I

interacted with some parents and guardians during my observations, these conversations were brief. This is important because there is a lack of literature on how caregivers experience restorative justice and having their beliefs, buy-in and experiences with restorative justice would add another level of understanding.

Restorative justice is a complex concept, and throughout this research, I have illustrated that it can be conceptualised as a behaviour management technique or as a relational philosophy. My own subjective understanding of the concept has a clear impact upon this study. If like Daly (2016) or Marshall (1999), I thought that restorative justice was solely a process or a mechanism, my scope would have been much narrower. However, my aim was to capture the richness and complexities of restorative justice, and I believe this approach is consistent with restorative values of inclusion, respect and appreciating diversity.

10.6 Recommendations for further research

This study has made a significant contribution to knowledge by expanding the understandings of how restorative justice was constructed and embedded in primary schools. Throughout the research process, I identified several areas where further research is needed.

This research has illustrated that the origins of restorative justice matter. It is clear restorative practices and philosophies have a long history in First Nation communities on this land. The Indigeneity of restorative justice is significant in Canada; a country where Indigenous knowledge has been appropriate for centuries, a country with ongoing colonisation and one working towards reconciliation. Acknowledging the Indigenous origins of restorative justice and the colonisation that "forcibly replaced" them (Woolford, 2009, p.45) is essential for restorative justice to move forward authentically. However, this study also found some evidence that restorative justice was being appropriated as a "new" technique. This has significant ramifications for restorative justice as a

respectful and inclusive concept. However, more research is needed in this area. The pervasiveness

of such practices is unknown. The manner and extent that the Indigenous origins of restorative

justice are acknowledged is also unknown. In addition, given the complex and contested nature of

the Indigenous origins of restorative justice, further research is also needed in this area. I believe this

will help to ensure the past is not romanticised, and the earliest meanings of restorative justice are

not lost (Wonshé, 2004).

Throughout this study, my own appreciation for the Indigeneity of restorative justice

developed. As I explored what this means for the concept, it became apparent that more research is

needed in this area. Acknowledging the Indigenous origins of restorative justice requires a conscious

and considered effort. However, given that not all Indigenous justice can be considered restorative

and not all current administrations of practices reflect the originals (Daly, 2002; Sylvester, 2003), this

is a challenging prospect. How can we properly acknowledge and honor the Indigenous origins of

restorative justice without romanticizing them? Clearly, more research is needed. One way to

approach this is to explore the ways in which Indigenous communities have traditionally used

restorative justice, so that we can fully recognise and give credit to this rich history. This process

needs to actively involve Indigenous people to explore how to move forward respectfully and

inclusively. As the Indigeneity of restorative justice is central to concept and not specific to Canada,

this research has broad implications.

In the literature, restorative justice is frequently considered in relation to alternative

education (for example Adamson and Bailey, 2012; Bickmore, 2012; Cremin, 2016; Cremin, Sellmen

and McCluskey, 2012; Gold, 2011; Moore, 2014; Papakitsos and Karakiozis, 2016; Rinker and

Jonason, 2014; Ryan and Goodram, 2013; Vaandering, 2010, 2014). Yet, significantly, this study

found that stakeholders did not consciously consider restorative justice in such a manner. While this

does not mean that a link does not exist or is unhelpful, it does raise more questions that should be explored by future research. The relationship between restorative justice and alternative education has significant implications for the understanding of the concept and its objectives, and further research is needed to explore how pervasive such attitudes are, and why they exist.

This study found that some key stakeholders had a deep faith in the appraisive nature of restorative justice which led to an unconditional commitment to the concept. This is particularly concerning as there can be substantial gaps between the aspirations and realities of restorative justice (Zernova, 2007), and restorative justice can be utilised to fulfil different missions in schools (Reimer, 2015; Vaandering, 2009; Woolford, 2009). Further research is needed to explore how pervasive such attitudes may be and how they may impact operationalisation.

To date, all known research on restorative justice in Ontario has focused on public education (for example this study, Bickmore, 2008, 2011; Lewington, 2016; Moore, 2014; Nanavati et al., 2007; Reimer, 2009; Ryan and Goodram, 2013; Vaandering 2009; Webb, 2018; Zheng and De Jesus, 2018). While over 93% of Ontario school children are educated in public schools (Van Pelt and MacLeod, 2017), it is not known to what extent, if at all restorative justice is used in private or alternative schools across the province. This lack of literature reflects a larger trend, where research on restorative justice has focused on publicly funded education (Kane et al., 2007; Lillard, 2017; Martin, 2007; McCluskey et al., 2008a; Stinchcomb et al., 2006; Reimer, 2015; Russell and Crocker, 2016). Therefore, there is a need for research to explore restorative justice outside publicly funded education. As restorative justice is contextualised, it would be interesting and significant to learn how the unique features of private and alternative schools can contribute to the construction of restorative justice. Furthermore, research is needed to explore how and to what extent the

construction of restorative justice in private and alternative schools differs from public school settings.

There is a growing body of literature on the potential positive effects of restorative justice in schools. However, many schools have not committed to restorative justice. In Ontario, where this research is situated, restorative justice was first implemented in schools in the mid-2000s (Evans and Vaandering, 2016; Reimer, 2015), and yet it is still implemented sporadically. I echo Bickmore (2011), and Webb's (2018) calls for research to examine why more schools are not implementing restorative justice.

Lastly, this study was concerned with conceptual clarity, and as I explore deeper into restorative justice, I wonder how broad the concept should be? As an illustration, what (if anything) does restorative justice have to say about planetary consciousness? O'Sullivan (1999, p.20) argued,

> What happens at the level of the human community has equally profound implications for the earth community. With all other species considered on this earth, it is essential to understand that, far and away, the human community occupies a crucial role in both our own survival and the survival and integrity of the earth community as a totality.

While restorative justice is described as inclusive, respectful, and non-hierarchical, is it solely focused upon the human community? When I began this study, I might have argued that such a question was a step too far, and we need to draw the line somewhere. Correspondingly, Bell (2001, np) noted that justice systems "continually promote the needs of the human community." However, clearly many structural inequalities and injustices are related to our relationship with the earth, and if restorative justice truly seeks transformation, it should also involve planetary reconciliation. Thus, it is not too much to imagine at this critical point in time. I am not aware of any studies exploring the ecological vision of restorative justice.

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Appendix A: University of Hull ethics certificate

Centre for Educational Studies
T 01482 465031
E c.m.mckinlay@hull.ac.uk

ETHICAL PROCEDURES FOR RESEARCH AND TEACHING
IN THE
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

FORMAL NOTIFICATION OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

Reference Number: **FoE15/16-115**

Name: **Meara Sullivan**

Programme of Study: **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)**

Research Area/Title: *Constructing a restorative ethos: A cross country case study of primary schools using restorative practices (working title)*

Image Permission Form   **N/A**

Name of Supervisor: **Professor Catherine Montgomery**

Date Approved by Supervisor: **25th January 2016**

Date Approved by Ethics Committee: **2nd February 2016**

UNIVERSITY OF **Hull**
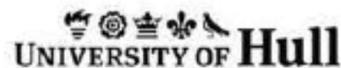
Faculty of Education Ethics Committee

Appendix B: School Information Sheet

UNIVERSITY OF **Hull**

Information Sheet for Schools

Working Title: Constructing a restorative ethos: A cross country case study of schools using restorative practices

Dear

My name is Meara Sullivan and I am a PhD student at the Faculty of Education at the University of Hull, England. As part of my PhD thesis I am conducting a study on restorative practices in schools. This research is a two-country case study involving schools in England and Canada. Your school is invited to take part in the research study. I would like to learn about the school and why you have decided to develop restorative practices. I am also interested in learning what restorative practices means to different people in the school and how restorative practices are being used. Please read this information sheet carefully before consenting to participate in the study.

Participation

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you consent for your school to take part in the study, I will spend two weeks in the school as a participant observer, where I will observe openly and overtly, and will present myself as a PhD student interested in learning about the school. During this time, I will observe the members of the school (staff and students), the many different areas (such as classes and hallways) and activities (such as meetings and playtime) within the school. With full informed consent, I would conduct one-to-one interviews with several staff and students and I will gather documentary information. You may withdraw your consent at any time. If you withdraw consent, there will be no adverse consequences and all information gathered will be destroyed. This research will take place during March 2017 and April 2017.

Risks/Benefits

There are no known risks to the school, staff or students participating in this study. The study will not pose any possible risk to children's or staff's physical well-being and very personal or sensitive questions will not be asked. This research will identify which aspects of the environment are receptive to restorative practices. This information is essential for the successful implementation and sustainability of restorative practices. It is my aim that the study results will be published and the findings will help develop the understanding of how restorative schools construct their ethos.

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The school will be provided with a copy of all publications and addition copies are available upon request.

Confidentiality

No directly identifying information about the school or any of its members will be shared. In all research publications or presentations, the school and its members will be anonymized. All interviews will be kept anonymous and will not be shared with the school. All data collected will be stored in a locked cabinet and non-identifying information will be stored in password protected computer files. In publications, I may quote interviewees directly however I will never include any identifying information. If interviewees agree for the interview to be tape recorded, the tapes will be destroyed as soon as transfer the answers onto paper. All other data collected for the research will be stored for ten years and then destroyed.

The contact details of the researcher are:

The researcher conducting this study is: Meara Sullivan

If you have any questions or concerns you can reach me at: M.Sullivan@2013.hull.ac.uk

The Lead Supervisor is: Professor Gerry Johnstone

Should you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project, please contact the Secretary, Faculty of Education Ethics Committee, University of Hull, Cottingham Rd, Hull, HU6 7RX; Tel No 011-44-1482-465031; Fax 011-44-1482 466137

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this research.

Appendix C: Parent Information Sheet

UNIVERSITY OF Hull

Information Sheet for Parents/Guardians

Working Title: Constructing a restorative ethos: A cross country case study of schools using restorative practices

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Meara Sullivan and I am a PhD student at the University of Hull, England. As part of my PhD thesis I am leading a study on restorative practices in schools. This research is a two-country case study involving schools in England and Canada. Your child's school has chosen to use restorative practices. I would like to learn about the school and what it is like to be a student there. I am also interested in learning what restorative practices means to different people in the school and how restorative practices are being used. Your child's school has agreed to take part in this study and your child is invited to take part in this research. Please read this information sheet carefully before consenting to allow your child to participate in the study.

What will happen if I consent for my child to take part?

If you agree for your child to take part in this study, he/she will participate in a one-to-one interview with me. In this interview, I will ask questions on your child's thoughts and experiences in school. If you agree, this interview will be audio recorded to help me accurately note answers. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes. However, if your child wants to have a break or to continue the interview later that can be arranged. This research will take place during March 2017 and April 2017.

Are there any potential risks or benefits?

There are no known risks to participating in this study. The study will not pose any possible risk to your child's physical well-being and no very personal or sensitive questions will be asked. This research will identify different understandings of restorative practice and how they are being used. This may help your child's school in further developing restorative practices. It is my aim that the study results will also be published and the findings will help advance the understanding of restorative practices in schools. The school will be provided with a copy of all publications and addition copies are available upon request.

UNIVERSITY OF **Hull**

Will information be kept confidential?

Your child's answers will be kept anonymous. Furthermore, no directly identifying information about the school or any of its members will be shared. In publications or presentations, I may directly quote your child, however I will never include any of your child's identifying information (such as his/her name) and I will never name the school or its exact location. If you agree for the interview to be tape recorded, the tapes will be destroyed as soon as the answers are transferred onto paper. All data collected will be stored in a locked cabinet and in password protected computer files. All data collected for the research will be stored for ten years and then destroyed.

Does my child have to participate?

Your child does not have to participate in this study. Your decision will in no way affect your children's schooling. If you do agree for your child to take part in this study you are free to change your mind at any time. If you do change your mind, nothing bad will happen and all information gathered on your child will be destroyed.

The contact details of the researcher are:

The researcher running this study is: Meara Sullivan

If you have any questions or concerns you can reach me at: M.Sullivan@2013.hull.ac.uk

The Lead Supervisor is: Professor Gerry Johnstone

Should you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project, please contact the Secretary, Faculty of Education Ethics Committee, University of Hull, Cottingham Rd, Hull, HU6 7RX; Tel No 011-44-1482-465031; Fax 011-44-1482 466137

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this research.

Appendix D: Student Information Sheet

UNIVERSITY OF Hull

Information Sheet for Students

Working Title: Constructing a restorative ethos: A cross country case study of schools using restorative practices

Dear Student,

My name is Meara Sullivan and I am a PhD student at the University of Hull, England. As part of my PhD I am doing a research study at your school. A research study is a way to find out more about something. I want to learn about your school and what it is like to be a student at your school. Your school has decided to build restorative practice and I am interested in learning what that means to you. Your school has agreed to take part in my study, but you do not have to join the study. Before you agree to take part, please read this information sheet carefully and ask any questions you have.

What will happen if I choose to take part?

If you choose to take part in this study, I will ask you questions about your school and what it is like to be a student at your school. The questions will last about 45 minutes. You can have a break at any time or to continue the questions later. If you say it's okay, I will tape record our meeting to make sure I get all your answers. This will take place during March 2017 and April 2017.

Are there any potential risks or benefits?

There are no risks to joining in this study. That means the study will not harm you, your schooling will not change in any way and you will not be asked very personal questions. I hope what I learn will be put into books and papers and will help people to better understand schools using restorative practices. Your school will be given a copy of all these papers and you can ask for your own copy if you want.

Will information be shared with others?

Your answers may be shared with others like your school, but I will never give your name or class. If I talk about my study in a paper or in front of a group of people, I might use your words, but I will never say your name or your schools name. All information about you,

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including your answers will be kept in a locked cabinet or will be stored in password protected computer files. If you say it's okay to tape record your answers I will erase the tapes as soon as I write down all your answers. The other information I pick up for the study will be burnt or erased after ten years.

Do I have to take part in the study?

You do not have to take part in this study. If you say no, no one will be mad at you and nothing will change. If you say you want to join the study, you can change your mind at any time. If you choose to stop later, nothing will happen and all your information will be erased or burnt.

What if I have questions?

My name is: Meara Sullivan

If you have any questions you can email me at: M.Sullivan@2013.hull.ac.uk

My Lead Supervisor helping me with my PhD is: Professor Gerry Johnstone

If you have any worries about this research, please talk to Clare McKinlay, who is the Secretary, Faculty of Education Ethics Committee, University of Hull, Cottingham Rd, Hull, HU6 7RX. You can call her: 011-44-1482-465031; Fax 011-44-1482 466137; Email: c.m.mckinlay@hull.ac.uk

Thank you for reading this page and for thinking about taking part in this research.

Appendix E: Staff Information Sheet
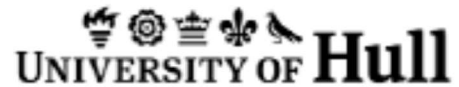
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Information Sheet for Staff

Working Title: Constructing a restorative ethos: A cross country case study of schools using restorative practices

Dear Staff,

My name is Meara Sullivan and I am a PhD student at the University of Hull, England. As part of my PhD thesis I am conducting a study on restorative practices in schools. This research is a two-country case study involving schools in England and Canada. Your school has chosen to use restorative practices. I would like to learn about the school and what it is like to work there. I am also interested in learning what restorative practices means to different people in the school and how restorative practices are being used. Your school has agreed to take part in this study and you are invited to take part in this research. Please read this information sheet carefully before consenting to participate in the study.

Participation

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you consent to take part in this study, you will participate in a one-to-one interview with the researcher. In this interview, I will ask questions about your experiences in school and your thoughts on restorative practices. If you agree, this interview will be audio recorded to help me accurately note answers. If you do consent to take part in this study you are free to withdraw your consent at any time. If you withdraw consent, there will be no adverse consequences and all information gathered will be destroyed. This research will take place during March 2017 and April 2017.

Risks/Benefits

There are no perceived risks to participating in this study. The study will not pose any possible risk to your physical well-being and no very personal or sensitive questions will be asked. This research will identify which aspects of the environment are receptive to restorative practices. This information is essential for the successful implementation and sustainability of restorative practices. It is my aim that the study results will be published and the findings will help advance the understanding of ethos in restorative schools. The

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school will be provided with a copy of all publications and addition copies are available upon request.

Confidentiality

Your responses will be kept anonymous. In publications or presentations, I may quote you directly, however I will never include any of your identifying information and the school will be anonymized. All data collected will be stored in a locked cabinet and non-identifying information will be stored in password protected computer files. If you agree for the interview to be tape recorded, the tapes will be destroyed as soon as the answers are transferred onto paper. All other data collected for the research will be stored for ten years and then destroyed.

The contact details of the researcher are:

The researcher conducting this study is: Meara Sullivan

If you have any questions or concerns you can reach me at: M.Sullivan@2013.hull.ac.uk

The Lead Supervisor is: Professor Gerry Johnstone

Should you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project, please contact the Secretary, Faculty of Education Ethics Committee, University of Hull, Cottingham Rd, Hull, HU6 7RX; Tel No 011-44-1482-465031; fax 011-44-1482 466137

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this research.

Appendix F: School Consent Form

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Working Title: Constructing a restorative ethos: A cross country case study of schools using restorative practices

Research Consent Form for Schools

I, ... of ....

give permission for .... to be involved in a research study being undertaken by Meara Sullivan. I understand that the purpose of the research is to learn about schools using restorative practices. The school's involvement means that the researcher will spend time observing the school, she will conduct interviews with staff and students and will collect documentary information.

I understand:

1. the aims, methods, anticipated benefits, and possible risks/hazards of the research study, have been explained to me.

2. I voluntarily and freely give my consent for the institution/organisation to participate in the above research study.

5. I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study, in which event participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained through this institution/organisation will not be used if I so request.

3. I understand that combined results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals.

I agree that:

4. The institution/organisation will NOT be named in research publications or other publicity without prior agreement.

5. I / We DO / DO NOT require an opportunity to check the factual accuracy of the research findings related to the institution/organisation.

Signature: ....   Date: ....

The contact details of the researcher are:
The researcher conducting this study is: Meara Sullivan
If you have any questions or concerns, you can reach me at: M.Sullivan@2013.hull.ac.uk
The Lead Supervisor is: Professor Gerry Johnstone

The contact details of the secretary to the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee are Clare McKinlay, Research Office, Faculty of Education, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX. Email: c.m.mckinlay@hull.ac.uk tel. 011-44-1482-465031

Appendix G: Parent Consent Form

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Working Title: Constructing a restorative ethos: A cross country case study of schools using restorative practices

Consent Form for Parents/ Guardians

I, ... give consent for my child/dependent .... to take part in the study organised by Meara Sullivan. I understand that the purpose of the research is to learn about schools using restorative practices and how students, staff and others understand restorative practices.

I understand:

1. the aims, methods, anticipated benefits, and possible hazards/risks of the research study, have been explained to me.

2. I voluntarily and freely give my consent to my child's/dependant's participation in such research study.

3. I understand that combined results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals.

4. Individual results will not be released to any person except at my request and on my authorisation.

5. I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, during the study in which event my child's/dependant's participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained will not be used.

Signature: .... Date: ....

Interviews may be audio recorded to precisely capture your child's responses. If you consent the audio recording will be destroyed immediately after the answers are transferred onto paper.

I consent to audio recording: Yes _____ No _____

The contact details of the researcher are:
The researcher running this study is: Meara Sullivan
 If you have any questions or concerns you can reach me at: M.Sullivan@2013.hull.ac.uk
The Lead Supervisor is: Professor Gerry Johnstone

The contact details of the secretary to the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee are Clare McKinlay, Research Office, Faculty of Education, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX. Email: c.m.mckinlay@hull.ac.uk tel. 011-44-1482-465031

Appendix H: Student Consent Form

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Working Title: Constructing a restorative ethos: A cross country case study of schools using restorative practices

Consent Form for Students

_____

I, ...   of ....

Would like to take part in this study by Meara Sullivan. I understand that the reason for the study is to learn about my school and my experiences at school.

I understand:

1.   The reason for this study and what will happen if I choose to take part. The study will not harm me, and what is learnt will be shared with others to help them better understand schools using restorative practices.

2.   My name and class information will not be shared with anyone unless I ask for them to be shared or I say it is okay.

3.   My answers may be shared, like in papers, books or at talks, and my words may be used (quoted), but information that could identify me or my school (such as my name or my schools name) will never be shared.

4.   I can change my mind at any time and decide not to take part in the study. If I decide that I do not to be part of the study, nothing will happen and no information from me will be used.

5.   I do not have to take part in this study. I agree to take part in this study.

Signed...Date....................

Name (block capitals) ....

Consent to Audio Recording:
I agree for you to tape record my interview and use this tape and your hand-written notes in the research. This audio recording will be erased as soon as it is copied onto paper.

Please initial: _____Yes _____No

The contact details of the researcher are:
The researcher running this study is: Meara Sullivan
If you have any questions, you can reach me at: M.Sullivan@2013.hull.ac.uk
The Lead Supervisor is: Professor Gerry Johnstone

The contact details of the secretary to the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee are Clare McKinlay, Research Office, Faculty of Education, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX. Email: c.m.mckinlay@hull.ac.uk tel. 011-44-1482-465031

Appendix I: Staff Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF Hull

Working Title: Constructing a restorative ethos: A cross country case study of schools using restorative practices

Consent Form for Staff

I, ...   of ....

agree to participate in this study organised by Meara Sullivan. I understand that the purpose of the research is to learn about schools using restorative practices and how students, staff and others understand restorative practices.

I understand:

1. the aims, methods, anticipated benefits, and possible risks/hazards of the research study, have been explained to me.

2. I voluntarily and freely give my consent to my participation in such research study.

3. I understand that combined results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals.

4. Individual results will not be released to any person except at my request and on my authorisation.

5. I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study, in which event my participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained from me will not be used.

Signed...Date.....................

Name (block capitals)...

Consent to Audio Recording:
I consent for you to audio record my interview and use this audio and interview data in my research. If you consent the audio recording will be destroyed immediately after the answers are transferred onto paper.

Please initial: _____Yes _____No

The contact details of the researcher are:
The researcher conducting this study is: Meara Sullivan
If you have any questions or concerns you can reach me at: M.Sullivan@2013.hull.ac.uk
The Lead Supervisor is: Professor Gerry Johnstone

The contact details of the secretary to the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee are Clare McKinlay, Research Office, Faculty of Education, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX. Email: c.m.mckinlay@hull.ac.uk tel. 011-44-1482-465031

Appendix J: Student Interview Guide

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<u>Interview Guide: Students</u>

Introduction:

- o Introduce myself and the study overview, aims, confidentiality and consents

General Background Questions:

- o Grade/Class
- o Length of time at the school
- o Any previous schools

Main focus:

- o Can you tell me about your school?
  - What is a typical day like for you?
  - What is it like to be a student at your school? Memorable experiences/people/situations

- o Your school uses restorative practices, what does that mean to you?
  - What techniques/strategies does it involve
  - What beliefs/principles
  - How has restorative practice developed in the school? Key people/leaders/areas?
  - How is RP created in the everyday (language, dialogue, relationships, responses)
  - Has your school created any literature (pamphlets, signs, videos, books etc.) on restorative practice?
  - How are students involved in RP? Examples/ situations/ personal experiences
  - Has the school created any literature (pamphlets, signs, videos, books etc.) on restorative practice?

- o How were you introduced to RP at the school?
  - By whom/when
  - How do you use RP in your school?
  - Have you had any training in RP?
  - Any areas/times when restorative practices are not used, any alternatives used?
  - How are different and conflicting views/ways of being treated?
  - How are students, parents, other staff introduced to RP?

- o What does your school do to develop and expand restorative practice in the school?
  - Specific practices/procedures
  - Whom is responsible – a specific people/all stakeholders
  - Challenges/barriers to continuing and developing practice
  - How can restorative practice be developed in your school?

Closing:

- Summary of the discussion
- Any questions, thank you and closing.

Appendix K: Staff Interview Guide

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<u>Interview Guide: Staff</u>

Introduction:

- o Introduce myself and the study overview, aims, confidentiality and consents

General Background Questions:

- o Role/Profession
- o Length of time at the school
- o Previous experience prior to school

Main focus:

- o Your school uses restorative practices, what does that mean?
    - What techniques/strategies does it involve
    - What beliefs/principles
    - How is RP created in the everyday (language, dialogue, relationships, responses)
    - How did restorative practice develop in the school? Key people/leaders/areas?
    - In what ways does the school include input from stakeholders
    - What is the school's objective in using RP? is the aim educational or something else?
    - Has the school produced any literature on restorative practice?

- o How were you introduced to RP at the school?
    - By whom/when
    - Do you have any previous experience/ training in RP?
    - How do you use RP in your role?
    - How are different and conflicting views/ways of being treated?
    - Any areas/times when restorative practices are not used, any alternatives used?
    - How are students, parents, other staff introduced to RP?

- o How are restorative practices embedded in the school?
    - Specific practices/procedures
    - Whom is responsible, specific people/all stakeholders
    - Challenges/barriers to embedding practice
    - How can restorative practice be developed in your school?

Closing:

- Summary of the discussion
- Any questions
- Thank you and closing.