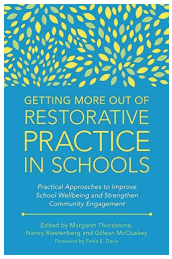
BOOK REVIEW



Getting more out of restorative practice in schools – A practical approach to improve school wellbeing and strengthen community engagement

Margaret Thorsborne, Nancy Riestenber, & Gillean McCluskey. (2018). Jessica Kingsley, 280 pages.
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Jean Carter

Associate National Director, Quality Assurance - Adventist Schools Australia, Ringwood, VIC

> *Restorative Practice (RP) is all about focussing on community, relationships and healing rather than punishing wrong doers.*

This book is an easy to read, yet engaging, interesting and informative. Restorative Practice (RP) is all about focussing on community, relationships and healing rather than punishing wrong doers. It has been successfully implemented in many schools across the world.

This book showcases different practices of RP from a wide range of settings and locations in Part 1 of the book. In Part 2 (my favourite section) RP is aligned to a variety of different approaches and knowledge.

Chapter 1 is all about the need for the school to assess their own interest and willingness to adopt RP in their school. It also highlights the problems with implementation that could happen if the school is not ready.

Chapters 2 – 5 discuss individual case studies from Glasgow, Minnesota and California and how RP has been implemented in a range of schools or school districts. These chapters reflect honestly the individual journeys implementing RP and give good insight into the pitfalls for others to avoid.

Chapter 6 is set in London and discusses how to evaluate and measure success when implementing RP in schools. This chapter sums up Part 1 of the book in a very practical way.

As mentioned earlier, Part 2 of this book aligns a variety of approaches and knowledge with RP:

1. Theory of Mind: Chapter 7 aligns the Theory of Mind and the Theory of RP. The researchers from Edinburgh believe both of these theories may enhance the understanding of each other.
2. Mindfulness: In Chapter 8 the researchers from Vermont discuss the strengths with incorporating Mindfulness with RP.
3. Wellbeing: The New Zealand Researchers discuss how there is a strong link between Wellbeing and RP and how both can strengthen the other program.
4. Student Trauma: This study from Minnesota shows that students can come to school with various amounts of trauma and RP can actually help decrease tensions.
5. Peace Practices: Peace Practices from England were coupled very successful with RP to strengthen the outcomes for students.
6. Therapeutic links to Maturing Young Brains: The connection was made by Neuroscientists in NZ that schools who responded with RP when students make mistakes had better outcomes than normal means of punishment for wrongdoing.
7. Transitions to new schools: The researchers in Minneapolis found that when schools adapted a version of Family Group Conferencing, the transition to a new school for a student who had been suspended or expelled, was significantly more successful.
8. Restorative Parenting Program: The restorative parent program in Ireland was found to be very successful when combined with RP in schools.
9. Supporting Families with Complex Needs: Some schools in NZ found that RP worked best in their school if they also implemented a strong program to support families with complex needs.

The final chapter succinctly gives important advice to those wanting to implement RP into their own school. This chapter also includes a series of questions that need to be considered before implementation.

Restorative Practice aligns very well with Christian principles. It is my belief that while there were many sections in this book that schools could implement readily, it would be important to ensure that Christian principles were overlayed over all decisions when implementing Restorative Practice in Christian schools. TEACH