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*Why Is It So Hard to Get Restorative Practice to Stick?*

Presenters: Lyn Doppler & Terry O'Connell

## Welcome & Introductions

- What's brought you to this session?
- If you have some experience of Restorative Practice, why is it so difficult to embed and sustain RP [as part of any school culture]?
- Why is it important to identify the factors that are most likely to impede the effective implementation of Restorative Practice?
- Where would you start looking?
- Using the analogy of a 'journey' to discuss practice, how would this help you to frame your discussion:  
Past - what has shaped & moulded your practice.  
Present - how you explain your existing practice.  
Future - what the ideal practice would look like.

## Background

- Introduced restorative conferences to schools in 1991.
- Provided facilitator training for teachers 1991-95
- 1995 - Lewisham Primary School - focus shifted from formal to informal processes and involvement of all teachers.
- Development of one-day teacher training with an emphasis on explicit practice.
- 2003 - Mary MacKillop Primary Penrith [NSW] - developed a 'whole school approach' by training teachers, students and parents.
- 2004 - Initial collaboration with Bruce Schenk in Canada.
- 2005 - Rozelle Public School - linking RP to pedagogy

Subsequently refined training, shift in focus from behaviors to relationships and linking Restorative Practice to sound pedagogy [teaching and learning]. My thinking was to challenge teachers around explicit practice and the importance of engaging in regular, constructive and reflective conversations on what works.

Principal: Lyn Doppler

Question:

*Lyn you were appointed principal at Rozelle in 2002. What was this experience like? What did you see happening in the school?*

Question:

*What was the hardest part in getting teachers to focus on explicit teaching practice? Once started on this course, how were you able to maintain the impetus?*

Principal: Lyn Doppler

Question:

*Student self governance is a strong feature of what happens in your school. Why do you feel this is important? Can you give us some examples of how teachers encourage students to learn how to self manage or take responsibility for their own learning.*

Question:

*Strong leadership is critical if Restorative Practice is to become an integral part of the school culture. Tell us a little about your leadership style. How do you model Restorative Practice with your staff? For example, how do you facilitate your staff meetings or the first day of a new school year?*

Principal: Lyn Doppler

Question:

*You always talk about Restorative Practice as a ‘way of being and learning’. How do you maintain this focus with teachers, students and parents?*

Question:

*How would you summarize the benefits that Restorative Practice has to offer once it becomes part of your school culture, a ‘way of being and learning’?*

*General Questions:*

## What Teachers Say:

- I am much more conscious about my practice.
- I have learnt to be a better listener.
- Being a facilitator of dialogue by using the questions has made it far easier.
- I have learnt to be more explicit in my practice.
- The biggest change is that I have learnt how to give students the opportunity to sort things. In the past I expected students to take responsibility but now realise that I have to provide the rituals if this is to happen.

## What Teachers Say:

- The framework has affirmed the things I do well and importantly helps you to more easily recognise your bad habits.
- The quality of the conversations I have with my colleagues are more positive as we are using a common language and practice.
- I no longer ask 'why' questions.
- I feel more confident and certainly more consistent in how I interact with students.
- As a staff we have become better at celebrating what we do well.



### What Students Say:

- I am better able to work things out with my class mates.
- I have learnt the questions and this has helped me at home.
- We get to work things out when something happens.
- We are more prepared to accept responsibility when we do something wrong because we know we will get a chance to fit things.
- I used the questions when I had a fight with one of my friends and we were able to sort things out.

### What Students Say:

- When something happens in class, it is our responsibility to sort things out.
- I get into less trouble now that I understand how what I do hurts others in the class..
- I feel with cooperate much better in the class with one another.
- I have learnt that you can work anything out by using the questions.
- The class is much better since we learnt about restorative practice.

### What Parents Say:

- Since I learnt how to use the questions, I find myself blaming less and listening more.
- I am surprised how the questions have taken most of the emotion from situations that go wrong.
- I have realised the important of being a facilitator and not a problem solver.
- Restorative practice has helped me greatly in my workplace.

### What Parents Say:

- I manage a reasonably large workplace and since I have been exposed to restorative practice, I am much more confident at dealing with difficult issues.
- As a parent, I feel that my relationship with my kids have improved now that I act in restorative ways.
- I find myself being pulled up by my kids when I ask the why question.
- Having my husband attend the parent evening has certainly helped our relationship.

## What We Have Learnt

- *The critical importance of sharing Restorative Practice with teachers, students and parents.*
- *This approach offers a common language and practice.*
- *It ensures a shared accountability. When all stakeholders are engaged in restorative practice, it is no longer a teacher's discretion as to whether he/she will use restorative practice, rather it becomes the community expectation.*
- *The framework supports the development of more explicit and consistent practice.*

## What We Have Learnt

- *Attempting to use restorative practice without knowing how 'to be' restorative is problematic.*
- *Sustaining and embedding restorative practice is only possible where it is seen as integral to teaching and learning.*
- *Leadership is critical for restorative practice to be sustained.*
- *Visionary leadership and strong collegiality are the two key ingredients for success.*
- *Restorative interactions and circles are the basis for building collegiality.*

## What We Have Learnt

- *Regular uninterrupted dialogue amongst teachers about what works is essential to developing sound pedagogy.*
- *Classroom practice should be an extension of the modeling that does well at building sound collegiate relationships.*
- *Getting teachers to embrace restorative practice is far more challenging than getting students and parents to buy in.*
- *To show how restorative practice satisfies the key elements of quality teaching so that it is not seen as a program, set of strategies and techniques.*

Thank You!

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