Weaving restorative practices into Lutheran school communities

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An unfolding story……

- There has to be a better way
- A gap…
- A bit disconnected
- Our values as Lutheran Educators
  - “Lifelong qualities for Learners….Living in community and reflecting characteristics of God through core values, especially love, justice, compassion….etc
- At long last…

“We have come to understand that significant cultural change is possible within schools when they choose to work restoratively with young people”

The relational management project:

A Lutheran Education Queensland initiative to initiate, encourage, and support:

- the development of our school cultures to align with our values as Lutheran Educators
- embedding the philosophy and processes of Restorative Practices (RP) across our schools,
- And therefore, in particular, to encourage and support the review of behaviour management policies to be restorative and relational, rather than punitive

“You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist.”
Indira Gandhi, quoted by Christian Science Monitor, May 17, 1982
Step by step… a 3-5 year project

- A steering group
- A special friend – Marg Thorsborne, a pioneer, facilitator, and trainer in RP
- Appointment of Relational Management Coordinator as a seconded, 2 day per week position, initially for 1 year
- A call for Pilot Schools - Memorandum of understanding to Principals.
- Orientation day – to set direction, explore values base for change, reflection and planning for whole of school culture development
- Email network
- Mid-year 3 day intensive training facilitated by Marg Thorsborne
- Coordinator to support, encourage, coach via phone, email, and school visits
- A Share and Discuss day for Pilot Schools is planned for next year so that schools can share what is working and what isn’t, swap ideas and resources etc
Art and science......

- appealing to hearts and minds – especially the Principal’s!

- Culture is the result of messages that are received about what is really valued. People align their behaviour to these messages in order to fit in. Changing culture requires a systematic and planned change to these messages, whose sources are behaviour, symbols and systems. (Peta Blood and Margaret Thorsborne, *The Challenge of Culture Change: Embedding Restorative Practice in Schools*. 2005)

- Developing a culture of restorative pedagogy...in our classrooms and playgrounds, in our staffrooms and carparks, in our newsletters and websites, in how we treat each other face to face.....and behind each others’ backs....
“…True justice emerges from conversation….”

Howard Zehr, “The Little Book of Restorative Justice”, 2002

Photo by Jesse Richards, Year 12, St Andrews Lutheran College
If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”
Romans 12:18 NIV

Photo by Jesse Richards, Year 12, St Andrews Lutheran College
Living theology.....

Creation

De-Creation

Re-Creation
Responding to disruptions or conflict...

Student behaviour is not always the full story....
Traditional responses

- What happened?
- What rule was broken?
- Who’s to blame?
- What punishment is deserved?
- …lecture, threat, warning, detention, removal from class, daily report, move seat, time out, suspension, expulsion
- Or in the “good old days”… six of the best or a wallop on the backside!
Discipline issues involve…

- Judgement by the teacher at classroom level
- Skill of the teacher to escalate/de-escalate
- Track record of the referring teacher
- Understanding of the student’s family and peer relationships
- Previous behaviour and academic history of student
- Immediate context of the behaviour
- Culmination of behaviours which threaten teacher authority
- School or Principal’s disciplinary philosophy
- Emotions!

Adapted from Skiba et al. 2003 quoted by Margaret Thorsborne 2008
Limitations of punishment-based systems to control behaviour...

- Focus on “stopping” rather than “changing” behaviour
- Rarely address causes or effects effectively
- Don’t encourage self-reflection or responsibility
- Aim becomes to avoid punishment - don’t get caught
- Damage relationships, and impact on self esteem
- Encourage resentment, revenge, and rebellion
- Model inflicting pain and unpleasantness
- Assume person harmed is helped by others being punished
- Can gain compliance for the wrong reasons
- Emphasises external control as opposed to internal control
- Can put the school in the role of adversary

Adapted from Pathhead Primary Scotland, Morrison 2007, and Bill Hubbard, Rosehill College Auckland, NZ.
Hang on a minute......

- When a child has trouble reading, we.... teach
- When a child has trouble spelling, we ....teach
- When a child has trouble with maths, we....teach
- When a child has trouble behaving, we .......punish?
Thinking about discipline....

What outcomes do we seek for:
- The school community as a whole?
- The wrongdoer?
- The wrongdoer’s parents
- The victim?
- The victim’s parents?
- Staff involved in the incident?

Margaret Thorsborne 2008
What are Restorative Practices (RP)?

- A Process
- A Set of Values
- A Fresh Way of Looking at wrongdoing and interpersonal conflict:
  - A Third Way – “Fight or flight/ freeze” aren’t the only options!
  - A New “Lens” – embracing both support & accountability / the Law and the Gospel

T. Taylor Dealing with People you can’t Stand, 1994
Key Principles of Restorative Practice

- All crime and misconduct is a fundamental violation of people and interpersonal relationships. So too are “toxic” and unresolved interpersonal conflicts.

- Violations create obligations and liabilities.

- Restorative Practice seeks to heal and put things right.
Figure 1: Building Social Capital, Adapted from Wachtel, T (1999). The Challenge of Culture Change, Peta Blood & Margaret Thorsborne (2005)
Building Social Capital (b)

- Power struggles
- Confrontations
- Rules
- Win-Lose
- Retribution
- Revenge
- Punitive

- Consistent
- Responsive
- Adaptive
- Cooperation
- Negotiation
- Accountable
- Responsible

- Uncaring
- Tired
- Lazy
- Burnt out
- Given up
- Harsh

- Chaotic
- Inconsistent
- Excusing
- Giving in
- Blurred boundaries
- Rescuing

Support / care / nurture

Limits / boundaries / expectations

Adapted from Margaret Thorsborne 2008
Genuine accountability, then, includes an opportunity:

- To understand the human consequences of what has been done
- To take responsibility
- To take part in a process to decide what needs to be done to put things right
- Take steps to heal and repair
- Address the cause(s) of one’s own behaviour

Howard Zehr 1990, Adapted from Margaret Thorsborne 2008
Key Questions

• What happened?
• What were you thinking at the time?
• What have you thought about since?
• Who has been affected?
• In what way(s)?
• What needs to be done to put things right?
• What can be done to make sure this doesn’t happen again?
It’s important to note...

The effectiveness of these Questions lies not just in what is asked but how they are asked.
Putting RP into action

Informal

- affective statements
- affective questions
- Restorative Chat

Formal

- Large group/small group / classroom conference
- Formal Conference

Adapted from “Restorative Justice in Everyday Life”, Ted Wachtel, 1999

Compiled by Steve Brady April 2008
Where does it fit?

Adapted from “Restoring Safe School Communities”, Brenda Morrison (2007) with reference to Peta Blood 2004

Whole school model of restorative practices: an integrated approach

1-5% of population

Whole school

Restorative Conferencing
Mediation

Restorative chats, classroom conferences, problem solving circles

Relational practices, school/classroom policies, curricula, social skills programs, Care groups, chapels etc

DEVELOPING SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL CAPACITY

Accountability, responsibility for self and others, working together, personal potency

MANAGING DIFFICULTIES & DISRUPTIONS

RESTORING RELATIONSHIPS
Two models for culture change were offered to the pilot schools, to guide their thinking and planning. This one, and the one on the following slide.

Developing an Action Plan - EXAMPLES
Adapted from Restoring the Balance 2 (Warren & Williams, 2007)

- Staff professional development
- Newsletters
- Brochures
- Case studies
- Conference presentations
- Ongoing restorative conversations between staff / students / parents

- Displays
- Posters
- Artworks
- Badges
- Wristbands
- Wallet-sized cards with the Questions printed
- Restorative/ reflection / “safe” / “chill” designated areas within school
- Time invested by staff / students / parents to “restore” when things go wrong

- Chapel services
- Assemblies - to highlight “the way we do things around here”
- Widespread adoption of restorative language especially “the Questions” and affective statements
- Playground supervisions and BM strategies adapted to Relational Management model
- Regular use of Circles/Mini-conferences to solve problems

- Restorative conferencing structures put in place
- Policies reviewed and adapted to Restorative Practices model
- Clear referral and support procedures eg Student Services, Counselling, Chaplaincy, Staff support
- Review and recycle for sustained restorative culture development

- Playground supervisions and BM policies strategies adapted to Relational Management model
- Reflection sheets with restorative focus
- Expanded “toolkit” for teachers eg restorative continuum + proximity / nonverbal cues/ warnings/ change of seating etc – note also No Blame interventions for bullying etc
Developing an Action Plan – Triangle Model

Adapted from “Restoring Safe School Communities”, Brenda Morrison (2007) with reference to Peta Blood 2004

Whole school model of restorative practices: an integrated approach

RESTORING RELATIONSHIPS

- Formal Conferences
  - “Round Tables”

MANAGING DIFFICULTIES & DISRUPTIONS

- Classroom meetings/conferences/circles
- Restorative chats/Corridor chats
- Peer mediation
- Group mediation
- No blame interventions eg support group, shared concern
- Restorative behaviour plans
- Problem solving circles
- Restorative grievance procedures

DEVELOPING SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL CAPACITY

- Curriculum programs eg Mindmatters, You can Do it etc
- Care groups Home classes etc
- “Circle Times”
- Chaplains/Counsellors
- Chapel Services
- Staff training
- Pastoral care – ie YLC, general Teacher care and concern “Getting Connected cards”
- Widespread use of restorative language
- Restorative BM plan (Relational Management Plan)
- Reflection sheets - restorative Support for staff emotional health and well being
- Library resources re restorative practices
- Whole of school modeling & promotion of healthy social/emotional learning and competency development
Back to the **Relational Management Project**

...*What’s been happening for the 9 schools (4 x P-12, 1 x P-6, 3 x P-7, & 1 x 8-12) aligned with the project?*

The schools, each at different stages of development, with differing levels of available resources, have engaged in a combination of the following:

- Review of policies and procedures
- Formation of implementation teams
- Professional development for staff
- Having a go at using restorative processes for dealing with incidents – serious and not so serious
- Purchase of resources
- Parent information evenings
- Meetings with key staff
- Development of brochures for parents, and students
- Key restorative questions printed on wallet-sized cards for staff and parents
- Data collection and evaluation processes developed
Snapshots......

St Johns Lutheran Primary School
Kingaroy – Qld

St Andrews Lutheran College
Gold Coast - Qld
Building a Caring Community
—The Questions

• What has happened?
• What were you thinking at the time?
• Who has been affected, and in what way?
• What can you do to make things right?
• Is there anything that you need to ask me to do?

Get Real . Repair . Reconnect
Draft MSSS Relationship / Classroom Management Process – St Andrews Lutheran College

- **Get Real. Repair. Reconnect**

**Effective relationships for Learning**

- **Disruption**
  - Teacher Level 1 Intervention (Minimal Disruption)
    - Low-level approach
      - Selective attention
      - Use of proximity
      - Eye contact/ non-verbal cues
  - Teacher Level 2 Intervention (Disruption continues)
  - Teacher Level 3 Intervention
    - Referral to Student Services
      - For gross misbehaviours or continuation of disruptive behaviour despite level 1 & 2 interventions
    - Development of Individual Management Plan using restorative dialogue
      - Teacher fills out a yellow referral slip.
        - Student takes this to Senior Admin – Signs in – then proceeds to Student Services – may be accompanied by another student/staff.
      - Student Services (SS)
        - Student works through ReFlection Sheet with a staff member from SS. This includes the development of a re-entry plan.
        - SS Staff member contacts parent and asks if he/she would like teacher to make contact (within 1-2 days)
        - SS makes a copy of the re-entry plan for Class teacher and Learning Advisor
      - Student services may include:
        - Restorative Conference
        - Classroom conference
        - Negotiated Behaviour contract
        - Detention
        - Internal suspension
        - External suspension
        - Parent contact

- **Level 4 Intervention**
  - Referral to DP/Dean/HoMS
  - Correction Plan / Strategies for Re-entry may include:
    - Restorative Conference
    - Classroom conference
    - Negotiated Behaviour contract
    - Detention
    - Internal suspension
    - External suspension
    - Parent contact

- **Level 5 Intervention**
  - Referral to Principal
  - Correction Plan / Strategies for Re-entry may include:
    - Restorative Conference
    - Classroom conference
    - Parent contact
    - Negotiated Behaviour contract
    - Detention
    - Internal suspension
    - External suspension

- **Exclusion**

**Meaningful Re-entry to class**

- Restorative Chat
  - Questions – In/ out/ or after class
  - Classroom conference

- Student Services (SS)

- **Principal**
  - If unsafe behaviour / serious incident

**Correction Plan / Strategies for Re-entry may include:**

- May include:
  - Restorative Conference
  - Classroom conference
  - Parent contact
  - Negotiated Behaviour contract
  - Detention
  - Internal suspension
  - External suspension
  - Parent contact

**Restorative Classroom culture**

**Development of Individual Management Plan**

**Get Real. Repair. Reconnect**

**Restorative Classroom culture**

**Meaningful Re-entry to class**

- Restorative Chat
  - Questions – In/ out/ or after class
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**Correction Plan / Strategies for Re-entry may include:**

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  - Parent contact
  - Negotiated Behaviour contract
  - Detention
  - Internal suspension
  - External suspension
  - Parent contact
Some challenges:
Restorative practices are like a river….

- ..... with many small beginnings
- ..... that can bring meaningful changes
- ..... that can turn negative incidents into constructive events
- ..... that can build empathy and social skills to develop a sense of community
- ..... that can help to build a culture of listening and fairness
The Round Table is intended to be a place of peacemaking, where the process itself, the environment of the table, and a willingness to make a difference, will help make it possible to turn conflict into cooperation.