Building and sustaining restorative schools: centring relationships, participation, and community.

Laura Halliwell

Doctorate of Applied Educational Psychology

School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences

Newcastle University

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Declaration

This thesis is being submitted for the award of Doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology.
I declare that this work is my own and has not been submitted for any other purpose.

Overarching abstract

This thesis explores restorative approaches as a relational and community building philosophy within schools. It contains four chapters: a systematic literature review (SLR), an ethical and methodological critique, an account of an empirical research project, and a reflection on the personal and professional implications of conducting this research.

Chapter 1: In what ways do restorative approaches influence relationships within a secondary school community?

This SLR explores how restorative approaches may influence relationships within a secondary school community. The review adopts a meta-ethnographic approach to synthesising selected papers, in keeping with the review's constructionist philosophical stance. A total of eight studies were included in this review, including from the UK, USA, New Zealand, and Peru. The third-order constructs identified highlighted that relationships are influenced by the creation of an environment of co-construction, alongside space for human encounters. The review also highlighted that these spaces are nested within a wider contextual environment, and as such consideration of socio-historical cultural context was key. In short, restorative approaches must be enacted in a way that considers the relational experiences that occur beyond the school gates. Finally, the review also highlighted that within relationships there existed a shifting balance of power between old, traditional operations of hierarchical power and more egalitarian structures. The review therefore highlighted that restorative approaches have the propensity to transform relationships, however, critical consideration should be paid to the role of power and the socio-cultural context beyond the school.

Chapter 2: An ethical and methodological critique

This chapter offers an ethical and methodological critique of the research process outlined in chapter three. This includes a reflection on my personal experiences and motivations which in turn formed the axiological stance of this research. The philosophical stance of this project, social constructionism, is outlined including how it has influenced key tenets of this project. This chapter also offers a critique of the methodological approach of this study, participatory action research, particularly the notion that under the guise of participation, the epistemic privilege of the researcher is maintained. To consider this paradox, the chapter considers and reconceptualises the construct of power and its role within this project.

Chapter 3: How are restorative school communities built and maintained? A participatory action research project with one primary school.

The purpose of this research was to explore the ways in which restorative school communities may be built and maintained. The research adopted a participatory action research methodology with three staff members from a small primary school. The research took place over four cycles of reflection, research, and action, which were analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis. Findings highlighted that restorative approaches are best constructed as a philosophy over a programme, that centres on participation, curiosity, and community. They also highlighted the importance of creating spaces; for co-construction and reflection. Finally, the findings suggested that a restorative school community is one that appreciates the centrality of all relationships within school communities, whether this is in forging connections or in rupture and repair. Within this theme, it was suggested that schools must foster professional belonging amongst all staff, in doing so acknowledging that one fundamental way to maintain restorative approaches is to approach relationships with staff restoratively. This chapter concludes by exploring implications, for both educationalists and EPs working with educationalists.

Chapter 4: A personal and professional reflection

This chapter explores the personal and professional implications of conducting this research, considering particularly the implications for my ongoing practice as a TEP. It also considers how the research process challenged me to embrace uncertainty as an agent for transformation and change. This chapter considers the way in which social constructionism may encourage day-to-day practice that centres uncertainty as a conduit for collaboration and collective meaning-making. The ways in which restorative approaches can be conceptualised as 'small acts of resistance' is also explored, by considering the role of relationality, reflection and co-construction within a system where these are not prioritised. In drawing parallels between research and practice, the sustaining possibilities of relationality, reflection and co-construction in practice are also considered, before questioning to what extent these can also be considered 'acts of resistance' when working in systems that are time and resource pressured.

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Chapter 1: Systematic Literature Review

Abstract.

This SLR explores how restorative approaches may influence relationships within a secondary school community. The review adopts a meta-ethnographic approach to synthesising selected papers, in keeping with the review's constructionist philosophical stance. A total of eight studies were included in this review, including from the UK, USA, New Zealand, and Peru. The third-order constructs identified highlighted that relationships are influenced by the creation of an environment of co-construction, alongside space for human encounters. The review also highlighted that these spaces are nested within a wider contextual environment, and as such consideration of socio-historical cultural context was key. In short, restorative approaches must be enacted in a way that considers the relational experiences that occur beyond the school gates. Finally, the review also highlighted that within relationships there existed a shifting balance of power between old, traditional operations of hierarchical power and more egalitarian structures. The review therefore highlighted that restorative approaches have the propensity to transform relationships, however, critical consideration should be paid to the role of power and the socio-cultural context beyond the school.

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Introduction

Restorative approaches are defined as relational practices that focus on building and, when necessary, repairing relationships as a way of working together as a community (McCluskey et al., 2008; McCold, 2004). In short, justice is understood to be a relational concept, rather than a disciplinary one (Vaandering, 2010). Restorative approaches are typically traced back to non-western, indigenous populations (Veloria et al., 2020). Within western cultures, restorative approaches have been embedded within community organisations, youth, and adult justice services (Crawford & Newburn, 2002), social work services (Van Wormer, 2003), and more recently schools (McCluskey et al., 2008, 2011). It is the latter that will be the focus of this Systematic Literature Review (SLR).

It is the aim of this SLR to explore and synthesise restorative approach literature, to illuminate new perspectives or understandings in relation to restorative approaches and relationships. It will do so by focussing on the following question:

> In what way may restorative approaches influence relationships in a secondary school community?

This SLR will adopt a meta-ethnographic approach, as it is suggested this can support the generation of new understandings of how restorative approaches may influence relationships within a secondary school context (Noblit & Hare, 1988). It is acknowledged that a range of qualitative review approaches would have been philosophically coherent (Major & Savin-Baden, 2011). It is my position, however, that the generation of reciprocal and refutation translations within a meta-ethnography would support a nuanced interpretation, which does not assume a universally positive or negative influence of restorative approaches on relationships.

In considering why this review question and focus is particularly pertinent in the current climate, it is important to examine the educational and legislative context. Suspensions and exclusions in England are highest within secondary school populations, warranting the focus on this population (DfE, 2024). Considering government legislation, it can be argued that it has focused on individual responsibility, punishment, and retribution within schools. One such example is a 2016 behaviour and discipline guidance document, which it is suggested by some authors focusses overly on constructs such as punishment and discipline, whilst making no reference to restorative approaches (DfE, 2016; Greer, 2020). This is also true of the most recently updated guidance (DfE, 2022). With this example, it becomes possible to see how neoliberal ideals have permeated education and limit the space for development in the social sphere and democratic processes (Beckmann & Cooper, 2004). By inquiring as to the way restorative approaches may influence the relationships (either positively or

negatively) within a school community, this review hopes to illuminate an alternative perspective.

Restorative approaches

Terminology

This section will explore the terminology and language used in the review. It will start by exploring why the language used is important, briefly drawing on the tenets of social constructionism, before going on to explore the terminology available.

This review will adopt a social constructionist philosophical stance (which is described in more detail, here). Social constructionism asserts that language is used to produce and reproduce knowledge which in turn contributes to socially and culturally specific discourse (Lock, 2010; Schiff & Hooker, 2019). These dominant discourses then provide a lens through which people make sense of their experiences and themselves (Lock, 2010). It was therefore important to critically consider the language available, and further to warrant the choice of language in this SLR.

Terminology surrounding restorative approaches within schools is broad, and includes the terms Restorative Justice, Restorative Discipline and Restorative Practice (amongst others) (McCluskey, 2018). Schiff and Hooker (2019) suggested that words are not innocuous labels used to describe past events, rather they are calls to action towards a certain way of being. The authors suggested that prefixing the term justice with restorative does little to demarcate the approach from those which focus on retribution and punishment, which may allow oppressive practices to continue despite an espoused restorative ethos (Schiff & Hooker, 2019).

It is acknowledged that the term restorative approaches has become more widely used, particularly in relation to implementation in schools (Vaandering, 2010) . This, it is proposed, is to move away from conceptualisations which centre on retribution and disciplinary control (Vaandering, 2010), towards one which represents an underlying relational philosophy (McCluskey, 2018). In accepting that language shapes experience, the term restorative approaches will be used in this SLR to reflect my position that restoration is inherently community focussed and relational.

Philosophical underpinnings

This section aims to explore the philosophy which underpins restorative approaches, from their origins as an indigenous way of being (Veloria et al., 2020), to their enactment in current educational contexts. My warrant for exploring this prior to the theoretical basis, is to acknowledge that restorative ways of being were enacted as a cultural philosophy prior to

more academic attribution of psychological theory (Veloria et al., 2020). It is particularly important to hold the philosophical underpinnings in mind, to allow criticality with regards what psychological theory is attributed and who it may serve. An understanding of the underpinning philosophy therefore supports practitioners to remain vigilant to times where restorative approaches may be subjugated by processes which do not align with this philosophy (Mustian et al., 2022).

Restorative approaches as a relational concept assert that human beings thrive in contexts of social connectedness rather than social control (Gonzales, 2015; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). It is noted that it is within the context of social connectedness that new meaning is generated (Gergen, 2009). Restorative approaches require a paradigm shift towards understanding the world through the lens of the interconnectedness of humanity (Vaandering, 2010), rather than one which sees humans as individual, rational actors (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). In doing so, when there are ruptures in a community, it is the community and the relationships within it that become the site of repair (Marcucci, 2021; McCluskey et al., 2008).

Theoretical links

As explored in the previous section, the philosophy of restorative approaches predates the attribution of psychological theory (Veloria et al., 2020). It is, therefore, important to acknowledge there is no universal consensus on the psychological contribution to restorative approaches (Vaandering, 2011). I have chosen to represent that with the terminology 'theoretical links'. In doing so, I am acknowledging that a philosophical construct (restorative approaches) can be viewed through a psychological lens, highlighting common threads or goals in supporting others and wider society. The aim of this section is to explore critically the espoused theoretical links, before considering the ways in which they may or may not honour the philosophical perspective highlighted above.

Reintegrative Shame Theory (RST) explored the concepts of stigmatisation and shame, and the role they play in responses to harm (Braithwaite, 1989). Drawing on Labelling Theory, Braithwaite (1989) posited that stigmatisation as a response can lead to further wrong doing, as individuals feel adrift from the community that has judged or rejected them. Reintegrative shaming offers a position whereby the individual is still valued, but the wrongdoing is not (Vaandering, 2011). Pertinently, Braithwaite (1989) noted that shame is most effective as a response to wrongdoing within the context of multiple interconnected relationships. It is suggested, therefore, that the role of shame is to re-establish an individual's connection to their community (Vaandering, 2010).

Although Braithwaite (1989) was considered an early proponent of restorative approaches, his work was further developed with the formation of the Social Discipline Window (SDW) (McCold & Wachtel, 2003). The SDW proposed four methods of responding to harm, based on differing levels of control and support, which is represented in Figure 1 below (McCold & Wachtel, 2003). The For, Not, To quadrants are said to illicit stigmatisation, whereas the With quadrant promotes reintegrative shaming (McCold & Wachtel, 2003; Vaandering, 2011). It is proposed that responding to harm in an environment that promotes high control and high nurture (With quadrant), the community values the person, but not the behaviour (McCold & Wachtel, 2003).
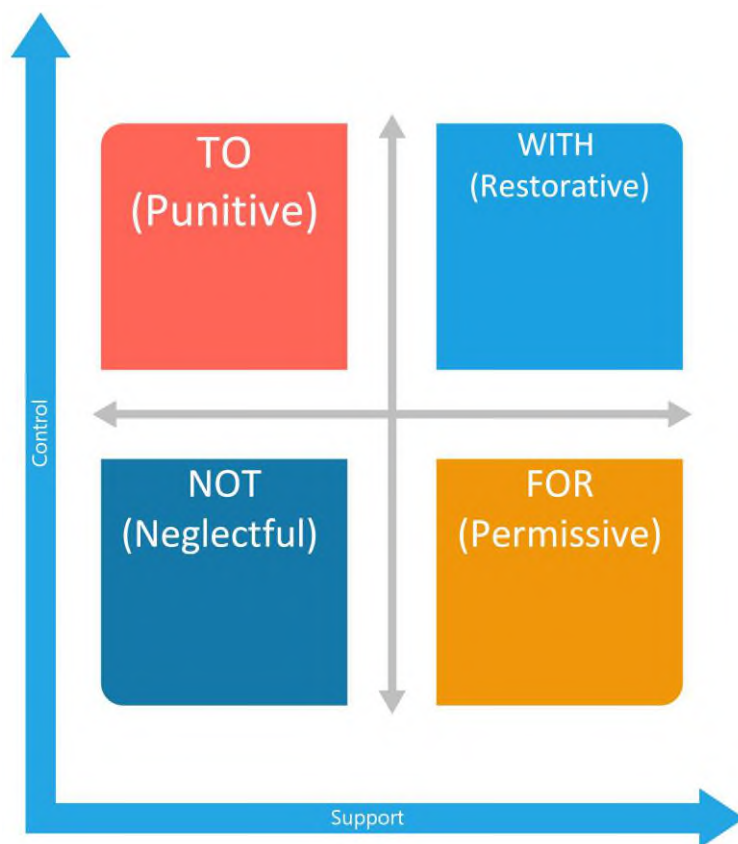
Figure 1: The SDW (McCold and Wachtel, 2003)

It has been suggested that the aforementioned conceptual frameworks have been pivotal in supporting a paradigm shift towards restorative ways of being, particularly in schools (Vaandering, 2010). Whilst reintegrative shaming acknowledged the importance of a community within which to respond to harm, it has been argued that the role the community may play in contributing to harm has been ignored (Morrison et al., 2005). It has also been suggested that these conceptual frameworks still situate harm as within the individual, rather than within the structure or institution which may be supporting ruptures or disenfranchisement (Morrison et al., 2005; Vaandering, 2010). It can be argued, therefore, that viewing restorative approaches conceptually as a response to harm serves to limit the

approach and the focus should instead be on the creation of a responsive education community, rather than one which is punitive and controlling (Vaandering, 2011).

Current context

Restorative approaches are not enacted within a vacuum, rather they are nested within a specific social, political, and economic context (Gonzales, 2015). In addition to this, restorative approaches have their origins in non-western cultural contexts. It is therefore pertinent to consider how they are enacted (or subjugated) within present western contexts.

There has been a proliferation of zero tolerance approaches to responding to behaviour which falls outside of prescribed systems of rules, firstly in the USA (Teasley, 2014), before being followed by other western counties (Welch & Payne, 2018). Such policies universally apply rewards and punishments, and as such rest on the principles of behaviourist psychology (Teasley, 2014). These sanctions are often pre-determined and applied without consideration of unique context (Kupchik et al., 2015).

When considering the permeation of zero-tolerance policies, it is pertinent to examine the socio-political context within which they are situated. It is suggested that zero-tolerance, punitive approaches have proliferated widely in education because they reflect approaches currently taken in western society as a whole (Harold & Corcoran, 2013). Neoliberalism is an economic ideology, arguably present in the UK since the 1980's (Steger, 2021). The permeation of neo-liberalism within society has promoted the idea of individualistic success, with which comes individualistic responsibility (d'Agnese, 2019). This focus limits the sites of state intervention, and is based on the assumption that the economic market is best placed to distribute resources (d'Agnese, 2019; Steger, 2021). It has been suggested that the site of developing docile bodies to serve such an economic ideal is education (Davies & Bansel, 2007). For brevity, schools became services, like any others to be traded on the free-market and their success is measured by the individual success as defined and measured by the market (Davies & Bansel, 2007). It could be argued that the erosion of communal responsibility and connection has as such followed (Brady et al., 2014).

Philosophical Stance

This review is positioned within the social constructionist word view. Ontologically, this approach suggests reality is historically and culturally specific, and does not exist outside of human knowledge or construction (Burr, 2015). Related to this research, social constructionism is concerned with how knowledge is constructed between individuals and thereafter how this leads to social action (Burr, 2015) . Social constructionism is said to be compatible with the meta-ethnographic approach taken in this SLR, as they both ground

reality and meaning within human encounter (Noblit & Hare, 1988; Soundy & Heneghan, 2022). In adopting a social constructionist world view, this review accepts that constructions (such as justice, restoration and relationships) all have meanings which vary across place, time, culture and experience (Schiff & Hooker, 2019).

In adopting this stance and SLR approach, I am also acknowledging my own interpretative position within this analysis and synthesis (Soundy & Heneghan, 2022), and as such make no claim to truth or fact. In outlining my philosophical stance, I hope to be transparent about my place within the interpretation and presentation of this review, as suggested crucial by Doyle (2003).

Method

The method of this review was shaped by the research question:

> In what ways may restorative approaches influence relationships in a secondary school community?

Selecting a method of review

Owing to the relational nature of this exploration, it was deemed crucial to understand how participants viewed and experienced relationships within their social world. As such, the review focuses on qualitative research, which it is suggested offers unique perspectives and experiences (Howitt, 2019). Within this paradigm, I considered alternative review methods, including thematic synthesis (Thomas & Harden, 2008). Whilst acknowledging this approach may have offered a clear understanding of the commonalities between papers, I deemed its focus on interventions and 'what works' incoherent with a conceptualisation of restorative approaches as a philosophy, rather than an intervention (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009; Thomas & Harden, 2008).

Britten et al. (2002) suggested that a synthesis approach should be aligned with the type of research being synthesised. As this study is exploratory in nature, a meta-ethnography was deemed appropriate as it supports the exploration of nuance within the texts, through the identification of reciprocal and refutational constructs (Noblit & Hare, 1988). It has been suggested that the synthesis process simultaneously remains consistent with the constructs from the texts, whilst moving beyond them to provide a novel contribution (Britten et al., 2002). This is aligned with the reviews aims, which centre on providing a new perspective on relationships within the context of restorative approaches.

Noblit and Hare (1988) outlined a seven-step approach to conducting a meta-ethnography, which is documented below in Table 1. It is important to note that, for readability, these are presented as discrete sections within this review, however in practice there was

considerable overlap between each section, something which is acknowledged in the literature (Noblit & Hare, 1988).

Step	Process	Place in document
1	Getting started	Method
2	Deciding what is relevant	
3	Reading the studies	
4	Deciding how they are related	
5	Translating the studies on to one another	Findings
6	Synthesising the translation	
7	Expressing the translation	

Table 1: Noblit & Hare (1988) seven step process

Getting started and deciding what is relevant.

Meta-ethnography literature has suggested that thorough searches must be carried out in areas relevant to the research area (Noblit & Hare, 1988). Considering this, searches were carried out in October 2022 on the databases British Education Index (BEI), Child Development and Adolescent Studies, ERIC and SCOPUS. Other databases were considered (e.g., web of science and education abstracts), however they were ruled out after scoping searches (carried out between July 2022-October 2022) yielded few papers of relevance.

The search terms and Boolean operators are documented below in Table 2:

	"restorative approach*" OR "restorative justice" OR "restorative practice*" OR "restorative discipline"
AND	AND (relationship*)
AND	("high school" or "secondary school")

Table 2: Search terms and Boolean operators used in searches.

A list of inclusion criteria was refined during the scoping searches and is documented below in Table 3. The inclusion criteria were designed to ensure the studies included were appropriate to answer the research question.

Category	Inclusion Criteria	Justification
Study type	Empirical, qualitative studies exploring relationships in the context of restorative approaches (excluding reviews)	To access primary data relevant to the topic. Qualitative design – to access ethnographic data to generate further understanding in relation to the review question.
Context	English language only	Accessibility
Population	Focus population - Schools that cover secondary age group (11-18) thus excluding primary aged settings and other contexts (e.g., youth justice, social work, community organisations)	School settings – to maintain a clear relevance and applicability to educational psychology
Literature Type	Published in a peer review journal	Quality assurance
Review time frame	Years between 2013-2022	Key events during this period: 2013 – publication of the UN international policy on promoting restorative justice for children. This policy focuses on implementing restorative approaches in many areas, including schools and includes case examples from across the world.

Table 3: Inclusion criteria

The initial search result yielded 291 studies. The process of screening is documented in Figure 2 below. The 40 papers remaining after title and abstract screening were read in full. Elements of the papers which did not meet the inclusion criteria were highlighted and cross checked on second reading. For the study exclusion reasons, see appendix 1.1.

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┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Databases searched (October 2022):  │
│                                 │
│  British Education Index (BEI)  │
│                                 │
│  Child and Adolescent Studies   │
│                                 │
│            ERIC                 │
│                                 │
│           SCOPUS                │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌──────────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────────┐
│ 291 studies identified. │ ────▶ │ 65 duplicates removed. │
└──────────────────────┘        └──────────────────────┘
              │
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┌──────────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────────┐
│ 226 screened against │ ────▶ │    186 excluded.     │
│  title and abstract. │        └──────────────────────┘
└──────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌──────────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────────┐
│ 40 studies screened in │ ────▶ │    32 excluded.     │
│        full.         │        └──────────────────────┘
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│ 8 studies included in │
│    the review.       │
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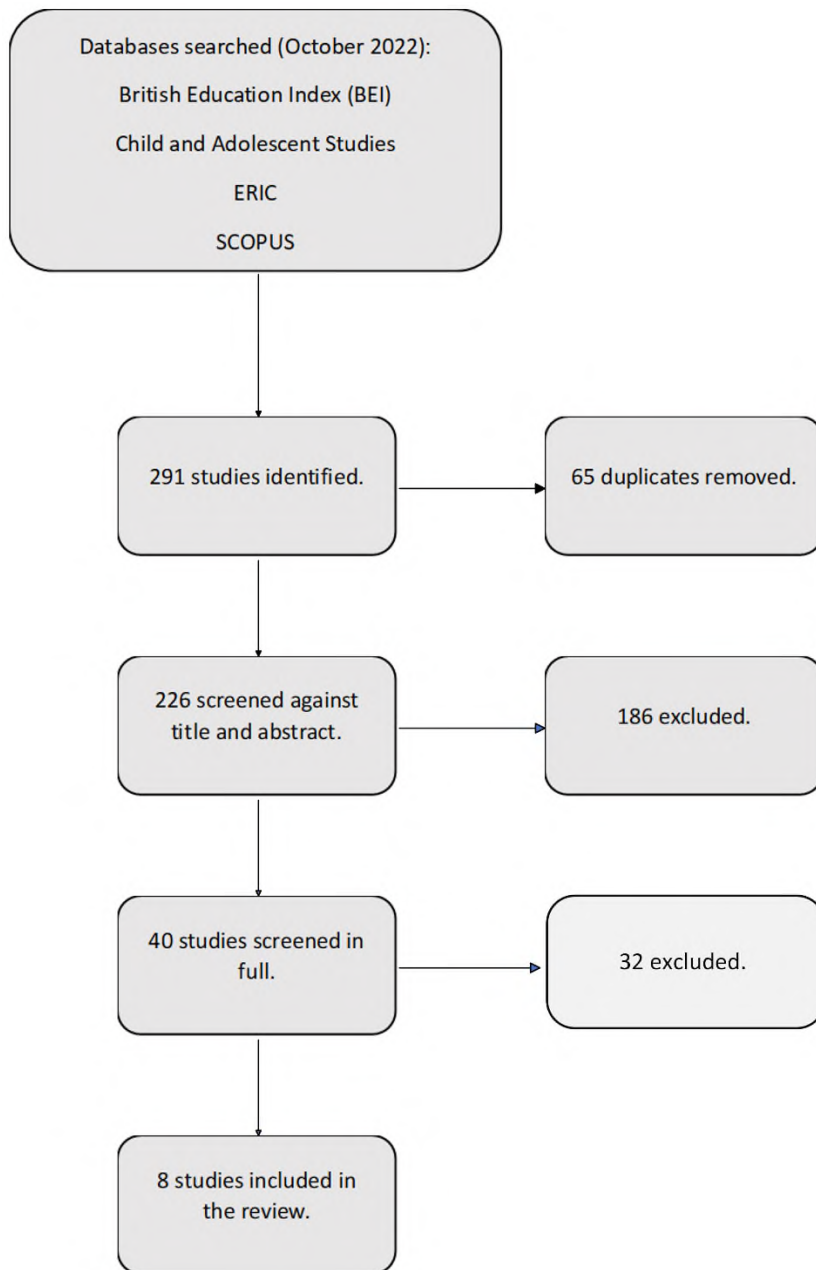
Figure 2: The literature review search process.

Reading the studies and deciding how they are related.

The eight studies were firstly read in depth, with information regarding participants, research questions, theoretical orientation and method recorded in Table 4 below.

Study	Research Aim	Sample *all USA middle schools in this review cover year 7-9 UK equivalent*	Setting	Method	Theoretical framework	Overarching findings/conclusions
Bruhn (2020)	To explore how two leaders built relationships with teachers and students in the context of transitioning towards restorative approaches.	Two school leaders (Jackson and Kate) Three teachers Four students	Charter High School (USA)	Observation, interviews with school leaders. Observation, interviews with students and staff. Observation of school environment (e.g., school corridors) Researcher reflective memos	Grounded Theory approach	Leadership was characterised by a restorative 'way of being', demonstrated in all interactions with staff and students. Leadership was characterised by 'restraint', 'respect' and 'persistence' which provided the foundation to build meaningful relationships with staff and students.
Fickel (2017)	To further understand what enables restorative practices and ethics of care in three secondary schools across two national contexts.	Students, teachers and parents	Three High Schools (Peru & New Zealand)	Three case studies As part of this, focus groups with students, parents and teachers	Critical Humanist Lens	Schools suggested that restorative approaches promoted care for the 'human fundamentals' which focused on 'becoming a good person', which provided the foundation for positive relationships.

						These positive relationships respected inclusion, community and inter-connectedness.
Lustick (2020)	To further understand how restorative practices were enacted and applied in context.	Teachers and students across three middle schools*	Urban Public Schools (USA)	Ethnographic multi-case study of three urban public schools (two high schools and one middle school covering the equivalent UK school years 7-9) This included observations, semi structured interviews, memo writing	Narrative and explanatory theory	Co-construction of problems and solutions sustains communities. Responses to harm have to be nested within a pre-existing sense of community and relational connection. Responses to harm were not always restorative, culturally sensitive or nested in pre-existing relationships.
Weaver & Swank (2020)	To explore the experiences of middle school students and staff who engage in restorative approaches.	Three class teachers One school administrator Six students	Middle School* (USA)	Case study including interviews, observations and a review of documents. Interviews took place with three teachers, an administrator and six students.	Social Discipline Window	Restorative approaches may reflect a different approach to how many teachers have been trained, which may require a shift in thinking. Restorative approaches focus on protecting relationships, and centre on a shift to

						a 'we mind-set'. This, and a sense of peers holding each other accountable, creates a community ethos within the classroom.
Short, Case and McKenzie (2018)	This study aimed to explore the views of staff working in a school which had adopted whole school restorative practice.	5 pastoral members of staff	High School (UK)	Semi structured interviews	No theoretical orientation specified	The core of restorative approaches centre on bringing people together to foster empathy and understanding of differing perspectives. Communication, in particularly use of language, was seen as key to fostering a 'non blaming' and 'non judgemental' climate. Restorative approaches were seen to have a positive impact on relationships between staff and students, because of the increased understanding of differing perspectives.
Sandwick et al (2019)	This study aimed to explore what	32 school staff	Five High Schools (USA)	Multiple case study approach across	No theoretical orientation specified	Schools used flexibly a variety of

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	practices, processes and resources are being used to foster whole school restorative approaches.	44 parents 23 parents 10 school safety agents		five schools using interviews and focus groups.		restorative approaches, depending on the presenting situation. Most staff reported the broad support they received from leadership as being imperative to the success of restorative approaches.
Schumacher (2014)	The aim of the study was to examine whether talking circles nurture long term relationships and encourage the development of emotional literacy skills.	31 students, 5 teachers and 2 gatekeepers.	High School (USA)	Observations of community circles and semi-structured interviews with students, staff and gatekeepers.	Grounded theory Relational Cultural Model	Talking Circles promoted a sense of connection between circle members that imbued trust and friendship. Circle members also gained specific skills, in listening, empathising, and interpersonal sensitivity.
Ortega et al (2016)	To examine student and staff experiences of participating in a Restorative Circles programme.	35 high school students 25 school staff and administrators	High School (USA)	Semi structured interviews with 35 high school students and 25 high school teachers	Grounded Theory	The introduction of restorative approaches requires a paradigm shift, which may create tension for some staff in the school community. Community ownership was seen as a key part

| | | | | | | of the process, with active but voluntary participation seen as key.

A great deal of trust was needed to support the vulnerability which some may feel partaking in community circles. |

Table 4: Overview of studies included in this review

Part of this stage of the meta-ethnography involved deciding whether to quality assess the eight remaining studies. At present, there is little consensus on the appropriateness of quality appraisal for qualitative research (Toye et al., 2013), and even those who argue that it is important to do so lack a consensus on the way in which to carry this out (Dixon-Woods et al., 2004). It has been suggested that quality appraisals have, at times, led to 'meaningless practice in interpretative research' (Savin-Baden & Major, 2007, p837). It could also be argued that quality appraisals bring about concerns of an epistemological nature (Smith, 1984). In adopting an interpretivist stance to this SLR, I am accepting the existence of multiple constructed realities (Cunliffe, 2008). This, in itself, makes defining a universal quality impossible, and philosophically incoherent (Smith, 1984). I therefore chose not to conduct a separate quality appraisal.

Whilst acknowledging that I did not conduct a separate quality appraisal, it is also important to consider the ways in which I did consider issues of rigour in relation to the papers included in this SLR. Collins and Stockton (2018) argued that transparency regarding the theoretical orientation strengthens qualitative research. In reading the studies included in this review, considering the theoretical orientation of the research supported me to consider issues of coherence. Coherence, it is suggested, is a sign of consistent and rigorous research as a process, from the philosophical and theoretical orientation to the specific methods used (Holloway & Todres, 2003). In addition to this, understanding the assumptions underpinning the research supported me during translation of the studies, as I was able to critically consider the ways in which the assumptions in one study either aligned with or refuted those in another. As highlighted in Table 4, two of the included studies in this review did not include any information regarding the theoretical orientation of their research (Sandwick, Hahn, & Hassoun Ayoub, 2019; Short, Case, & McKenzie, 2018). Understanding the limitations of this lack of transparency allowed me to be judicious in the ways in which these papers contributed to the overall analysis.

In reading the studies, key concepts were highlighted that I deemed relevant to the review question. For this stage, the meaning of concepts was explored as individual constructs. This involved selecting first and second order constructs, as defined by Schutze (1962). First order constructs are the raw data gathered, whereas second order constructs are author's interpretation of this (Schutze, 1962). It is important to acknowledge that adopting this process involves a double interpretation of the first order constructs. The constructs have been interpreted once by the original author (constructing second order constructs), and a second time by this meta-ethnography, in the construction of new, third order constructs (Noblit & Hare, 1988). As aforementioned, this review accepts the existence of multiple

realities, and as such espouses no claim to truth (Cunliffe, 2008). It is hoped, therefore that this double interpretation will instead offer a new construction, or explanatory perspective to the area of study (Atkins et al., 2008; Britten et al., 2002).

Findings

Translating the studies

The final element of this stage was the initial mapping process, as described by Noblit and Hare (1988). It is suggested this process allows you to consider the commonalities between the papers (Noblit & Hare, 1988). This process was iterative and complicated by the papers included in the review having different foci (see Table 4). As described by Britten et al. (2002), key concepts noted in each paper were compared one by one to the other papers in the review. They were organised thematically by grouping concepts which I interpreted as sharing a similar meaning (France et al., 2019). Whilst at this stage, every effort was made to ensure the wording of the concepts remained as close to that used in the text, at times this had to be adapted to be able to best describe concepts across multiple papers. An example of this is presented in Table 26 (see appendix 1.3). Throughout this process, concepts were continually refined and redefined, as new metaphors and constructs were illuminated (Atkins et al., 2008). Thus, concepts were tested and developed through the process of reading and re-reading the studies, and comparing the concepts found in one study across the remaining studies (France et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2015). This is documented using the grid method documented in Table 14 – Table 25 (see appendix 1.2). The purpose of this was to ascertain whether the concepts were in agreement (reciprocal translation), if they directly contested each other (refutational translation) and later to consider if/how they offered different parts which contributed to a whole understanding (line of argument) (Noblit & Hare, 1988). To do this, I compared the meaning between studies for each identified concept, and where this appeared contradictory I considered the assumptions within each study that may have contributed to this (France et al., 2019). It was noted that one concept was refutational in nature (see appendix 1.4), and twelve were reciprocal in nature. Again, owing to the differing foci of the original studies, most concepts were explored by only a small amount of the studies in the total review (France et al., 2019).

Synthesizing translations

The process of synthesizing translations is one which has been contested within the literature (France et al., 2019). In this review, the purpose of synthesizing the translations was to develop a more holistic understanding of how concepts related to each other across the studies, in doing so providing a novel contribution in relation to this research question (France et al., 2019). This process involved the generation of third-order constructs, which

were my own interpretation of how concepts could be grouped to offer a higher-order understanding of the phenomena under study (Noblit & Hare, 1988). This mapping process is documented in full in Table 10 – Table 24 (see appendix 1.2), and I have included one example in Table 5 below for clarity. The conclusion of this process, including my interpretive rationale for each third order construct, is documented in Table 6 below.

Study →	Bruhn (2020)	Lustick (2020)	Short (2019)	Schumacher (2014)	Ortega (2016)
Overarching concepts ↓	* second order constructs in bold * first order constructs in italics				
Shared understanding	**Understanding the young people**	**He also consistently allows students to help co-construct their understanding of what happened and how things can move forward** **Evan asks questions that prompt students to co-construct an understanding of what happened among them and its relationship to broader patterns of violence in their school and greater (social media and in-real-life) communities**	**These mechanisms were thought to help all stakeholders reach a shared understanding** *"to try and come to a common conclusion"* *"I believe it is about getting the kids and staff to understand the issue and then deal with it by sort of empathy and understanding the problem and how it effects other people"*	**Generally, misunderstandings cleared once each person got to tell their story**	**Meaningful dialogue** "*Um, I think that is a way for people to get—to like—to understand each other so that way they are not just bickering a whole bunch of words*"

Table 5: Example of mapping process from first and second order constructs to overarching concepts

Concepts drawn from second and first order constructs	Third order constructs
- Shared Understanding - Shared Ownership	**An environment of co-construction**. These concepts were reciprocally translated and described restorative environments as ones that prioritised reaching mutual conclusions about the nature of events, alongside 'shouldering' a joint responsibility for what happened next. This then supports the restoration of relationships and community when harm does occur.
- Inconsistency in approaches - Undoing traditional school hierarchies	**Shifting balance of power** Three of the included studies reflected on the inconsistent application of restorative approaches; whilst they were enthusiastically adopted by some staff members, others relied more on traditional methods. This is considered in tension, with the finding that within a restorative context, schools often move towards a renegotiation of typical power structure, between senior and other staff members and between staff and students. Therefore, the studies represent a shifting balance of power within and between relationships, that is continually open to negotiation and re-negotiation.
- Connecting with the 'human' - Deepening and developing relationships - A holistic approach - Cultivating empathy - Trust	**Space for human encounters** Relationships within restorative school communities were often characterised as 'deeper', perhaps because of a shift in focus towards the human over the academic. Relationships were also characterised as more empathetic, as spaces to support genuine understanding had been created that went beyond the current situation. This is held in tension with the concept of trust which represents a refutational translation. Whilst some studies reported restorative approaches as trust generating, others reported the high level of trust needed to engage in dialogue which may expose vulnerability. This resulted in some being frustrated at others' unwillingness to disclose.
- Cultural sensitivity - Impact of adverse community experiences - Community building	**Socio-historical community context** Whilst community building within schools was highlighted to be foundational, there was also consideration of the community beyond the school gates of which young people are members. Building a community, therefore,

	involves connecting with the community experience of young people beyond the school gates, including systemic and generational inequalities which may be reproduced in any school environment and any interaction, regardless of a restorative orientation. Building community, therefore, is complex and should always be nested in a socio-historical understanding of the wider community a school serves.

Table 6: Synthesis producing Third Order Constructs

Expressing the synthesis

Noblit and Hare (1988) noted that a synthesis can also be expressed visually, to complement the written version and thus support accessibility. Britten et al. (2002) suggested that the production of a synthesis should hold in mind the intended audience, therefore it is pertinent to note the following visual contribution has been produced with educationalists and Educational Psychologists in mind. This visual synthesis is presented below in Figure 3, and then explored further in the discussion section.
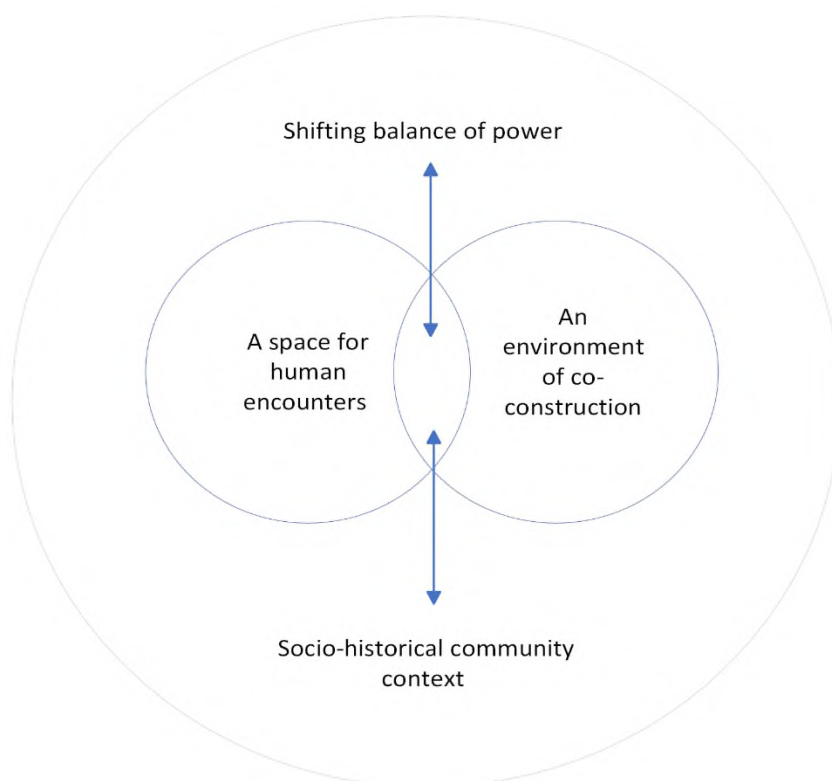
Figure 3: Visual representation of this Line of Argument

Discussion

As previously noted, third order constructs were generated through a process of considering how key concepts translated across the studies included in this review (Cahill et all., 2018; Noblit & Hare, 1988). The synthesis of these constructs led to a line of argument (Noblit & Hare, 1988). For this review, it is suggested that a line of argument represents 'a picture of the whole based on stories of its parts' (France, 2019 p.10). The purpose of this section is to explore critically the line of argument presented here, in response to the research question:

in what ways may restorative approaches influence relationships in a secondary school community?

Central to this line of argument is that restorative approaches influence relationships in a secondary school community by creating space for human encounters and an environment of co-construction. These overlapping spaces for influence over relationships are impacted upon by the shifting balance of power within a school and the wider socio-historical community context within which a school is situated. As depicted in Figure 3 this influence is bidirectional, in that the relationships created within the restorative spheres have the potential to influence the balance of power and socio-historical community context over time. The purpose of this discussion is to draw on this further, by contextualising the findings within the wider literature.

Space for human encounters

Central to this line of argument is that restorative approaches influence relationships by creating space for human encounters. Whilst this review acknowledges that restorative approaches can lead to the creation of tangible new spaces, such as Talking Circles in Schumacher (2014), consideration of the translation of the concepts across studies generates a new, more nuanced picture about the type of space created. This new understanding considers what happens in the space 'in between' during dialogue that has an influence over how that relationship may develop, change, or be reconstructed within the restorative school community.

"Unless we deal with the human, we are not going to deal with the academic".

Fickel (2017, p. 53)

Three of the included studies noted that restorative approaches supported staff in connecting with the human being who is the student (Bruhn, 2020; Fickel et al., 2017; Short et al., 2018). It was further suggested that this connection should occur before addressing any concerns regarding the 'academic' (Fickel et al., 2017). A key concept that was also noted was the cultivation of empathy that occurred when students were provided with the space to receive stories and have their own received by peers (Schumacher, 2014), as a consequence of which peer-peer relationships could be developed and enriched. Bruhn (2020) concluded staff engaging with students in a way which centred knowing them and connecting with them generated empathy towards the students' experiences, which may not have existed before. McCluskey et al. (2008) previously suggested the development of such empathy between staff-students and students-students had the propensity to both prevent harm occurring and to reconstruct future responses to harm. The findings of this SLR appear in keeping with this.

In creating space for human encounters, and as such supporting the development of deeper, more empathetic relationships, it could also be suggested that restorative approaches stand in resistance to the current dominant stories about the purpose of education. Biesta (2009) concluded that the rise of neoliberal economic ideals has supported a narrative shift, from education to learning; from students to learners. In doing so, it has redefined the purpose of education (or *learning*) to an individualistic endeavour to achieve academic goals, thus narrowing the remit of what an education is to offer (Biesta, 2009). In providing space for human encounters, and prioritising what happens in the space 'in between', restorative approaches call for a return to *education*, a linguistic shift which Biesta (2009) proposed resituates an individualistic focus towards a collective endeavour. For brevity, they move beyond the societal demand for measurement (Biesta, 2009) towards an approach to education which prioritises young peoples' need to feel safe, connected, and as though they belong (McCluskey et al., 2008).

Socio-historical community context

In exploring critically, the third order construct of socio-historical community context, it is important to firstly examine what is meant by community, as constructed within this SLR. The concept of community or community building translated across four of the studies (Bruhn, 2020; Lustick, 2020; Sandwick et al., 2019; Weaver & Swank, 2020). The papers suggested that building a sense of community was foundational to the development of a restorative ethos and as such restorative relationships. It is pertinent to note that the papers conceptualisation of the community that is built varies. It is therefore key to this review that notions of community are seen as context specific, and shaped by the unique social, cultural and historical environments within which they are nested (Wiesenfeld, 1996).

Key to the line of argument constructed in this SLR is that to support the development of restorative relationships across the lines of race, culture and class requires deep reflection on the socio-historical community context (that being the community which exists within and beyond the school gates). This has previously been noted by McCluskey (2011), who suggested that schools must be alert to both internal and external tensions in their community when embedding restorative approaches. Bruhn (2020) suggested that the largely black student population brought with them experiences from school and the wider community which left them fearful and distrustful of the intentions of white adults. These experiences were said to be both interactions they had been directly involved with and the macrosystemic consequences of living in a society that could still be considered deeply unequal and structurally racist (Bruhn, 2020).

Three of the studies included in the review highlighted the challenges of promoting restoration in schools where staff were, in the most part, unrepresentative of the communities they served (Bruhn, 2020; Lustick, 2020; Sandwick et al., 2019). Furthermore, one study highlighted the proactive work of staff to hire staff who shared similar backgrounds or experiences to the students they worked with (Sandwick et al., 2019). Egalite, Kisida, and Winters (2015) suggested that young people who are taught by teachers of the same race or cultural background may have improved academic outcomes. The researchers suggested this may be because of the presence of a role model with whom they can see themselves, or because the teachers understand and resist against the racial biases that are present in school (Egalite et al., 2015). As suggested by the findings of this meta-ethnography, the authors concluded that racial and cultural representation in a school environment is important (Egalite et al., 2015).

Bruhn (2020), Sandwick et al. (2019) and Lustick (2020) suggested that there is a racial and cultural subtext to all interactions (whether these be disciplinary or otherwise), and these often remain unsaid or unseen. This can result in students experiencing distrust towards (often) white, middle-class adults who operate in a position of power. Vaandering (2010) proposed that even when schools espouse restorative values in their response to harm, they fail to interrogate the institutional (internal) factors which may be contributing to the situation at present. In the current review, this could be applied to the reproduction of racial, cultural or class biases which exist in the community beyond the school gates. It could also refer to a failure to reflect on and engage in critical dialogue about the experiences (direct and generational) that young people have encountered, and the institutional structures which may continue to reproduce this (Vaandering, 2010).

In accepting that no relationship or interaction occurs in vacuum, it becomes possible to consider how the historical, societal and political constructions of race, culture and class are pervasive in everyday school interactions (Carter et al., 2017). It is suggested that school environments can often replicate oppressive societal attitudes through reproduction of stereotypes, applications of micro-aggressions or the implicit bias of staff (Carter et al., 2017). This is aligned with findings from the present SLR, where reproduction of traditional patterns of teacher control and punishment were noted to occur despite a school's espoused restorative ethos (Lustick, 2020).

The findings of this SLR also noted that a switch to restorative approaches required a conscious change of mindset for some staff across lines of race, culture and class, which was at times a slow and non-linear process (Bruhn, 2020). This is particularly pertinent as the application of more traditional behaviour approaches in the US has been consistently

demonstrated to impact disproportionately across lines of race and culture (Hoffman, 2012). Whilst this phenomenon is somewhat less studied in the UK context (Graham, 2016), data from the Department for Education (DfE) has indicated higher levels of permanent exclusion for children from minority ethnic backgrounds (DfE, 2024). This may suggest that even with a restorative school ethos, schools can still become sites of replication of the bias that exists in wider society (Carter et al., 2017), and school leaders need to be alert to instances of this occurring. This is represented in Figure 3 by the socio-historical context being the environment within which other elements (such as space for human encounters) are nested, demonstrating its influence to change the nature of, for example, the human encounters that take place. Lustick (2020) concluded that to engage with the socio-historical community context one must illuminate the power dynamics at play within society and interrogate how they may be at play in the situation or relationship at hand.

Vaandering (2010) proposed that the institution itself should also be considered in dialogue with students and staff if it is hoped to be transformed from a place where the dominant narrative is reinforced to one where an alternative way of being are promoted. In keeping with this, Bruhn (2020) questioned how perspectives on restoration within a school are affected by issues of race, class and culture. Considering the socio-historical community context, therefore, involves more than wondering about how what happens 'out there' impacts on relationships 'in here', although that is important. It involves interrogating how societal oppression may (consciously or unconsciously) be reproduced through a process of questioning assumptions and engaging in critical dialogue with the institution itself. Bottrell (2007) suggested that experiences of school are integrated into a young person's understanding of themselves and their place in certain systems. Considering this, it is important to consider the impact of engaging in ways of being within a school that present an alternative to the story proposed by the socio-historical community context.

An environment of co-construction

"A community works how we make it work. We're all in this together…how do we make this work and be productive on all ends" – Teacher.

Weaver and Swank (2020, p.5)

A further element of this line of argument suggests that restorative approaches influence relationships by fostering an environment of co-construction between all community members. Wiesenfeld (1996) suggested that co-construction and negotiation were key features of a community, in doing so recognising the unique historical and cultural factors which will contribute to this. In approaching the development of community as a collaborative process, Lustick (2020) argued that students were repositioned as experts, which could be seen as standing in resistance to typical school hierarchies. This is represented in Figure 3

by the bidirectional arrow between this area and the 'shifting balance of power' (discussed further, here), to show that by creating spaces for co-construction, the balance of power is challenged and renegotiated. In engaging students in a process of sharing understanding and ownership, the community demonstrates to the young people that they are 'acknowledged, valued, cared for and understood' (Fickel, 2017, p53), in doing so connecting with the 'human'. In Figure 3 the overlap between 'space for human encounters' and 'environment of co-construction' demonstrates this complex interplay between these two constructs.

Repositioning students as collaborators and co-constructors could be seen as an act of resistance against the dominant story of what it is to be a good student (Bottrell, 2007). Within the studies included in this review, this involves moving beyond the construction of a shared understanding of what has happened in the present situation, towards a shared understanding of how the community operates at this time, and for who (Bruhn, 2020; Lustick, 2020). This was combined with a shared responsibility to construct a new way forward. It could be argued this embodies the membership and influence highlighted by McMillan and Chavis (1986) as a key component of a community, in that all members are active participants who are involved in shaping the wider community. It is suggested that restorative processes allow students to consider needs at an individual, sub-community and societal level (Lustick, 2020), and provides a forum to discuss an individual's influence over these spheres (Lustick, 2020; McMillan & Chavis, 1986). In doing so, it could be argued this moves beyond the relationships involved in that restorative community, to illuminating and generating influence in relationships across different eco-systems, communities and society more broadly. Howarth (2002) suggested that identities are constructed in the eyes of others. If it holds that restorative environments reposition students as active participants with influence, it can be suggested that the identities forged in this light reflect this.

The shifting balance of power
This section will further explore the way power was (or wasn't) enacted within the studies included in this review, which has been further conceptualised as the shifting balance of power. Power as a construct was described in six of the eight studies included in this review (Bruhn, 2020; Fickel et al., 2017; Lustick, 2020; Ortega et al., 2016; Sandwick et al., 2019; Short et al., 2018). This third order construct has been generated from translated concepts which describe on the one hand, an undoing of traditional school hierarchies, whilst on the other hand some inconsistencies in approaches remained. This was largely characterised by some staff deferring to traditional disciplinary responses and hierarchical structures (Bruhn,

2020; Fickel et al., 2017; Sandwick et al., 2019), which in itself may be in keeping with wider societal discourses around wrongdoing and retribution (Vaandering, 2010).

Adopting a Foucauldian perspective, power should be redefined as a producer (Foucault, 1979, 2020). It was suggested that to consider power critically was to move away the dominant negative discourse surrounding power as something that excludes, hides or conceals and instead towards an understanding of power as something which produces or generates (Foucault, 1979, 2020). Within the present studies, it could be argued that power was present at times where exclusionary practices were reproduced (Fickel et al., 2017) or staff relied on previous systems of control, thus re-producing a more typical student-teacher hierarchy or disciplinary techniques (Bruhn, 2020). This tension has been demonstrated in the wider literature, with some members of staff or institutions being reluctant to let go of the option of punitive measures in certain circumstances, despite an espoused restorative way of being (McCluskey et al., 2011). This can be, in part, be explained by wider societal discourses about responsibility and retribution (Harold & Corcoran, 2013). In this representation of power within the studies, power was suggested to be a force which maintained the status quo within school relationships.

'In this moment, Kate opts not to exert her positional authority'.

Bruhn (2020, p.13.)

In contrast, whilst still drawing on a Foucauldian perspective, power was also presented as the producer of new realities or ways of being. In the above quotation, it could be argued Kate produces a new truth regarding her role as principal, by not operationalising power as a producer of authority and instead as a producer of restraint. This redefining of the nature of relationships is seen as key, whether it is noted explicitly as an attempt to address power relations (Short et al., 2018) or whether it is implicit within the interactions which subvert traditional school hierarchies (Bruhn, 2020). A key concept within the studies was senior leaders engaging with staff members in a more egalitarian way (Bruhn, 2020; Sandwick et al., 2019), which could allude to the operationalisation of power to produce a model or framework for interactions with students.

In Figure 3 the shifting balance of power is shown with a bidirectional line operating at the intersection of space for human encounters and an environment of co-construction. The purpose of that is twofold. It firstly demonstrates that the operationalisation of power impacts upon, for example, the possibility of co-construction in an environment. An example of this is illustrated in Lustick (2020), where instead of a teacher allowing a student to reflect their own views, they spoke on their behalf. It is possible to argue in this example the teacher operationalised positional authority to produce an environment that conformed to more a

more traditional student-teacher relationship. At the same time, this review highlighted that restorative approaches in their creation of, for example, spaces for human encounters can act upon and influence the balance of power in a situation. Bruhn (2020) documented an example of this when Kate (the principal) wished to hold a circle, however students had other work commitments. The authors concluded that by engaging with the students Kate was able to operationalise power to give way to the needs and agendas of the students (Bruhn, 2020). It could be argued this space acted upon the balance of power, resituating it in a more egalitarian way.

Conclusion

Overview

This small scale SLR has aimed to investigate the way in which restorative approaches may influence relationships in a secondary school community. My motivations were to consider conceptualisations of restorative approaches that centre on the relational elements of schooling (McCluskey et al., 2008; Vaandering, 2010), in doing so resisting the current individualistic focus of education (Biesta, 2009). This meta-ethnography has highlighted that restorative approaches influence relationships by creating space for human encounters and an environment of co-construction. As discussed, this can be seen to be standing in resistance to dominant discourses about education, learning, and the roles of students and teachers. It is the interpretation of this SLR that relationships between all members of a school community have the propensity to be reconstructed.

It is pertinent to note, however that these spaces are influenced by the shifting balance of power within a school community and the socio-historical community context. The latter pertains to potential for schools to reproduce inequalities within their systems or environments, something that was demonstrated in this review, despite a school's espoused restorative ethos (Bruhn, 2020; Graham, 2016; Lustick, 2020). It also encompasses the experiences and challenges that students may bring with them from their environments into present interactions. The shifting balance of power encapsulates on the one hand the undoing of traditional school hierarchies to generate more egalitarian relationships, yet on the other hand acknowledgement that some staff or structures may seek to hold on to more traditional power structures. This shifting balance of power influences and can be influenced by both the creation of space for human encounters and co-construction.

Implications

This findings of this SLR have potential implications for both research and practice. In considering the latter, this SLR has illuminated the potential of restorative approaches to create spaces where connection and collaboration are fundamental, alluding to an

alternative world view that acknowledges the interconnected nature of human experience (Vaandering, 2010). It has also suggested a complex interaction with the wider socio-historical community and the shifting balance of power within a school community. This has particular implications for educationalists, as it calls for them to consider community in the widest sense, and to ask how can what we do here promote individual, collective and community wellness (Prilleltensky, 2005). For Educational Psychologists, who may be engaged in supporting schools with a transition to or maintenance of a restorative way of being, this review alludes to the importance of questioning assumptions about community, relationships and responses to harm. This review also encourages Educational Psychologists to remain critical of ways in which societal inequalities may be reproduced, even within the context of an espoused restorative environment. This is particularly pertinent when supporting schools to embed restorative approaches.

When searches for this review were initially carried out, there was only one study within a UK context that explored relationships within the context of restorative approaches within the SLR time period (Short et al., 2018). This highlights a recent paucity in UK literature exploring the relational, community building elements of restorative approaches. This highlights a key area and a need for future research, as it is important to question if a community isn't built and developed in the first place, 'who [or] what [is] being restored?' (Vaandering, 2010, p.20).

Chapter 2: A methodological and ethical critique

Abstract

This chapter offers an ethical and methodological critique of the research process outlined in chapter three. This includes a reflection on my personal experiences and motivations which in turn formed the axiological stance of this research. The philosophical stance of this project is outlined including how it has influenced key tenets of this project. This chapter also offers a critique of the methodological approach of this study, Participatory Action Research (PAR), particularly the notion that under the guise of participation, the epistemic privilege of the researcher is maintained. To address this paradox, the chapter considers and reconceptualises the construct of power and its role within this project.

Word count: 3299

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a warranted account of the decisions that have been taken as part of this project and to critically consider methodology and issues of ethicality. This will include presenting a link between the findings of the SLR and the empirical research project. This chapter will also explore questions of a philosophical nature, considering the axiology, ontology and epistemology that have guided this research. In doing so it will also consider what it means to be human and become human and how reflection on this informed the research topic and the methodology of this project. This chapter will end by addressing issues of an ethical concern.

Personal experience and motivation: a reflection on the values underpinning this research.

The nature and area of this research was initially guided by a personal reflection on my own values and axiology. Axiology refers to what the researcher considers important for humans and society more broadly (Biedenbach & Jacobsson, 2016; Parker, 2013). In line with my own world view of social constructionism, it is my contention that what a researcher considers important for humans and society as a whole is shaped by their experiences (Darlaston-Jones, 2007).

Having previously worked in a secondary school in a deprived part of the North East of England during the initial austerity period in the UK, I became acutely aware that those who were most deprived were impacted upon the most by the uneven distribution of cuts to public services (Ridge, 2013). This was fundamental for me in driving a desire to work in a way which could promote social justice, despite having a limited understanding of the complex nature of such an aim (Gewirtz, 2006). During my time at the school in question, there was a change in leadership and a gradual shift towards more 'zero tolerance' ways of responding to young people, which is reflective of a wider shift towards this in education, firstly in the US and more recently in England (Teasley, 2014; Welch & Payne, 2018). I noticed at the time that such approaches seemed to disproportionately impact upon the young people I was working with. I felt an acute tension between a desire to promote social justice yet being asked to apply rules and consequences universally. However, as a relative novice to psychology I struggled to articulate this and had limited awareness of an alternative way of being.

As a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP), I have visited schools which espouse to practice restorative approaches. On visiting these schools, I have been struck by the focus on process and procedures that follow harm within a community. Alongside this, I have reflected on a distinct lack of focus on the community building aspects of restorative

approaches, something suggested crucial within the wider literature (Llewellyn & Parker, 2018; Vaandering, 2010). In these experiences, I found myself questioning if the universal application of 'restorative processes' following harm were anything more than a traditional, punitive approach in a different guise (Mustian et al., 2022). At this point in my TEP journey, I would have questioned whether the restorative approaches I was seeing enacted in practice aligned with my personal values of social justice, collaboration and participation. It is only through initial scoping of the literature that I began to see that there was a philosophy underpinning restorative approaches that I had not seen enacted in practice. This process promoted my desire to engage with this research, in the first instance to conduct an SLR focussing on the relational, community building elements of restorative approaches. In the second instance this has involved utilising PAR to explore the ways in which a restorative school community is built and maintained.

Centring community

From the inception of this research, I have been guided by a strong desire to work in a community-orientated way, rather than focussing on an individual or group of individuals. Throughout my career, I have become increasingly aware that the problems that walk into people's lives are often macrosystemic in origin. Examples of this include neo-liberal government policy, poverty, systemic racism and so on (Bruhn, 2020; Ridge, 2013; Wilkins, 2015). Despite this, it has seemed to me that the site of change is all too often situated within an individual. Corcoran (2003) suggested that when we consider individuals as such, rather than as part of a community, it becomes easier to attribute responsibility solely to them. During the doctoral training programme, I have become interested community psychology. Community psychology stands in resistance to common, western notions of psychological deficit and disorder (Prilleltensky, 2001), instead focusing on collective wellness and prevention (Clauss-Ehlers, 2021). It is also concerned with the interrelations between social structures and processes, resituating the site of change to the ecosystem and the community (Prilleltensky, 2001; Rappaport & Seidman, 2000).

Prilleltensky (2005) suggested that psychology should be strengths based, preventative, empowering and community focussed (SPEC), with the aim of promoting individual, community and relational wellness. It is acknowledged that this is a context specific and careful balancing act, as focussing solely on one area can impact upon another (Prilleltensky, 2008). Rodriguez Espinosa and Verney (2021) conducted a systematic literature review exploring community orientated participatory research. The authors concluded that applying community orientated principles to research created meaningful change in range of contexts. In accepting the fundamental parallels between research and

applied practice (Parker, 2013), applying the same principles in real-life problem situations may also be beneficial (Kidd et al., 2018).

As a TEP, I am fascinated by the complex interconnected nature of humanity (Vaandering, 2011). Drawing on the philosophy of community psychology not only embedded an interest in the community building aspects of restorative approaches, but also how these could be explored in research using a methodology aligned with these principles.

A narrative perspective

Throughout the doctoral training programme, I have become increasingly interested in narrative psychology, and it has influenced much of my approach to this research. Narrative psychology asserts that problems exist outside of people (Freedman & Combs, 1996). It is also a perspective which considers the wider cultural, political and contextual discourses, that can serve to maintain the influence of problems in peoples' lives (Morgan, 2000). It rejects the notion that psychologists or researchers should consider the mind as an independent artefact to be studied devoid of context (Annan et al., 2006), and instead positions individuals as experts in their own context (Freedman & Combs, 1996). A narrative perspective, therefore, shaped my desire to conduct research which invited co-researchers to explore the stories of their context, their practice, their school, their 'restorativeness' (Annan et al., 2006), through the use of participatory methods which honour a view of the world as socially constructed.

The purpose of education

When considering the purpose of education, it is important to ask who, or what education serves? It has been suggested that at present the purpose of education is to support individuals to compete and succeed, thus serving a neo-liberal economic agenda (Wilkins, 2015). Somewhat more radically Fielding (2012), drawing on the work of John MacMurray, contended that the purpose of education is to become more human. John MacMurray, a Scottish philosopher, contended that the nature of a person could only be understood in relation to another; the personal can only be understood because of its relationship to others (Sharpe, 2016). For brevity, a person is only a person because of relationships of interdependence to and distance from others (Facer, 2012). This provides a lens through which the construct of relationality and as such relational approaches can be further understood conceptualised. Developing this further, Fielding (2012) postulated that becoming more human is characterised by learning to live with the other. It is suggested that becoming human is supported by a community characterised by reciprocal care, where human beings seek to understand what it means to live together and in relation to one another (Biesta, 2009). Considering this led me to revisit my experiences of working in a

school and question, whether this was an educational environment that supported living well together (Fielding, 2012), or one that was co-opted by notions of accountability, individualism and ideas of success that can later be measured by contribution to the economy (Wilkins, 2015). Considering the conceptualisation of education outlined by Biesta (2009) and Fielding (2012) more aligned with my own personal philosophy underpinned my focus on participation and the relationality embedded with restorative approaches.

Overall rationale: Offering a bridge between my SLR and empirical research project.
In chapter one I outlined the process I undertook to explore how restorative approaches may influence relationships within a secondary school community. In Table 7 below I have documented how the conclusions and points of interest from that SLR have influenced the decisions I have taken with regards my empirical project.

Conclusion from SLR	Influence on empirical project
Only one empirical study from the UK focussed on the relational elements of restorative approaches, meaning seven of the included studies were from other contexts.	Conduct an empirical project within the UK context that focussed on the relational elements of restorative approaches (community building).
The review concluded that restorative approaches influence relationships by creating space for human encounters and space for co-construction.	Consideration of the way my empirical project can mirror some of these findings, supporting the adoption of Participatory Action Research as a methodology.
The review concluded that the implementation of restorative approaches is influenced by and should take consideration of the socio-historical cultural context within which a school is nested.	The empirical project is guided by a social constructionist world view, which acknowledges that all knowledge (e.g., that about restorative approaches) is contextually specific. Use of an action research methodology seeks to create change in a specific context, rather than generate an understanding of 'what is'.
None of the included studies in the review explored the role of Educational Psychologists in relation to the development of restorative approaches.	This empirical project hopes to create an understanding of the ways in which Educational Psychologists may (or may not) play a role in supporting the building of restorative school communities.

Table 7: The bridge: from SLR conclusions to empirical project decisions

Philosophical stance

Social Constructionism

This section aims to explore the ontological and epistemological foundations of this research. It is suggested that researchers being able to reflect critically on their philosophical stance provides a framework to guide various methodological decisions, ensuring they are coherent with the espoused world view (Darlaston-Jones, 2007).

This research has been approached from a social constructionist world view. Ontologically, social constructionism adopts a relativist stance; it does not assume a universal reality, rather reality is seen as subjective and independent from the individual (Darlaston-Jones, 2007; Gergen, 2015). Social constructionism offers an invitation to be critical of the assumption that through observation we understand the true nature of the world (Burr, 2015). Epistemologically, social constructionism situates knowledge as culturally and historically specific, and argues it is constructed within the social realm (Burr, 2015). Language constructs reality as opposed to representing it (Burr, 2015).

This project was shaped by values of collaboration and participation. The action research format sought change within one unique context. Table 8 below highlights how the tenets of social constructionism shaped and supported this research across the domains of collaboration, participation, change and ethicality. The table draws on literature from Moore (2005), Gergen (2015), Camargo-Borges and Rasera (2013), McNamee (2019) and Burr (2015). It is acknowledged that Moore (2005) explored social constructionism in relation to Educational Psychology practice, however as described further below this research has been conducted from a stance accepting of the direct parallel between research and practice (Parker, 2013), thus warranting its inclusion.

Project tenant	Social constructionism
Collaboration	- Supports the notion of second-order systemic understandings, that bring the learning together of research-practitioner and others (Moore, 2005) - A post-modern perspective invites us to be critical towards expert practice which involves universal application of certain practice towards the 'other' (Moore, 2005). Instead, the other is situated as an equal in a joint endeavour of meaning making (Moore, 2005). - Collaboration is not presented as a theoretical concept, rather a practical resource which can construct new ways forward (Camargo-Borges & Rasera, 2013).
Participation	- Constructs knowledge as something that individuals 'do together' in dialogue (Burr, 2003, p.9). - In accepting that knowledge is context specific, participation of those within that context is seen as strengthening the link between research and action (Camargo-Borges & Rasera, 2013).
Change	- Social constructionism can promote innovation, as the boundaries of what is 'true' and 'right' are challenged and scrutinised (Camargo-Borges & Rasera, 2013; Gergen, 2015) - Through learning together in the sharing of understandings, new, potentially unexplored avenues for change are illuminated (Moore, 2005).

Ethicality*	• Ethicality refers to holding centre a relational responsibility for the inter-personal processes within a group of co-researchers (McNamee, 2019).
	• Adopting a constructionist stance offers an invitation for co-researchers to explore other, less dominant stories and the multi-storied nature of themselves (McNamee, 2019).

Table 8: The influence of social constructionism across key tenets of this project

* An exploration of the following of university ethical processes is documented below (see, here).
Ethicality above is explored in terms of relational ethicality, as described by McNamee (2019).

Methodology

Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a collaborative, reflexive process which aims to challenge ways of thinking, learning and being in the world (McIntyre, 2008). It is well documented that PAR can be considered a contested terrain (Jordan & Kapoor, 2016; Rahman, 2015). This is because of the diverse perspectives of researchers involved (Rahman, 2015), and further because it does not prescribe specific methodological approaches (Jordan & Kapoor, 2016; Lykes & Mallona, 2008). It is suggested that PAR's methodological variety reflects an authentic approach to a democratic epistemology (McIntyre, 2008).

There is some consensus regarding the values underpinning PAR. Jordan and Kapoor (2016) suggested that these values are democratic engagement, inclusion, transparency, openness, and a communitarian ethos. It is these values that I believe align well with the conceptual underpinnings outlined above (community psychology, narrative psychology, social justice, and education as a place for becoming more human). For brevity, PAR is described as collaborative endeavour of equals which aims to challenge traditional notions of researcher-researched dichotomy in the pursuit of action which is shaped by and has direct implications for the research context (Jacobs, 2016; Jordan & Kapoor, 2016; Kemmis, 2014).

Whilst my initial interest in PAR was driven by my own values as a researcher, the methodology also has distinct parallels with aspects of Educational Psychology practice (Wallace & Giles, 2019). During the programme, a university session drawing comparisons between of EP practice and research resonated with me. In holding this parallel between research and practice central (Parker, 2013), I was able to reflect on the ways in which I hoped to practice. This centres on working collaboratively with others to approach problem situations, supporting democratic decision making, and being aware of systems and processes which may maintain or disrupt power imbalances (Prilleltensky, 2008; Wallace & Giles, 2019). This focus on values and process also guided my decision to open recruitment

at the empirical stage of the project to both primary, secondary and specialist educational provisions.

Ethical considerations

Ethics process

Ethical approval was sought and granted by Newcastle University in April 2023. The research also adhered to the BPS Code of Ethics (2021). The co-researcher information pack detailed the aims of the research, their rights as co-researchers, and how their data would be stored ([see appendix 2.2](#)). It is important to note that ethicality remained central to this research and was not conceptualised solely as the initial ethical application process.

Problematising PAR and Ethical Concerns

PAR: A critique

Whilst affirming that PAR aligns with my values and hopes for this research, it is important to also hold it up to scrutiny, to prevent valorisation on the basis of perceived virtue. To do so would endanger ethical reflexivity and risk the perpetuation of participation that is tokenistic at best, oppressive at worst (Jordan & Kapoor, 2016). Janes (2016) examined the construct of epistemic privilege to scrutinise PAR's emancipatory claims. Epistemic privilege refers to the freedom afforded to only a few in the knowledge construction process (Vaditya, 2018). It is suggested that within dialogue, dominant societal discourses can become hidden including those about elite knowledge producers and community others (Janes, 2016). Central to the paradox of PAR is that whilst it offers a critique of the epistemic privilege of academia, it also obscures local knowledge into the academic authorial voice (Janes, 2016). It is further suggested that most literature has done little to address this central paradox, other than acknowledge that different co-researchers took a lead at different points in the research (Janes, 2016). It is in response to this critique that I go on to critically consider the limits of participation, and how a reconceptualization of the construct of power may go some way to addressing this paradox.

The limits to participation

Within PAR, participation is considered at all research stages, such as defining the research question, constructing research activities, data analysis and dissemination (Kemmis, 2014). It is important to acknowledge that this empirical project was completed within the timeframe of a professional doctorate. This meant that there were times when full participation between co-researchers was not possible (such as data analysis). Whilst the decision that I would conduct the data analysis was decided in collaboration, it must be highlighted that this reduced participation at this stage of the research. Whilst this can be seen as a limitation, I was also concerned with the burden PAR can place on co-researchers, in contrast to other

methodologies. Wallace and Giles (2019) suggested that the uncertainty of PAR could be anxiety provoking for TEPs, and I wondered how this 'messiness' may promote feelings of discomfort in my co-researchers. Deciding together that I would take a lead on certain elements of the project therefore not only served a pragmatic agenda, but also was done in consideration of the ethical principle of responsibility (BPS, 2021).

Power, knowledge, and PAR

Advocates of participatory research methods have long critiqued other research methods for failing to address (and at times exacerbating) the power differentials between researcher and researched (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2006). The espoused ethical position of PAR would be suggested to stand against this (Jordan & Kapoor, 2016). Since the outset of this project, I have been concerned with the notion that a methodology can be inherently virtuous, and I have therefore sought to scrutinise the concepts of power and knowledge within this research.

Foucault (1980) suggested power is something that is inherent in all relational and institutional spaces and it's role is that of a producer. It rejects notions of power being a repressive force, because to do so would suggest power can be reduced, given up or mitigated against (Stoecker, 2009). To ignore the power present within this research context, therefore, would result in participation that could be described as tokenistic or even harmful (Dedding et al., 2021; Healy, 2001). It was important to acknowledge the power present because of my membership to two large institutions, Newcastle University and the local authority within which this research was taking place. It is also important to acknowledge the institutional power my co-researchers had, in being members of the staff community in the school where the research was taking place. Furthermore, two of my co-researchers held senior positions in this school, where one did not. It would be disingenuous to suggest at any point these power dynamics were mitigated against, rather they were constantly in flux and reflected upon in collaboration. Drawing on the Foucauldian notion of power as a producer, I held central the concern that if left unacknowledged the role of power in this project could be to reproduce notions of 'expert' and knowledge for the few that hold that expertise.

Hayward (1998) further developed Foucauldian thinking and suggested that power related to the ability to act upon certain social boundaries that either constrain or enable certain practice or actions. Hayward (1998) suggested that these social boundaries are boundaries of possibility and in doing so rejected notions of power solely belonging to the 'powerful' who act upon the 'powerless'. Instead, it is proposed it is more helpful to consider how power operates to come to define what is possible, impossible, a problem or a solution (Hayward, 1998). This conceptualisation of power led me to consider the role of knowledge within this

project, and its relationship with power. It is suggested that knowledge making is located within a political and cultural sphere, which results in the creation of a world which favours the status-quo (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). By conceptualising power as something which comes to define what is possible, knowledge becomes a resource which can act on these socially created boundaries (Hayward, 1998; Reason & Bradbury, 2008). It is my contention that whilst this project makes no claims to have mitigated against institutional power dynamics, the engagement in reflexive dialogue supported the construction of local knowledge which may, at some point, act as a resource for scrutinising or negotiating the social boundaries that currently constrain the field of possibility. It is done by drawing on the PAR principles which assert the inextricable link between power and knowledge (Mohan, 2001).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a warranted account of some of the methodological decisions taken in this research, and how these decisions were shaped by my own word view. To do this I have documented my own personal motivations, describing how an interest in community and what it is to be human were borne from personal experiences. This chapter has warranted how these interests shaped the research area and methodological approach, both of which were aligned with my philosophical position of social constructionism.

Further, this chapter has highlighted the limits to participation which existed in this project, and offered this as at the same time both a limitation but also an enactment of ethical principles. Finally, this chapter has accounted for ethical considerations that arose through this project, namely concerns around power, knowledge and participation. My understanding of these concepts, and how they interacted with the research process have been outlined, and further this section acknowledged that this research makes no claims to have removed power imbalances. The acknowledgement of this ethical tension created space to consider a different conceptualisation of power and knowledge, one that sees power as enabling and knowledge as a resource.

Chapter 3: How are restorative school communities built and maintained? A participatory action research project with one primary school.

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to explore the ways in which restorative school communities may be built and maintained. The research adopted a participatory action research methodology with three staff members from a small primary school. The research took place over four cycles of reflection, research, and action, which were analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis. Findings highlighted that restorative approaches are best constructed as a philosophy over a programme, that centres on participation, curiosity, and community. They also highlighted the importance of creating spaces; for co-construction and reflection. Finally, the findings suggested that a restorative school community is one that appreciates the centrality of all relationships within school communities, whether this is in forging connections or in rupture and repair. Within this theme, it was suggested that schools must foster professional belonging amongst all staff, in doing so acknowledging that one fundamental way to maintain restorative approaches is to approach relationships with staff restoratively. This chapter concludes by exploring implications, for both educationalists and EPs working with educationalists.

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Word count: 7415

Introduction

This chapter summarises the findings of a participatory action research project exploring what it means to build a restorative school community, and how restorative approaches are maintained and supported by systems, structures and personnel within a school environment. The project was devised and carried out with three co-researchers from a small primary school in the North of England. This chapter will begin by briefly outlining the context within which this research was shaped, before outlining the research method and data analysis process. The chapter will then explore the findings further, contextualising them in the wider literature before considering implications for educationalists and EPs, alongside considerations for future research.

Restorative approaches in the current context

16 years ago, McCluskey et al. (2008) commented on a growing international interest in restorative approaches and how they might be implemented in schools. It is pertinent to question whether current societal discourses still reflect this interest. Armstrong (2018) suggested that education policy is often forged in reoccurring 'moral panics' about the nature of student behaviour in school, leading to the creation of policy that focuses on the key concepts of management and discipline. This can be said to be true of the 2023 DfE guidance in the UK, which highlights discipline and punishment as key behaviour management strategies (Greer, 2020), thus situating the site of change within children who do not conform to increasingly narrow school rules (Armstrong, 2018; Harold & Corcoran, 2013). The guidance does not reference restorative approaches, suggesting that they do not currently align with the dominant education philosophy in England, as mandated by the current UK government.

It can be equally contentious to define restorative approaches (Song & Swearer, 2016), something which is reflected in the variety of ways schools implement the approach (McCluskey et al., 2008). It can be argued that much of the literature has focussed on the role of restorative approaches in response to harm (Mustian et al., 2022). As such, it has highlighted concepts such as restorative conferences, wrongdoing, perpetrator and victim (McCluskey et al., 2008; Vaandering, 2010). It is suggested that such a focus ignores the interconnected nature of a school community and the inextricable link between learning and behaviour (Vaandering, 2010, 2013). In recentring the community building element of restorative approaches, this project conceptualises problems as residing within institutions, communities, or relationships rather than people (Vaandering, 2010), in doing so drawing on key tenets of community psychology (Prilleltensky, 2001, 2005). These tenets are explored in more detail in chapter 2, here.

Educational Psychology and restorative approaches

Concerns about behaviour and discipline in school are pervasive (Armstrong, 2018), something which is reflected in current government policy (DfE, 2016, 2023). The number of permanent exclusions within England continue to rise, yet the universal application of zero-tolerance behaviour policies continues. EPs are routinely involved in casework, often for children who have been labelled as having Social, Emotional, and Mental Health needs (SEMH) and/or those who are at risk of permanent exclusion from their school. Whilst individual casework remains a crucial part of the EP role (Boyle & Lauchlan, 2009), it is also important to consider the ways in which EPs may be positioned to work with systems that may be contributing to or maintaining the difficulties experienced by individual children (Stanbridge & Mercer, 2022). In focussing on the community building elements of restorative approaches, this research hopes to illuminate how EPs may (or may not) be placed to support the development of a sustainable and resilient restorative community. In doing so, the research hopes to consider both the psychology *within* restorative approaches and the psychology *between* adults thinking together about change in one context.

Song and Swearer (2016) suggested that restorative approach practice has long preceded literature in the area. The authors go on to highlight that this is true across domains, including Educational (school) psychology (Song & Swearer, 2016). Moir and Macleod (2018) evaluated the involvement of one Educational Psychology Service (EPS) in supporting the implementation of restorative approaches across different schools. The authors concluded that the ongoing support offered by the EPS has an overall positive impact and that it influenced both school policy and day-to-day practice (Moir & Macleod, 2018). This example demonstrated EP involvement at an organisational level. Recent exploration of the Educational Psychology workforce suggested that there is a limited understanding of the EP role beyond statutory assessments, particularly in relation to organisational and preventative work (Atfield et al., 2023). Through its participatory methodology, this research hopes to illuminate one way in which EPs may support organisational change by focussing on the relational, preventative elements of restorative approaches (Bevington, 2015).

Research aims

The present research focus is an exploration of restorative approaches within one primary school context. This focus of this exploration was devised with co-researchers and covers two broad aims:

1) To construct an understanding of what it means to build a restorative school community; and

2) To explore how this is maintained by key staff members and wider systems.

Methodology

Research Context

Recruitment and co-researchers

Three co-researchers took part in this project (see Table 9 for further information). Initially, an email (see appendix 3.1) was sent to schools involved in an LA project, a strand of which involved the development of restorative approaches in school. The email contained a research poster, co-researcher information (see appendix 2.1), and an invitation to contact me for an informal discussion if interested. Sam contacted me and we had an informal discussion over Microsoft Teams in May 2023. I then met Alex and Jackie in school to informally discuss the project further in June 2023, at which point all three co-researchers completed and returned the consent form (see appendix 2.1).

Co-researchers and school demographics

The school involved in this research is a smaller than average, one form entry primary school. It is located in one of the most affluent areas of the local authority.

Co-researcher	Role
Sam	Assistant Headteacher
Alex	Assistant Headteacher
Jackie	Class Teacher

Table 9: Co-researcher information

Participatory Action Research

This research adopted a Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology. PAR is an approach to research that centres democratic decision making, social processes and the construction of knowledge at the site of change (Goodnough, 2008; Jordan & Kapoor, 2016). It adopts a position whereby research is an activity done with others, rather than to or about them (Goodnough, 2008). PAR does not ascribe to any particular methods, leaving the approach open to an array of research activities (Lykes & Mallona, 2008).

PAR is a collaborative process which engages with cycles of reflection, research and action (Kemmis, 2014). In the first session it was agreed that these phases would be used to provide a loose structure to our discussion sessions. This was mapped out visually and added to each subsequent session. Macdonald (2012) described the way in which participation is fluid throughout the process, with co-researchers leading at different stages of the project. This is reflective of the current project, whereby co-researchers took responsibility for the implementation of changes within their environment, whereas I took a

lead on data analysis (Macdonald, 2012). Whilst adopting a reflexive stance on the spaces where participation was most present, and where it was reduced, I acknowledge that I have written this thesis which may lead to a stronger representation of my authorial voice. In the coming months, we intend to feedback to the wider school community as a team of co-researchers, and we intend to construct the materials to support this collaboratively. Given my co-researchers local knowledge, it is likely that they will take a more leading role in the authoring of the materials which will support this process.

The research process

The research process was made up of four one hour co-researcher discussions, which followed overlapping cycles of reflection, research and action described by Kemmis (2014). Therefore, the method used in this participatory project could be best described as a discussion group, selected to acknowledge the fundamental role of group processes in supporting change (Chiu, 2003). The nature and content of each of the four sessions is briefly outlined in across Figures 4 - 7 below. Whilst the structure outlined above remained the same in each cycle, the topics for discussion were guided largely by my co-researchers and would usually begin by reflecting on any changes that had occurred since the previous session. The first session began by constructing a co-researcher group contract (see appendix 3.2), by adapting together the 'Research Group Protocols' described by Kemmis (2014).
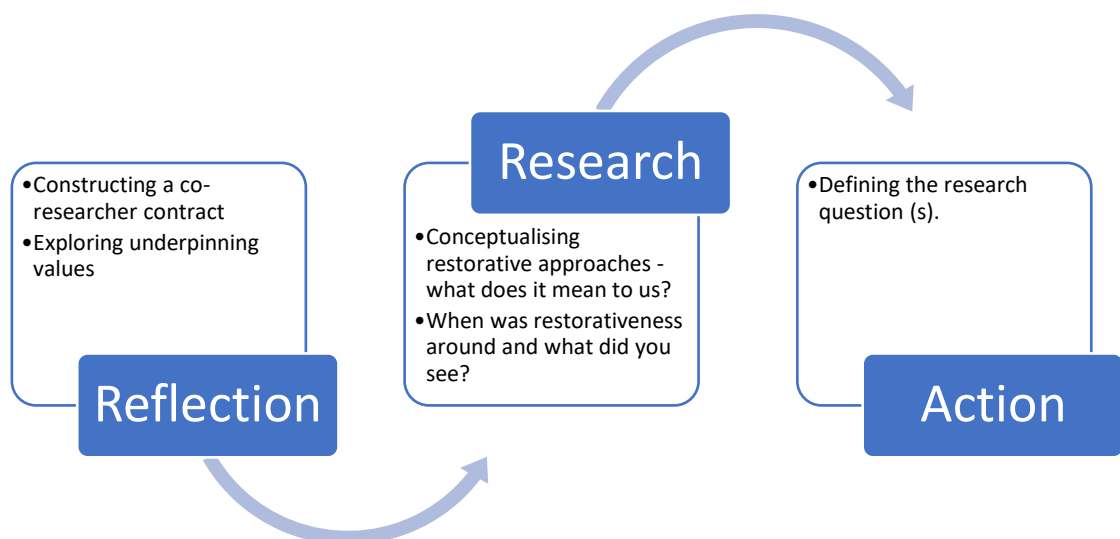
Figure 4: Co-researcher cycle one.
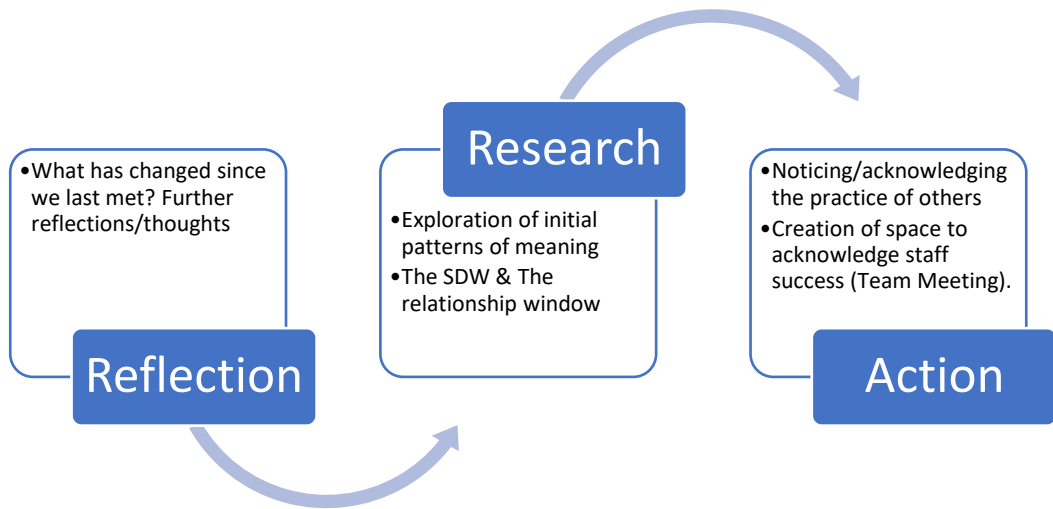
Figure 5: Co-researcher cycle two.

Research
- Exploration of initial patterns of meaning
- The SDW & The relationship window

Action
- Noticing/acknowledging the practice of others
- Creation of space to acknowledge staff success (Team Meeting).

Reflection
- What has changed since we last met? Further reflections/thoughts
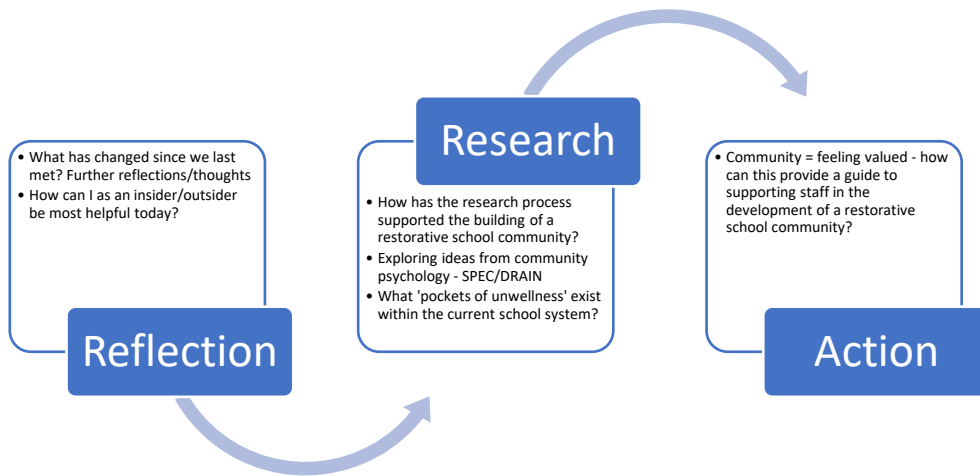
Figure 6: Co-researcher cycle three.

Research
- How has the research process supported the building of a restorative school community?
- Exploring ideas from community psychology - SPEC/DRAIN
- What 'pockets of unwellness' exist within the current school system?

Action
- Community = feeling valued - how can this provide a guide to supporting staff in the development of a restorative school community?

Reflection
- What has changed since we last met? Further reflections/thoughts
- How can I as an insider/outsider be most helpful today?

Figure 7: Co-researcher cycle four.

Research
- A restorative school community is one where everyone feels valued: what does this mean for; staff, young people, parents, the wider community?

Action
- "But maybe what we need is...a targeted effort to bring people with us" - sustaining and building on change.
- Next steps and moving forward

Reflection
- What has changed since we last met? Further reflections/thoughts
- What has changed since starting this project?

Data analysis

Reflective Thematic Analysis (RTA) was used in this study, as it offers a flexible approach to analysing qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Braun and Clarke (2023) proposed that RTA adheres to qualitative values which embrace researcher subjectivity as a resource. As such RTA is coherent with philosophical stance of this study, described further in chapter two (see here). Although co-researchers were not involved in conducting the analysis for pragmatic reasons (discussed further here), it was crucial that the method of analysis would be suitable for their desired aims and outcomes of the study. As some of the initial transcription and coding took place in between co-researcher sessions, I was able to take back initial patterns of meaning to prompt reflective discussions. This is something suggested important by Cornish et al. (2023), who note that community members should be invited to examine and critique developing ideas or patterns of meaning. Once initial themes had been constructed, these were also taken back to co-researchers, where they were able to comment or reflect on the findings. This supported analysis and prompted further thinking. These examples demonstrate co-researchers active contribution to the data analysis process (Cornish et al., 2023).

It is important to note that codes constructed in the initial analysis of co-researcher session one was carried into the analysis of co-researcher session two (and so on). These were then

supplemented with any additional codes. This approach supported the illumination of ideas or contributions that we revisited across sessions.

The six phase guide of RTA, as described by Braun and Clarke (2022), was followed iteratively. This is documented in Table 10 below.

Phase	Process	Evidence
Familiarisation with the data	This phase involved immersion in the data, through a process of listening, then reading and re-reading the data. During this process I made annotations, critically engaging with patterns of meaning. Once I had completed my four sessions with co-researchers, I returned to the familiarisation stage for each session.	Appendix 3.3 documents the data familiarisation table I completed when returning to the familiarisation stage. It was adapted from Braun and Clarke (2022).
Generating initial codes	This is a systematic process which involves with identifying patterns of singular meaning across each individual transcript. This process was carried out following each co-researcher session, initially on paper before copying this onto NVIVO. This meant when coding subsequent sessions, new codes were added. After each subsequent coding, I would return to previous transcripts to see if any new commonalities of meaning had been identified. This was an iterative process, whereby codes were narrowed, broadened and collapsed through the reading and re-reading of transcripts.	Appendix 3.4 includes an example of my initial paper coding, which was then copied into NVIVO.
Initial theme generation	Moving from coding to theme generation involved considering more broadly patterns of conceptual coherence. Individual codes were exported into an Excel document with all relevant data for each code, with a signifier for which cycle each section of data came from.	Appendix 3.5 includes an example of this process.
Developing and reviewing themes	The development and reviewing of themes was supported by returning to the	N/A

	data within each code and scrutinising whether this was coherent with the identified theme. Where this was not the case, the boundaries of themes were redefined by breaking the theme down or at times disregarding completely.	
Defining and naming themes	This process started by writing brief theme definitions, as suggested beneficial by Braun and Clarke (2022). This provided a way of reflecting on the conceptual coherence within a theme, and supported the development of theme names.	Appendix 3.6 documents one example of a theme definition I wrote as part of this stage.
Producing the report	As described by Braun and Clarke (2022), I produced the report by combining findings and discussion. This provided the opportunity to further analyse my data through the writing process.	N/A

Table 10: Guide to data analysis process.

Findings & Discussion

An initial 85 codes were constructed through analysis of the four cycles of PAR. Through an iterative process a number of sub-themes were grouped into the following overarching themes: *a philosophy over programme, the centrality of relationships, and creating spaces.* Within each theme, there was an acknowledgement of how certain restorative ways of being or conceptualisations existed in tension with the wider education system. Discussion about this tension is presented within the exploration of each theme and provides a lens with which to further understand some of the findings of this research through consideration of the influence of neoliberalism on education practice. This is therefore not seen as a standalone theme, but something that permeates each of the other identified themes, in the same way authors have argued neoliberalism has permeated all education structures and institutions (Ball, 2003; Biesta, 2009; Hall & Pulsford, 2019). I have presented this visually below in Figure 8 below.
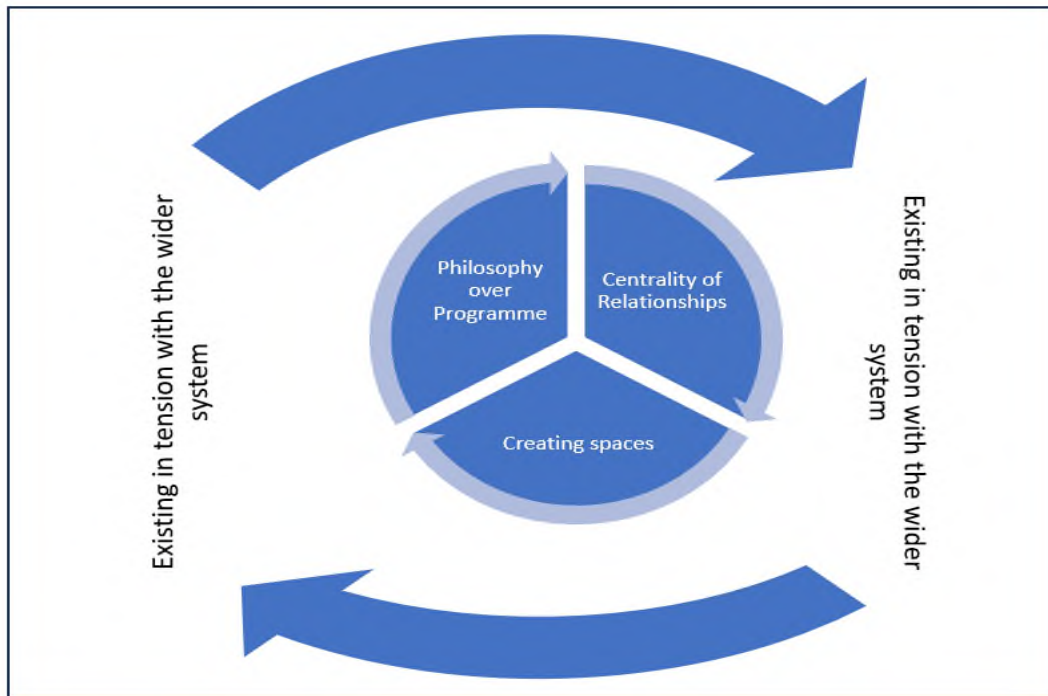
Figure 8: Overall thematic conceptualisation.

To provide a coherent overview of each theme and subthemes they are presented alongside a thematic map. This is then contextualised with co-researcher quotes and the wider literature, to provide a coherent overview of how these findings relate to the research questions of this project. In presenting the findings this way, I hope to offer further analysis through my writing, something suggested crucial by Braun and Clarke (2022). Through this process of analysing further through writing, themes were further refined and defined through an iterative process.

Theme 1: Philosophy over Programme

'…yeah we, we don't have a restorative behaviour policy but we do have… we do use a lot of restorative practice as part of our… of the way that we speak to children and approach them and how we work, as you know… we work generally as a as a team, how we work with each other, how we work with parents…' (Alex, cycle three).

Conceptualisations of restorative approaches in schools vary, ranging from the procedural to the philosophical (Marcucci, 2021; Morrison & Ahmed, 2006). Co-researchers described restorative approaches as a philosophy rather than a programme; a way of being and a way of understanding the world (O'Brien & Nygreen, 2020). This is in keeping with findings from Bevington (2015), and suggests that a philosophical approach, rather than a prescriptive one, supports restorative approaches to be threaded through the fabric of a school community. The subthemes described further below illuminate specific areas for

consideration within a restorative philosophy.
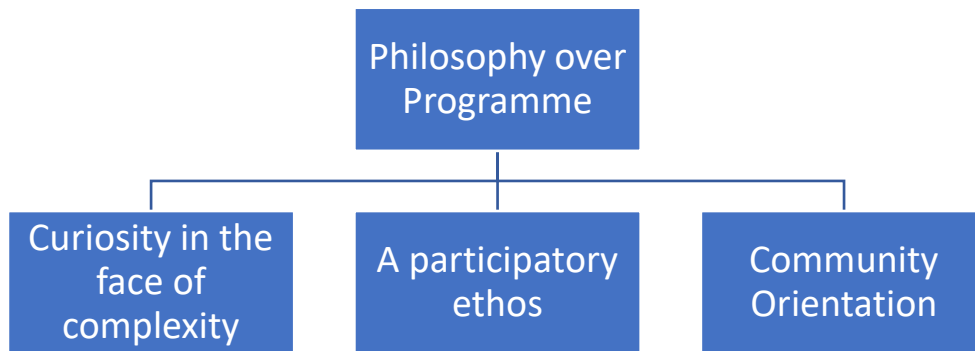
Figure 9: Philosophy over Programme subthemes

<u>*Subtheme: Curiosity in the face of complexity*</u>

Adopting a curious approach, where complexity was explored through questioning and reflection, was seen as important to all co-researchers, as exemplified by Jackie:

> *'And I said, is he trying to go out the classroom because is your classroom really hot? Is it quite noisy? Like maybe he wants that space.'* (Jackie, cycle two).

Curiosity as a construct has been examined through the lenses of many different paradigms, which have gone on to shape various understandings. Curiosity can be conceptualised as a desire to fill a gap in knowledge, motivated by uncertainty (Hidi & Renninger, 2020). From a more philosophical perspective, curiosity can be constructed as holding intrinsic epistemic value; it serves to construct knowledge (Schmitt & Lahroodi, 2008). Within Educational Psychology, curiosity has been suggested to be fuelled by embracing uncertainty and questioning taken for granted assumptions (Mercieca, 2009), a conceptualisation that is in keeping with Jackie's approach above, in that holds up to scrutiny simplistic understandings of situations.

Curiosity, it is suggested, brings a contingency which stands in resistance to categorisation and labelling (Mercieca, 2009). In the above example, the curious approach resituates the problem from within the child to within the environment, as such reflecting a philosophy that problem exist outside of people. This can be understood from a narrative perspective, which asserts that our interactions and approach to supporting others is shaped by whether we believe them to be intrinsically problematic or not (Combs & Freedman, 2012). This understanding is supported by Amorim Neto et al, (2022), who reported that teachers who demonstrated curiosity in their approach developed stronger relationships with their pupils,

suggesting this was because of a genuine interest in getting to know the pupils as people. This supports adults in school to understand '*what they need'* (Alex, cycle one).

In conceptualising problem situations as '*bad moments or a bad few moments'* (Alex, cycle one) rather than a bad person, Alex challenged dominant narratives around the fixed nature of identity (Combs & Freedman, 2016). Pollack (2012) suggested that the informal conversations that teachers engage in can provide a window into the discourses which are reproduced within schools. Often, it is suggested, these focus on deficit and stories of why some children are destined to succeed whereas others are not (Pollack, 2012). In exploring the curiosity present in the discussion, Jackie noted *'So I learn that from Sam… Well, what they're doing isn't their intended outcome, they're wanting something else'*, suggesting the 'conversational wisdom' (Pollack, 2012, p.95.) storied in the interactions of my co-researchers moved beyond simplistic, deficit-based conclusions towards something more critical and inquisitive (Drewery & Kecskemeti, 2010). It is therefore suggested that a philosophy of curiosity is learnt through interactions with more experienced colleagues, and the stories that are thickened within them (Bevington, 2015; Combs & Freedman, 2012).

Subtheme: A participatory ethos
Co-researchers expressed a complex and multifaceted understanding of children's participation. In cycle three, Sam explained:

> *'We encourage them… to take on roles within our community, [and] we encourage them to see themselves as like the middle and sort of it ripples out. So, their actions will have an impact on the whole community.' (Sam, cycle three)*

Article 12 of the United Nation Conference on the Rights of the Child proliferated a wide reaching interest in the concept of children's participation (Horgan et al., 2017; UN, 1989). Percy-Smith (2010) suggested that in the UK participation has become conflated with 'having a say', as such rendering attempts to support participation tokenistic and performative. Participation as described by Sam appears more aligned with a democratic, relational understanding of participation, which is grounded in the everyday experiences and interactions of children and young people (Horgan et al., 2017; Percy-Smith, 2010). Through this lens, the co-researchers assert that participation is an ethos, not a formal space created for the purpose of participation (Horgan et al., 2017). Percy-Smith (2010) suggested that the benefits of participation for children come from the first-hand experience of influence, such as learning new skills and increased confidence. In doing so, it can be argued that children learn '*what is to be as a part of the political world but also in small ways, just how you can influence things around you.*' (Sam, cycle one). By creating institutional spaces within which participation is woven, it can be suggested that strong relational bonds and a sense of

community responsibility is generated, which is suggested an important element of a restorative school community (McCluskey, 2018; Veloria et al., 2020).

Subtheme: A community orientation

> *'That's what I think community is that, for me, that you feel safe that you feel comfortable and that you feel valued.' (Sam, cycle three).*

Co-researchers described restorative approaches through the lens of community, rather than individuals. It was suggested that a community, whilst made up of lots of different stakeholders, is an inclusive space which recognises the inherent value in each member (Vaandering, 2010). It was further suggested that adopting a community orientation served to empower community members, as exemplified by Sam below:

> *'If you see everything in terms of yourself It's easy to become sort of disappointed or downhearted... If things… yeah. But if you see that you have an impact on the people around you that you know the community around you and your table, the community in your class, the community in your school that gives you… that empowers you.' (Sam, cycle three).*

If understanding school through the lens of community and connection is suggested to be empowering, it holds that the lens of individualism may be disempowering. Hall and Pulsford (2019) suggested that the education system has become defined by neoliberal discourses of productivity, efficiency and the individual. Within a school setting, they argued that this weakens social ties, reducing a sense of connection and common purpose (Hall & Pulsford, 2019). By adopting a community orientated philosophy, Sam is able to reflect on the interpersonal ties within which her identity is constructed, and her experience of agency is altered as a consequence (Dworski-Riggs & Langhout, 2010). Prilleltensky (2020) highlighted the reciprocal exchange of value (both being valued and giving value) as key components to a sense of being part of a community, suggesting 'mattering' is an inherently relational process. In the above quotation, Sam is able to reflect on the value they give to their community, something they experiencing as empowering (Prilleltensky, 2020). A community orientation stands in resistance to individual attributions of success and failure, and instead focusses its attention on the connections between all stakeholders ensuring they are included and valued (Hall & Pulsford, 2019), something which sustains a restorative school community.

Theme 2: The centrality of relationships

The centrality and importance placed on all relationships in a school community was highlighted by all co-researchers as a cornerstone of the school's wider ethos. Discussions

moved beyond consideration of the staff-pupil relationships, instead focusing how holding all relationships central supported the wider restorative ethos of the school. This was exemplified by Sam in cycle two:

'I think ultimately it comes back to relationships. You know, so none of that would matter at all if it wasn't for the fact that we built good relationships.' (Sam, cycle two).

This theme is made up of three subthemes: seeking connections, in rupture and repair and fostering professional belonging. These are explored in more detail in the subsections below.
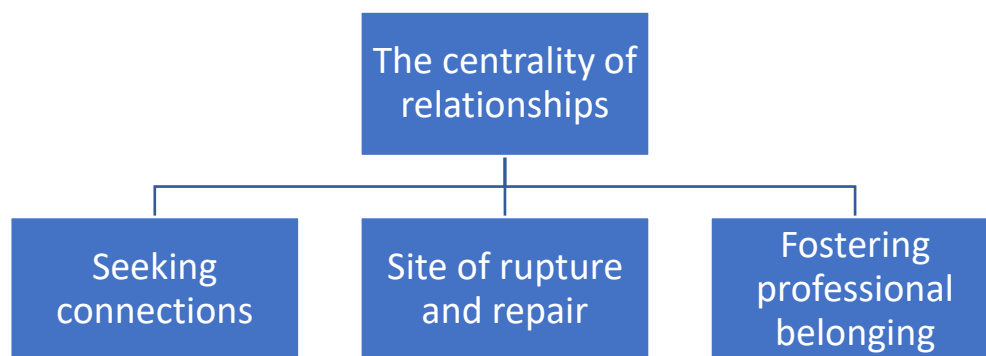
Figure 10: The centrality of relationships subthemes

<u>*Subtheme: Seeking connections*</u>

Co-researchers suggested that building meaningful relationships with young people involved seeking out opportunities to connect with the human, not just the learner in the classroom (Biesta, 2009).

This was suggested to move beyond the interactions within the classroom, as described by Jackie (cycle one):

'And I think the smaller conversations you have on whatever it is they've done at the weekend or whatever they want to talk about is important to the children as important as it is to you because then you know something about them.' Jackie (cycle one).

In accepting that relationships are central to the human experience (Allen et al., 2021), it becomes pertinent to explore the ways in which strong relational bonds are built and sustained within a school community. In the above example, Jackie describes seeking opportunities to connect with young people on a more informal, personal basis, which moves beyond seeing young people as being in school to receive knowledge from those that possess it (Freire, 2017). In '*know[ing] something about them'*, young people are

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conceptualised as active participants in the reciprocal construction of relational bonds, no longer 'containers' waiting to be filled (Freire, 2017, p.45). Staff are suggested to have a responsibility to seek these opportunities, with co-researchers noting these moments often occur '*in the playground*' (Jackie, cycle one).

Co-researchers explained that seeking relational connections was not in place of academic support provided by staff. Instead, they suggested that attending to the relational precedes the academic with '*progress and attainment com[ing] from feeling safe, secure and wanting to please the teacher*' (Sam, cycle one). This is in line with findings from the Systematic Literature Review, which highlighted that attending to the academic will not be successful if adults haven't connected with the human. Co-researchers do not suggest the development of academic skills is less important than the relational, rather they challenge the understanding of them as dichotomous. In describing developing a relationship with one young person, Sam explained '*it's impacted on her sort of outlook and her ability to progress and focus*' (Sam, cycle one), demonstrating the interwoven nature of developing relationships and academic progress (Vaandering, 2013). In doing so, social interactions are held central to school life (McCluskey et al., 2008), and enriching the relationships within which they occur is seen as foundational for social, emotional and academic development (Drewery, 2016).

Investing time and effort in building connections was suggested to be the foundation from which a restorative school community was constructed. In line with Sandwick et al. (2019), the notion that restorative approaches are applied only in response to harm was challenged, as exemplified by Sam below:

> *'It's… it's almost pointless putting the actions in afterwards if you haven't invested beforehand' (Sam, cycle three).*

Vaandering (2010) suggested that in western nations, restorative approaches have come to be considered mostly in terms of responses to harm, rather than an approach which also encompasses community building. Sam explained that community building focussed on developing '*trust*' (Sam, cycle three) because '*it's harder to restore something that wasn't there in the first place*', suggesting constructing resilient relationships provides a foundation to restore back to, when conflict inevitably does occur (McCluskey, 2018). Whilst highlighting the importance of building relationships, the findings also indicate the complexity within this, which can bring frustration (Marcucci, 2021). In cycle four, Sam explained '*well, it's a really long process to gain her trust. This has been going on for two years now. We're…still, you know, that's [restorative approaches are] still being advised…still being, so…it's not that*

easy'. In articulating this, Sam is highlighting a significant tension; building restorative connections is not easy (Darling & Monk, 2018), yet it is often recommended as though it is.

Subtheme: Site of rupture and repair

It is acknowledged that conflict is inevitable in any school community (McCluskey, 2018). How schools respond to harm could indicate their fundamental beliefs on what conflict is and where the site of change lies (O'Brien & Nygreen, 2020). This is also likely to reflect wider societal discourses in relation to conflict, retribution, restoration, childhood and so on (Harold & Corcoran, 2013). During the cycles of reflection and action, conflict was conceptualised as a learning opportunity, as exemplified by Sam:

> *'We all have this desire to protect our… our children, but it was more so to their detriment. So rather than facing conflict and knowing how to manage it or facing disappointment and knowing how to manage it…' (Sam, cycle one).*

It could be argued that this stands in resistance to the notion that conflict should be avoided, instead conceptualising it as something that provides young people with the skills to respond to difficult situations in the future. As such, responding to conflict through the lens of restorative approaches could be said to support the development of social skills (Drewery, 2016). Within this, the relationship and the community are positioned as the site of harm (and as such the site of change), as opposed to the individual (Prilleltensky, 2001).

This shifting of the site of change necessitates that each response to harm will be unique and context specific, again positioning restorative approaches as a philosophy (O'Brien & Nygreen, 2020), rather than a *'script [to follow]…after something's happened'* (Sam, cycle three). In some examples, co-researchers described responses which restored the relationship to its previous state. It was also suggested that, in other cases, through an ongoing and collaborative approach with parents, a new relationship was constructed as described by Alex below:

> *'I spoke to her parents…and then together, right, we're going to make sure that she can see things through other people's perspective. So, we spent the rest of it, so we've spent a good probably six months over the year, trying to give CHILD A the confidence to say when something is worrying her and to give her just confidence, more self-esteem, but with CHILD B there we have been able to develop her empathy and her understanding that she doesn't always have to have everything her own way' (Alex, cycle one)*

In the above example a community response to harm is operationalised, which involves collaboration between parents, teachers and the young people involved in the situation

(Macready, 2009). In engaging in ongoing dialogue the relationship becomes the site of transformation (Tsuruhara, 2019), with CHILD A finding *'her voice and her confidence'* (Sam, cycle one) and CHILD B developing the skills to see things from others' perspective (Tsuruhara, 2019). It is pertinent to note that this was not achieved in a one off, scripted interaction but through an ongoing, concerted and collaborative effort by various members of the school community (Drewery, 2016), the result of which was '*a friendship [that] is far more balanced'* (Alex, cycle one). This context specific response recognised that in this case, the relationship did not need to be restored, because it was the relationship that was causing harm (O'Brien & Nygreen, 2020).

Alongside context specific responses to harm, *'firm boundaries and consistent expectations'* (Sam, cycle one) in the form of a '*really good behaviour policy'* (Sam, cycle one) was also highlighted as important. A reluctance to forgo predetermined responses to certain behaviours has been found in the wider literature (McCluskey et al., 2011), and is consistent with the findings of this project's Systematic Literature Review. O'Brien and Nygreen (2020) suggested that the resilience of punitive measures, even in a restorative school, can be best explained by an individualistic culture. Neoliberalism asserts that there is a level playing field, and as such all success and failures can be attributed to the individual (O'Brien & Nygreen, 2020). Harold and Corcoran (2013) suggested that this societal discourse permeates education and reproduces stories of punishment and retribution. In terms of the present study, it suggests that schools can exist somewhere on a journey between punitive and relational responses to harm. It may also suggest that staff find it easier to respond to certain harm (e.g., in a peer relationship) restoratively, whereas within other relationships (e.g., teacher-student) this may be more challenging.

Subtheme: fostering professional belonging
Throughout the action research cycles, discussions often returned to what supported staff to build and maintain a restorative school community, in doing so addressing the second research question of this project. It could be argued that in focussing on what supports staff, co-researchers acknowledged that a fundamental way to support young people is to ensure that staff are well supported in their roles (Coleman, 2009; McCallum, 2021). This subtheme argues that fostering professional belonging is an essentially relational task. This is particularly pertinent in the current context, where concerns about teacher wellbeing and retention are high (Perryman & Calvert, 2020). Through my placement interactions with school staff as a TEP, I have also frequently heard of widespread difficulties recruiting teaching assistants and other support staff.

In much the same way informal opportunities to connect with young people were highlighted as important, they were also suggested to be crucial in the development of staff relationships, as suggested by Sam:

'You need to be part of that conversation about whatever was on telly last night or whatever, you know, all of that is important' (Sam, cycle two).

In connecting with and honouring the inherent worth and interests of every community member (Vaandering, 2013), there is an acknowledgement that school communities are made up of adults alongside young people (Coleman, 2009). McCallum (2021) and Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) both highlighted the importance of a collegial workplace, which in turn fosters a sense of belonging through social connection. It could be argued that the informal opportunities for staff to connect described by Sam support the development of these relationships, and in doing so support staff to feel good and function well (McCallum, 2021). In strengthening the bonds between staff, relational and community wellness is centred, which in turn contributes to the development of resilient and sustaining communities (Prilleltensky, 2005).

Perryman and Calvert (2020) reported that, from a sample of teachers who had left the profession, a lack of support from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) was often cited as a contributing factor. The study also suggested that this was particularly relevant in relation to responding to incidence of misbehaviour in school. The importance of SLT supporting staff in difficult situations was considered crucial, as exemplified by Sam (cycle one):

'[HEADTEACHER is] very clear on his boundaries about what is acceptable from children and from parents, which protects you as a teacher and enables you to be able to do your job.'

In offering positive supervisory support which characterised by trust, a priority is placed on relatedness and teacher experience of belonging. (Perryman & Calvert, 2020; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). In describing the support from SLT as enabling (rather than disabling), Sam also described a freedom and autonomy that is cultivated within the school environment. It has been suggested that the current educational climate of performativity and accountability has eroded opportunities for teacher autonomy and influence (Perryman & Calvert, 2020). This, it is argued, stems from a neoliberalisation of education which positions schools (and teachers) as products and families as consumers (Davies & Bansel, 2007). The individualistic focus necessitates that fault must be attributed for misbehaviour (either within the child, teacher or both) (O'Brien & Nygreen, 2020). In resisting this by supporting teachers in their own decision-making alongside reaffirming community boundaries, a relational ethos of mutual trust and professional respect is reasserted (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Whilst still

acknowledging schools are hierarchical in nature, this could be best described as a hierarchy of support, over a hierarchy of mistrust (Perryman & Calvert, 2020).

Autonomy and influence were also described in terms of demonstrating to staff their value. In describing a member of staff who was experiencing some dissatisfaction in work, Sam noted *'they are not…I think they're not finding… they don't know where… to fit anymore. So, it might be about trying to make sure that they feel valued and they're involved in stuff.' (Sam, cycle three).* Returning to reflect on this in session four, Alex noted *'Giving that person a bit of a project to do or just hearing their voice, which has made them seem like they… seem a bit more on board'.* Participating in decision-making, having influence and being able to use this creatively are all suggested to support professional belonging (Perryman & Calvert, 2020), and all are underpinned by an inherent trust in the professional capabilities of staff within a school community. Community psychology asserts that self-determination and participation are key guiding values within any organisation (Prilletensky et al.,1997). In the above example, the staff member is afforded both voice and choice; a space to be heard and the opportunity to implement something new (Prilletensky et al., 1997). The contrast between not knowing where they 'fit anymore' to being 'a bit more on board' powerfully paints a picture of belonging as a productive force, characterised by inclusion, participation and community (Roffey, 2013). In this example, it can be argued that there is a clear parallel between the restorative approaches implemented between staff-student and those implemented between SLT-staff (Bevington, 2015).

The findings also illuminated practical things that can be implemented in a school to support professional belonging through appreciating the value all staff members bring to the school community (Vaandering, 2010). Co-researchers described reciprocal relationship of care, between staff members and the community as an organisation, where the hard work and effort contributed by staff is acknowledged with flexibility. Alex noted in cycle four:

'We…put quite a lot into our community, but also when we need the support from it, we get it back… There are times when you…you need a day to, you've got appointments, or your child is ill or you're having a tough time, and you draw on the support from other people around you. Or you want to go to your friend's wedding that has ended up on a Friday and the answer generally is yes you can under the guise that actually we know that you work really hard and go above and beyond the rest of the time. So yes, you can do that.' – (Alex, cycle four).

Such flexibility could be argued to stand in resistance to the performative culture which has permeated education. Performativity creates an environment where teachers personal commitments and beliefs are rendered irrelevant in the pursuit of increasing output (Ball,

2003). Teachers become a learning resource (Perryman & Calvert, 2020), whose identity is bound by their (and their institutions) performance in comparison to others (Ball, 2003). In the above example, productivity and performativity is eschewed in favour of appreciation of all the spaces within which a staff member's identity is constructed. Other practical adaptations to the systems which support staff included staff being permitted to take their PPA time at home, or staff being provided with a day in lieu for supporting an open day. Infusing school systems with professional trust in resistance to the demands of performativity and accountability serve to support a sense of value and professional belonging (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). As described by Vaandering (2010) the inherent worth of every community member is honoured, providing one of the key foundations of a restorative school community.

Theme 3: Creating spaces.

Co-researchers described the creation of spaces as fundamental to supporting and maintaining restorative approaches in school. This theme is made up of two subthemes: space for co-construction and space for reflection. The word 'creating' is key, as it was widely acknowledged that in a busy school environment, these spaces may be harder to come by and require some concerted organisation. Within this theme, parallels were drawn between the PAR research process and what would be beneficial in the wider school community. There were also clear overlaps between supporting restorative approaches and being restorative, further supporting the notion that 'restorativeness' is a thread woven within the fabric of a school community (Vaandering, 2011).
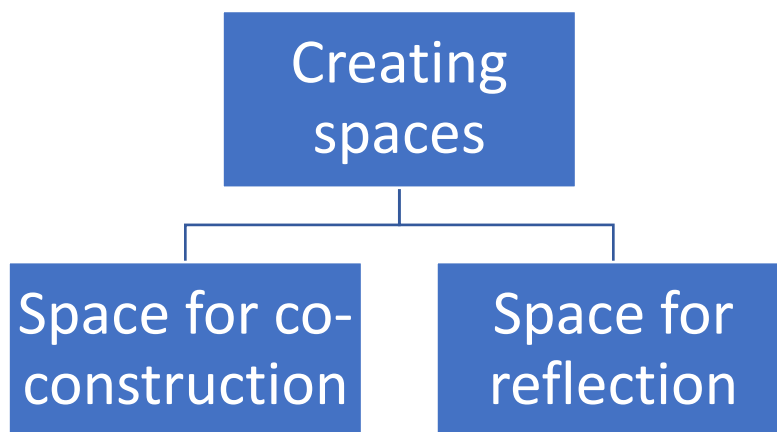

Figure 11: Creating spaces subthemes

<u>*Subtheme: Space for co-construction*</u>

'I think also people hear the word restorative practice. And they imagine… certain things'

(Sam, cycle four).

Throughout the discussions, it was acknowledged there exists multiple definitions and conceptualisations of restorative approaches, which at times exist in tension with each other. This lack of consensus has often been highlighted as a critique within the wider literature (Song & Swearer, 2016; Zakszeski & Rutherford, 2021), however, when considering restorative approaches as a philosophy rather than a programme, it is unsurprising. Returning to the social constructionist world view adopted within this research, meaning is constructed through language, which is then perpetuated in narrative, discourse and symbol (Hooker, 2020). It can, therefore, only ever be context specific. Language and dialogue become important resources in the knowledge generated and maintained by the community (Hooker, 2020).

Co-researchers highlighted challenges and frustrations associated with restorative approaches being a '*buzzword*' that '*wouldn't necessarily acknowledge some of the stuff we were talking about as part of that'* (Sam, cycle four). This was discussed in relation to parents and outside professionals working with the school community. Whilst acknowledging this frustration, co-researchers were also aware that they used terms without checking for a mutual understanding, noting *'sometimes I think maybe I'm guilty of not explaining some of the terminology, because you use it, so if you are meeting with a parent, you might use a terminology and you don't always stop to ask' (Sam, cycle four).* This highlights a space within the school community to engage in collaborative meaning making, where dialogue is embraced. Dialogue, it is suggested, is made up of the exchange of unique and even competing voices actively engaged in a search for meaning (Bessant, 2018). There is a contingency to dialogue, where thinking together rests on no-one holding their own view as final (Macready, 2009). It is therefore suggested that in engaging in dialogue with all community members, a context specific understanding of restorative approaches can be constructed. Co-researchers described some pre-existing spaces where this dialogue could be further supported such as parent coffee mornings, thereby suggesting 'restorativeness' can be built into pre-existing systems.

Co-construction was also suggested as key during moments of tension or conflict within the school community, as exemplified by Alex (cycle one):

'Not only that I spoke to I spoke to the other child, so her friend and I spoke to her parents, and they were quite shocked, and they were a bit upset. And then together, right, we're going to make sure that she can see things through other people's perspective.'

In engaging in dialogue with all relevant community members, the opportunity to construct a common understanding is created (Drewery, 2016). It is suggested that the most effective restorative response to harm not only constructs an understanding of how the problem

walked into a relationship, but also involves generating an understanding of how to safeguard against it occurring again (Drewery, 2016). It can be argued that this can only be achieved by engaging in dialogue, accepting that your view of the situation may be altered as a consequence (Macready, 2009). This, it is suggested, was underpinned by a belief in collaboration, or the notion that '*working together to figure things out is always a good idea*' (Jackie, cycle one).

<u>*Subtheme: Space for reflection*</u>

> *'I think for me the thing that it most does is help to crystallize things that are just floating about in my head that I normally wouldn't have time to think about.' (Sam, cycle three).*

Cronin-Lampe and Cronin-Lampe (2010) suggested that building a restorative school community requires deep personal reflection from staff members. During this project, co-researchers often reflected that engaging in the PAR process had provided space to *'stop and think'* (Sam, cycle three) and *'reflect a lot on what I could do'* (Sam, cycle three). It could be suggested that the PAR process created an opportunity to engage in thinking about 'the restorative I' (Cronin-Lampe & Cronin-Lampe, 2010, p.29), which involves considering how to practice in a preferred, restorative way. Bevington (2015) suggested that creating spaces for reflection serves a dual benefit; on the one hand it supports the development of restorative approaches and on the other the process of reflecting is inherently restorative. The findings of this project are in keeping with this, and suggest that building a restorative school community requires the creation of spaces to engage in reflection whilst questioning 'what can I be doing for this school/the culture/the relationship I am engaged in or those I am struggling with?' (Cronin-Lampe & Cronin-Lampe, p29).

Whilst identifying spaces for reflection and co-construction as conduits to building a restorative school community, co-researchers highlighted that the demands of school life are often a barrier to this. In understanding this from a postmodern perspective, it is possible to understand the lack of opportunity to '*stop and think*' (Sam, cycle three) as being constructed by an emphasis on efficiency, performativity and productivity (Ball, 2003; Mercieca & Mercieca, 2022). In a society that is obsessed with efficiency, stopping to think has one crucial flaw, it wastes time (Lyotard, 1993, 1994). It is also pertinent to consider how much space is created for thinking in an education system that is preoccupied with measurement, or more specifically what we can measure (Biesta, 2009). Considering this from an ecological perspective, it becomes possible to see how decisions made in the macrosystem (government rhetoric and education policy) can directly impact the relationship and interaction between members of a school community.

Implications

This section will firstly consider the implications for my co-researchers, who intend to continue this process through further cycles of reflection research and action. This section will then go on to consider implications more broadly, for educationalists and EPs.

These findings and implications have been shared in the first instance with staff in my research school, who aim to continue the action research process by engaging further with the wider school community. They have chosen to continue engage in cycles of reflection, research and action in the areas documented in Table 11 below:

Relevant finding	Co-researcher next step
Creating spaces Centrality of relationships	- Create a school staff community group which continues to explore 'restorativeness' and community wellness from a wider range of perspectives. Co-researchers reflected on their own roles (as teaching staff) and highlighted their intention that this group would include a more diverse range of school staff perspectives. - Co-researchers highlighted the importance of this community group being guided by restorative principles, thus providing space where repair that is required in the community can be acknowledged.
Creating spaces Philosophy over programme	- in acknowledging there is often not space or time to construct a shared understanding with parents, co-researchers intended to begin a series of parent workshops. Whilst this will share the findings of this research, these will be offered as a prompt for reflection, with the aim of building upon these with parents' own perspective on what it means to be part of a restorative school community and thus developing wider community participation.

Table 11: Implications for research school and next steps

The research findings also have implications for EPs, both in terms of how restorative approaches are conceptualised, and the methods by which we may work with schools to support change over time (in relation to restorative approaches or otherwise). These implications are summarised in Table 12 below.

Theme	Implications for schools	Implications for EPs work with schools
Philosophy over programme	- To adopt a curious stance when faced with complexity. This involves looking beyond the 'presenting difficulty' to what else may be contributing. - Create opportunities for staff to learn from the 'conversational wisdom' (Pollack, 2012) of other, more experienced staff. For more experienced staff, this is an opportunity to model a critical, curious approach. - A school ethos which separates people from the problems that walk into their lives (Freedman & Combs, 2012). - Opportunities for young people to engage in meaningful participation within their everyday schooling. This centres on avoiding 'tokenistic' participation initiatives.	- EPs may model curiosity in all their practice with schools. This may be supported most in consultation, where EPs are positioned to adopt a stance of 'not knowing'. In avoiding the temptation to seek simple solutions to complex problems, EPs may construct an environment of 'wondering together'. - Seek creative opportunities to support staff to 'think together', through group consultation, facilitating reflective practice sessions or group training.
Centrality of relationships	- To encourage staff to build connections with young people beyond the classroom. This involves connecting with what is important to the young person as a human being. SLT should create opportunities for this more informal interaction for all staff and young people. - Creation of a safe and supportive staff room. This space should be characterised by a lack of judgement. This should also provide a space where staff can connect informally, strengthening relationships and relational wellbeing. - In times of difficulty, the relationship should be centred as the site of repair. This will always require a unique approach, specific to that relationship. Sometimes, the relationship will be repaired but at other times it will be about constructing a new relationship. - Supporting staff to experience a sense of belonging and security in their professional identity serves to support community wellness and is inherently restorative. Supportive senior leaders, professional trust and flexibility were seen as key to achieving this.	- EPs may centre relationships in their own working practice, with all key community stakeholders. In consultation or other discussions EPs may find it helpful to ask about the interconnected, relational network within which a young person, parent, teacher etc is nested. - EPs may wish to draw on narrative psychology principles, asserting that no person is their problem (Freedman and Combs, 2012). - EPs may wish to consider further the role of professional identity and belonging in their work with schools. - In discussions about restorative approaches, EPs should highlight the importance of a relational, community building approach which seeks to strengthen the community, so that in instances where harm does occur it is resilient (Vaandering, 2013).
Creating spaces	- Space for reflection and co-construction were highlighted to be conduits to developing and maintaining restorative approaches, alongisde being restorative in themselves. Senior leaders should consider how this space can be created within busy school environment. It may be that 'restorativeness' can be built into systems that already exist. - Schools to consider how to reflect and co-construct with all community members, so that a shared context specific community undestanding is constructed. Working together with community members in this way not only supports and maintains the implementation of restorative approaches, it is also restorative in itself.	- EPs may wish to consider how to embed reflective practice into their daily interactions with schools. Consultation can provide one mechanism for this, alongside creating more formalised reflective spaces (e.g., reflecting teams sessions). It may be useful to ask in planning discussions with schools what space staff have to reflect or think together. - Co-researchers highlighted the frustration they experienced when recommended by professionals to 'take a restorative approach'. These findings suggest that working alongside schools to develop a common understanding as to what that means in their context may be more impactful. This applies not only to involvement regarding restorative approaches, but any involvement. This finding may call more broadly for consideration of the EP role in making

		'recommendations' (something discussed further in Chapter 4 here). • Action research methodology may provide a way of working with schools to construct and implement change over time, in relation to restorative approaches or otherwise.
Existing in tension with the wider system	• Senior leaders to make explicit to the wider school community the inherent tension between restorative approaches and current government policy. • Senior leaders to look for small steps of change which are incremental over time. This may include building 'restorativeness' into systems that already exist in the first instance.	• EPs should recognise the challenging and difficult circumstances within which schools are operating. An approach characterised by humility and a stance that everyone is doing the best they can in the circumstances they are in may support small steps of change in complex systems. • EPs may wish to draw on the wisdom of the school Headteacher, who during the findings feedback session referred to the further implementation of these findings 'small acts of resistance' against an education system that doesn't prioritise some of these areas. EPs may wish to reflect on what 'small acts of resistance' look like in their own practice (discussed further in chapter 4 here).

Table 12: Implications for schools and EPs working with schools.

Limitations and Future Research.

Data in this study was constructed across four cycles of action research and was recorded from the discussions as part of this. My co-researchers all worked at the same primary school, and all appeared to share at least some values (explored in the first session) and professional norms (explored throughout). Though generalisability was not an aim of this study, it is important to reflect on how this may have shaped the direction of travel throughout the action research project, and ultimately the findings. It is pertinent to consider that the research question decided on as a group of co-researchers (what does it mean to *build* a restorative school *community*) may have, even as early as session one, illuminated their/the school's philosophy regarding restorative approaches. This may suggest that the findings are somewhat unsurprising. Despite this, there is some congruence between the findings of this study and the understanding constructed from the SLR, where relationships and a sense of community was suggested to be deepened by having 'space for human encounters'. This suggests that the current study does provide one contribution to further understanding the relational, community building aspects of restorative approaches.

The aim of this study was to explore what it means to build a restorative school community, alongside considering how this can be supported by key staff members and systems. Whilst the current study has provided new insights into this area, it does not explore the perspectives of other stakeholders (such as young people, families or other staff members). Considering the study's focus on community, future research may wish to deepen understanding further by engaging with other members of a school community, to understand their perspectives on what it means to build a restorative school community.

This research took place in a small primary school in the North of England. Future research may wish to explore restorative approaches in other educational settings (e.g., secondary schools, specialist provisions). One of the key implications of this study was the way in which knowledge could be constructed which supported systemic change through PAR methodology. It may therefore be insightful to adopt participatory methods in the exploration of restorative approaches in other educational settings.

Conclusions

Within this research, restorative approaches have been constructed as a philosophy which centres an ethos of curiosity, participation and community. Three key themes were identified from the analysis of co-researcher discussion sessions: Philosophy over Programme, Centrality of Relationships and Creating Spaces. Each theme existed in tension with the wider system, which has been conceptualised visually in Figure 5. Findings have highlighted the interconnected nature of a school community, and have constructed ideas about the ways in which these interconnections can be strengthened in service to supporting relational, individual and community wellness (Prilleltensky, 2005). This chapter has also discussed potential implications and areas for further thought, both for educationalists in school settings and EPs working with schools. There are clear gaps in this research's contribution to understanding in relation to wider community stakeholders and other educational settings. Future research may wish to consider further exploration in these areas, perhaps again through an action research methodology.

Chapter 4: A personal and professional reflection

Abstract

This chapter explores the personal and professional implications of conducting this research, considering particularly the implications for my ongoing practice as a TEP. It also considers how the research process challenged me to embrace uncertainty as an agent for transformation and change. This chapter considers the way in which social constructionism may encourage day-to-day practice that centres uncertainty as a conduit for collaboration and collective meaning-making. The ways in which restorative approaches can be conceptualised as 'small acts of resistance' is also explored, by considering the role of relationality, reflection and co-construction within a system where these are not prioritised. In drawing parallels between research and practice, the sustaining possibilities of relationality, reflection and co-construction in practice are also considered, before questioning the extent to which these can also be considered 'acts of resistance' when working in systems that are time and resource pressured.

Word count: 2090

Introduction

This chapter will provide critical reflections on the research journey, with a particular focus on how the research process has shaped me as a TEP. This process has deepened my understanding of what it means to embrace uncertainty, to work in collaboration and to find or support pockets of relationality in resistance to an education system that centres performativity (Ball, 2003). In reflecting on these areas, I considered how they were nested within the PAR methodology which guided this research. Whilst the previous chapter highlighted implications for educationalists and EPs in relation to restorative approaches, this chapter will discuss more broadly how the methodology adopted in this research has ongoing implications for my practice as a TEP. In doing so, this chapter will in places draw on perspectives from narrative psychology (discussed further in chapter 2).

Social Constructionism: Finding Joy in Uncertainty

It is widely acknowledged that PAR is a complex human process, which generates uncertainty for all involved (Goodnough, 2008). Whilst writing this, I was struck by the notion that the same could be said for EP practice, that it occurs in the human domain and as such it is complex and fraught with uncertainty (Mercieca, 2009; Moore, 2005). Throughout this project I have grappled with how to work with the uncertainty that was present, something that I acknowledged in my research diary, as shown in Figure 12 below.

> *Yesterday I met again with my co-researchers. I noticed that I was very nervous beforehand, feeling as though I needed to 'bring' something – some information or a particular structure to follow. I wonder now how much I was struggling with the uncertainty of this project, and I was seeking 'structures' or 'information' to try and move away from this.*

Figure 12: Research diary excerpt one.

Mercieca (2009) suggested that in EP practice we can be tempted to seek process, structure, and solutions with the aim of reducing uncertainty, for ourselves and those we work with. I have recognised this through my own placement experiences, where as a novice to the profession I have experienced the urge to shy away from ambiguity, to appear competent and reassure those I am working with. I believe it is this same unease and a desire to appear competent I was experiencing at the time of writing the above excerpt.

Considering a narrative perspective, I have often wondered how 'our stories about [being an EP] conspire to make us listen with our ears cocked and our mouths set to say "Aha!" when we recognise something…we know what to do with' (Freedman & Combs, 1996, p43), suggesting a desire to provide certainty. Throughout this process I aimed to engage reflexively with my own approach, in my sessions with my co-researchers, my research

journal and discussions with my supervisor. Reflecting on the social constructionist world view of this research throughout supported me to see uncertainty as something that honoured collaboration, dialogue and the unique perspectives of others (Camargo-Borges & McNamee, 2020). This realisation reflected a turning point which has continued to impact my practice. I moved from fearing uncertainty, to tolerating it, to finding joy in the possibilities that it brought (Camargo-Borges & McNamee, 2020).

In my TEP practice I continue to resist the urge to seek and/or provide certainty, something which can be made more challenging by the resource and time limited nature of LA services (Atfield et al., 2023). Engaging in the PAR process has highlighted to me the importance of embracing uncertainty as an ethical endeavour, one that appreciates local, historical and cultural contingencies that require the knowledge that only those closest to the site of change can bring (McNamee, 2009). In my practice as a TEP this understanding has supported me to prioritise participatory and collaborative spaces such as consultation where those I work with are positioned as equal partners in a meaning making endeavour (Camargo-Borges & McNamee, 2020; Moore, 2005).

Throughout this process, I continually reflected on the impact uncertainty may be having on my co-researchers. Previous collaborative research projects have suggested that this element of action research can be challenging for teachers (Goodnough, 2008). Reflecting on this towards the end of the project was particularly pertinent, as I had come to understand uncertainty as something which could support my ongoing practice as a TEP, yet I worried about how its presence may impact those I work alongside. In considering this, I returned to the quote from Sam in cycle four, below:

'So, there's a child in my class who was observed by an educational psychologist and the educational psychologist suggests that we use restorative practice with her and… and....so, well it's a really long process to gain her trust. Has been going on for two years now. We're… still, you know that's still being advised… still being… so it's not that easy.' (Sam, cycle four).

In the above example, I noted a sense of frustration being around for Sam as they were speaking. I wondered to what extent being provided with a recommendation did not create the space for dialogue or the possibility for mutuality in their approach to this problem situation (Moore, 2005). Whilst it could be argued that recommendations provide certainty, which may provide short term relief for people in challenging situations, in this case the certainty was received as misguided; as not understanding the complexity within which school staff were trying to find a way forward (Mercieca, 2009). As a TEP who believes fundamentally in the transformational propensity of dialogue, a social constructionist world

view has supported me to understand my role as one primarily concerned with the psychology that occurs within interpersonal interactions (Moore, 2005). In practice this involves embracing the uncertainty that dialogue brings is an endeavour to collaboratively construct next steps in response the challenging situations, accepting that what is relevant, possible and acceptable in one situation cannot be universally applied to another (Moore, 2005). Whilst the research findings suggest co-construction is key to developing a shared community understanding of restorative approaches, I suggest the implications for me as a TEP can be considered more broadly as a philosophical orientation to practice and work with others (Parker, 2013).

Narrative Psychology and 'small acts of resistance'

When feeding back my initial findings to my co-researchers and head teacher, I was struck by a comment made by the head teacher, which I later reflected on in my research diary, an excerpt of which is documented below in Figure 13:

[Head Teacher] commented on how difficult some things are to embed because they are not currently reflected in government policy or wider agendas. He referred to creating space for restorative approaches as 'acts of resistance', something which really spoke to me. When I left, I wondered about the challenges of being a head teacher, working in a school etc and how sustaining small acts of resistance might be, and why they may be important beyond the actual process themselves. It has also prompted me to think about what the impact of creating space for 'small acts of resistance' might be for EPs.

Figure 13: Research diary excerpt two.

The use of the word resistance was interesting to me, and it prompted me to consider this further. Rayner and Gunter (2020) suggested that primary education in England had been re-engineered by neo-liberal economic ideals, so much so that it now reproduced discourses that focus on human capital and efficiency. It is suggested that this weakens social ties and removes notions of collective responsibility in the pursuit of individual success (Dovemark, 2010). Resistance, therefore, becomes conceptualised as acts which firstly recognise the fundamentally political nature of schooling and the reproductive power of policy in relation to dominant discourses (Rayner & Gunter, 2020). Thereafter, acts of resistance become those which challenge the dominant discourse, those which do not conform, or those which highlight an alternative discourse or way of being (Fuller, 2019).

The head teacher's comments that implementing a relational, restorative philosophy was like a small act of resistance appear in keeping with the conceptualisation of resistance as nuanced and fluid. Current policy and dominant discourses were not rejected, but space was found to present and embed an alternative view of the world; one that centres on relationships, community participation and reflection (Fuller, 2019). My interpretation in this interaction was this was a decision guided by values: of the school organisation, of my co-researchers and the head teacher.

In my practice experience as a TEP, I have been struck by the limited opportunity for staff to connect with their values and reflect on the structures within which they operate, something I believe this research offered. Whilst the findings of this research indicate the value in creating these spaces in school for centring a restorative philosophy, I have also been prompted to consider the implications more broadly. The PAR process supported a centring of my co-researchers' experiences, values and local knowledge (about their school, restorative approaches etc). Drawing on ideas from narrative psychology, I believe in the therapeutic worth of reflecting on the values that drive intentional actions, alongside considering the wider cultural, political and contextual discourses within which they are nested (Annan et al., 2006). In considering how I will take this learning forward in practice, it has highlighted to me the importance of creating space for school staff to reflect on their own values underpinning the small acts of resistance they engage in. In doing so, I suggest there is the possibility for a therapeutic and sustaining effect, which is particularly pertinent at a time where concerns about staff wellbeing and retention are widespread (See et al., 2020).

This research experience has impacted, and will continue to impact my practice as a TEP, as I consider ways to prioritise relationality in a system that valorises individualism (Camargo-Borges & McNamee, 2020), in itself a 'small act of resistance'. It also highlights a potential role for Educational Psychologists, who can provide a 'dissenting voice' (Mercieca & Mercieca, 2022, p.1) and offer disruption to systems by prioritising spaces for co-construction and reflection in their work, whether this be centred on systemic change or individual casework. It is suggested that systems that value efficiency can be comforting, because decisions are often made for you, as a member of school staff or as an EP (Mercieca & Mercieca, 2022). In adopting a stance that prioritises 'thinking again' (Mercieca & Mercieca, 2022, p2), EPs can embrace those we work with as equal partners in meaning making (Moore, 2005), creating space for possibility when presented with complexity.

In reflecting on my own transformational experience engaging in dialogue and reflection as part of this project, I am prompted to wonder to what extent prioritising relationality, reflection, and co-construction may have a sustaining impact for my ongoing practice as a

TEP and beyond. A recent workforce analysis concluded that LAs are struggling to recruit and retain qualified EPs, and this is in part because of the high workload and lack of opportunities to engage in varied work (Atfield et al., 2023). This research has highlighted to me a way of working with others that is underpinned by core narrative principles of curiosity and questioning towards taken for granted assumptions, in resistance to a system which at times seeks to position problems within children, families, staff members or organisations (Annan et al., 2006). In prioritising relating to and constructing with, I am reminded that any change occurs within relational networks, one interaction at a time (Camargo-Borges & McNamee, 2020). Holding this central to my understanding of my role as a TEP will be crucial, particularly in a system where many interactions are often brief or one-off.

It is suggested that applying narrative principles to EP work 'reflects the way EPs think and talk about situations, the way they feel and act when they are working' (Annan., et al 2006, p.19). I believe that continuing to embed narrative principles will support me to position problems as things that walk into people's lives (in my words and thoughts) and those I work with as co-researchers into the stories that have become dominant in their lives (Annan et al., 2006). In doing so, I will be continually working towards a practice that is aligned with my own personal and professional values, something which I suggest is not only therapeutic and sustaining for those we work with, but also for EPs.

Conclusions: PAR, restorative approaches, and practice

This chapter has provided a reflective account of two key areas in which this research has shaped and changed me. PAR as a methodology has required me to grapple with the uncertainty that is nested within dialogue, and to finding meaning and joy in the transformation that it can bring. In returning again to the parallels between research and EP practice, this project has highlighted the way in which an action research orientation to practice may support joint action and mutuality in the consideration of human situations which are complex and unique (Moore, 2005; Parker, 2013).

The project has encouraged me to critically consider my own philosophical orientation, and how this shapes my interpersonal interactions. This project has centred relationality in practice and supported me to position this as a 'small act of resistance' to a system within which it is not prioritised. In reflecting on this, I have considered how the application of principles from narrative psychology may guide me in negotiating complex systems with those I work with (Annan et al., 2006). I suggest that these acts of resistance, whilst challenging to maintain, will be sustaining on my journey into qualified practice.

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Appendices
Appendix 1: Systematic Review

Appendix 1.1 – Study and reason from exclusion from SLR

Study	Reason for exclusion
Kehoe (2018)	Population
Standing (2012)	Study Type
Lund (2021)	Study Type
Fine (2018)	Study Type
Parker (2021)	Study Type
Silverman (2018)	Study Type
Rainbolt (2021)	Study Type
High (2017)	Study Type
Katic (2020)	Study Type
Grossi (2012)	Study Type
Valdes-Cuervo (2018)	Could not access article
Weber (2020)	Study Type
Harden (2015)	Population
Clark-Louque (2020)	Study Type
Oxley (2021)	Study Type
Rigby (2015)	Study Type
Gregory (2021)	Population
Lustick (2020)	Study Type
Portia (2020)	Study Type
Bevington (2015)	Population
Hibben (2020)	Population
Martinez (2022)	Study Type
Lustick (2021)	Study Type
Cavanagh (2014)	Study Type
Vincent (2021)	Study Type
Lynch (2019)	Population
Vaandering (2014)	Population
Goldys (2016)	Population
Harold (2013)	Study Type

Lustick (2021)	Study Type
Reimer (2019)	Population
Song (2020)	Study Type

Table 13: Reason for exclusion from SLR

Appendix 1.2 – The mapping of first and second order constructs onto overarching concepts

Study →	Bruhn (2020)	Lustick (2020)	Weaver & Swank (2020)	Sandwick (2019)
Overarching concept ↓	* second order constructs in bold * first order constructs in italics			
Community building	*"we spend a ton of time community building…our one big thing is building relationships with the kids we work with, to work with families and kids"…* **…he teaches to a group of Black boys to build community and an understanding of themselves and their worlds**	**He used the word community instead of school, here and he opened the discussion to a series of questions, establishing the students as experts on how they can change the school community.** **In other words, the group constructed an understanding of "harms and needs" (Winn, 2018) at the individual, community and societal level.**	**We mindset Collective mentality** **the subthemes of "we mind-set" and peer accountability relate to building community among all members of a classroom, which encourages adherence to the rules and norms to sustain these valued relationships**	**Centring community building** **School community described as a** *"family"* **Community building as the foundation of Restorative Justice, highlighting it's relational nature**

Table 14: Grid Method - Community Building

Study →	Fickel (2017)	Lustick (2020)	Sandwick (2019)
Overarching concept ↓	* second order constructs in bold * first order constructs in italics		
A holistic approach	*"you don't want someone who can get 100% in a test who can't relate to people in the workplace because they are not going to get hired"*	**These questions were restorative in that they centred on Andrew as a whole person** **reflect this broader and deeper understanding of the student and**	**The study schools provided substantial resources to mitigate external stressors and foster student engagement, including counseling, mentoring, health clinics, unique academic opportunities, college preparation, among others**.

			what growth needed to occur		
	They felt that the holistic approach taken at the schools, one that focused on them as whole and fully rounded people with intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical needs and aspirations for the future, supported their human journey of "becoming."				

Table 15: Grid Method - A holistic approach

Study →	Bruhn (2020)	Lustick (2020)	Short (2019)	Schumacher (2014)	Ortega (2016)
Overarching concepts ↓	* second order constructs in bold * first order constructs in italics				
Shared understanding	**Understanding the young people**	**He also consistently allows students to help co-construct their understanding of what happened and how things can move forward** **Evan asks questions that prompt students to co-construct an understanding of what happened among them and its relationship to broader patterns of violence in their school and greater (social media and in-real-life) communities**	**These mechanisms were thought to help all stakeholders reach a shared understanding** *"to try and come to a common conclusion"* *"I believe it is about getting the kids and staff to understand the issue and then deal with it by sort of empathy and understanding the problem and how it effects other people"*	**Generally, misunderstandings cleared once each person got to tell their story**	**Meaningful dialogue** *"Um, I think that is a way for people to get— to like—to understand each other so that way they are not just bickering a whole bunch of words"*

Table 16: Grid Method - Shared understanding

Study →	Bruhn (2020)	Lustick (2020)	Weaver & Swank (2020)	Short (2019)	Ortega (2016)
Overarching concepts ↓	* second order constructs in bold * first order constructs in italics				

Shared ownership	*" we had a bit of a disagreement yesterday, but we are going to get on the right page"* **Instead, he puts the responsibility on both their shoulders** **There is a sense of shared ownership in the conflict and the restoration necessary to repair the underlying relationship, and a bag of Cool Ranch Doritos.**	**This social responsibility is key to what makes restorative practices unique** **It is essential for students to be part of co-constructing the problem, be it academic or social, so that they can design a solution that works for them and their community.**	*"A community works how we make it work. We're all in this together…how do we make this work and be productive on all ends"*	*"Restorative practice is initiating that next step of development in that they are part of society and what you do has an impact on others"*	**Ownership of the process** *"Me and my friend were playing around in class and we actually solved [a conflict using] the Circle. It was fun but it was serious too and we did it all by ourself."*

Table 17: Grid Method - Shared ownership

Study →	Bruhn (2020)	Fickel (2017)	Lustick (2020)	Sandwick (2019)
Overarching concepts ↓	* second order constructs in bold * first order constructs in italics			
Inconsistency in approaches	**In releasing her students to their work, Kate also releases her agenda and desire to extend the time in circle.** *"our answers are different. They see it as 'we need structures.' For me, its ' you need to work on you and your classroom'….I struggle to see if we have the same vision"…this suggests staff within the school have differing approaches and attitudes towards self-reflection and new ways of working.*	**implying that schools do sometimes reproduce exclusionary practices and thus they fail in their job to nurture and to help students flourish.**	**The restorative protocol was meant to give all participants equal opportunities to speak, providing opportunity for collaborative framing of the problems at hand and how they are to be solved. However, when Raymond spoke, he effectively spoke for both himself and Sadie**	**…some resistance to using Restorative Justice for addressing conflict between students and staff. In asking adults to reflect upon their role in a given conflict – and perhaps their mistakes – Restorative Justice could be seen as a threat to the tradition authority of educators.** **…a concern that Restorative Justice had shifted so much focus to addressing the root causes of harm and by**

	The community is still wrestling with these losses, with the elusive balance between encouraging a culture built on strong relationships and teachers' needs to have systems in place for when a child's behaviour in the classroom makes learning impossible or when there is a major breach of conduct. **At most schools I've visited, these interactions wouldn't strike me as significant, but here, where the implicit norms require restraint on behalf of the adults, these assertions of authority catch my attention** **That is not to say he is never frustrated by how slowly adults change their mind-set towards students they serve, particularly across racial and class differences**.			**extension, the person causing the harm** **A staff interviewee who was spearheading new Restorative Justice initiatives explained how a lack of explicit prioritization of Restorative Justice by the principal limited overall staff buy in**

Table 18: Grid Method - Inconsistency in approaches

Study →	Bruhn (2020)	Lustick (2020)	Sandwick (2019)	Ortega (2016)
Overarching concepts ↓	* second order constructs in bold * *first order constructs in italics*			

| Undoing traditional hierarchies of school | As Kate works to strengthen this transition, she does not forcibly exert the authority provided by her position as principal. Instead, she uses her role to model for teachers what she expects.

The same sense of restraint, which allows students' needs and agendas to be on equal footing with needs and agendas of adults…

"I know you just want to get stuff done. I wanted to have a circle today because I haven't had a circle all week. Sorry everybody, go ahead, get started"…this example suggests the principal of the school adopts a more democratic approach, whereby she is able to consider the students needs and adjust her plans.

"you can have bad values and a bad community. But that doesn't mean you can't change it" …the use of the words "change it" | In this way, he cedes the traditional authority of an educator or administrator and puts the focus not on correction | By engaging with staff more equitably, these leaders also laid the groundwork for more equitable staff-student relationships.

"I can't imagine having to do my job without the support. I get tons and tons of support from the staff, up from the principal right the way through"

Enhancing equity

"if you want to build relationships here with staff you can"

" When they don't listen to us and you just say – NO you're lying" Why'd you do that" - student

Transformation of workplace dynamics

Staff voice and leadership listening

One promising strategy for shifting traditional school hierarchies was explicitly calling on adults and students to adhere to the same core values of RJ: perspective taking, active listening, learning from mistakes, and taking responsibility for one's actions, among others. | Students discussed that a positive outcome of the RC program was that they were not getting suspended or "locked up." Similarly, adults explained that a positive outcome of the RC program was not having to give as many suspensions or detentions.

Similarly, adults stated being less reliant on punitive methods and more willing to talk things out using RC principles. |

Table 19: Grid Method - Undoing of traditional school hierarchies

Study →	Bruhn (2020)	Lustick (2020)	Sandwick (2019)
Overarching concepts ↓	* second order constructs in bold * *first order constructs in italics*		
Cultural sensitivity	**Changing mindsets…across lines of culture and class** **But as I listen to the competing versions of what supporting a reluctant student entails, I wonder how race and class differences may affect perspectives on persistence, restoration, and relationships.** **As his sentence lingers, the subtext of the conversation, about race, encounters with a racist world and fear of being a token in a predominantly white environment feel palpable to me.** *" to try and educate people about each other"* *"I take my time… I learned a long time ago that the best way to unlearn prejudice and racism is to interact with the person you have prejudice against so you can deepen your understanding"* **Changing mindsets…across lines of culture and class**	**cultural relevance of a particular circle—that is, its sensitivity to the students' harms and needs as well as those of the community—depended on preexisting relationships between the student and the students and/or staff facilitating the conference**	**Engaging diversity: Space for celebrating, and for venting** **…challenges of relationship building across lines of race and class. At the same time interviewed described restorative practices as tools that aided the development of stronger more empathic relationships, creating a structure for community members to be heard and to hear others.** **Multiple staff and student interviewees described the importance of affirming student identities** **Interviewees also highlighted a need to hire more staff who were culturally representative of their students— resembling them with respect to race, class, and community ties.** *"I tried to hire people who were of and from the community…there's a sort of intuitive…tacit knowledge that people have, preventative on the communities that*

			they were born and raised in…Shared experience that we all bring to the work."

Table 20: Grid Method - Cultural sensitivity

Study →	Bruhn (2020)	Lustick (2020)	Sandwick (2019)
Overarching concepts ↓	* second order constructs in bold * *first order constructs in italics*		
Impact of adverse community experiences	**Part of the messiness comes from the fact that many of the teachers and nearly all of the administrators are white and nearly all of the students are black and brown. Students bring experiences that leave them distrustful of white adults.**	**I theorized that a culturally relevant restorative circle would go beyond successful co-construction of the interpersonal conflict to a co-construction of the larger systems and inequalities that contributed to the conflict in the first place** **Culturally relevant restorative practice requires both cultural responsiveness and critical consciousness – attention to power dynamics in society and how these relate to the conflict at hand.**	**Staff described the struggle of serving students who were facing substantial adversity on individual, familial, and community levels. Interviewees pointed to difficulties associated with economic insecurity; structural racism and other forms of bias; unstable housing; immigration concerns; family conflict; police surveillance and violence; mental health issues; criminal justice involvement; gang affiliation; neighborhood violence, and more.** **While many of these stressors originated outside of the school walls, staff and students described how they seeped into their schools, catalyzing and amplifying school-based conflict.** *"so much anger in them they don't know what to do,*

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			how to proceed, to let it out. So when they let it out, they let it out in frustration where they come out fighting little things."

Table 21: Grid Method - Impact of adverse community experiences

Study →	Bruhn (2020)	Fickel (2017)	Short (2019)
Overarching concepts ↓	* second order constructs in bold * *first order constructs in italics*		
Connecting with the 'human'	*"everyone is human here and everyone deserves to be honoured"* **The principle argued that because schools are social institutions they must serve a higher mission, including the basic responsibility to meet the basic needs of the student as human beings based on a sense of dignity, respect and affection.**	*"sometimes we let the school get in the way of the human"* & *"unless we deal with the human, we are not going to deal with the academic"* **Being acknowledged, valued, cared for and understood** **Focusing on making a connection with the human being who is the student appeared to be a fundamental ethical principle for the teachers in this school.**	"like I say, just try and talk to them like they are human beings. Don't talk down to them"

		They felt strongly that education must nurture the abilities and attitudes of care which make us more human, such as connectedness, interdependence, knowledge of self and emotional self-management. **Focus on relationships** *"keep injecting before staff, every day, stories of humanity".*	

Table 22: Grid Method - Connecting with the human

Study →	Bruhn (2020)	Weaver & Swank (2020)	Schumacher (2014)	Ortega (2016)
Overarching concepts ↓	* second order constructs in bold * *first order constructs in italics*			
Deepening and developing relationships	**He speaks about his goal of supporting teachers' relationships with students, explaining,** *"You have to know the real them. Students recognize that and then they want to be around you. But it's not all roses. So when there's muck and mess and conflict, then we have a relationship."*	*"There's a change afterwards . . . it restores the relationship."*	**Being happy to be together and deepening friendships was a primary leitmotif that permeated the Circle meetings and was clearly palpable** *"it's something to look forward to because I know I am growing like deeper bonds with all of my*	**Understanding and connecting** **In this case students and adults talked not only about restored relationships, but also actual improvements in their relationships**

			friends" – student	
			"what's making it work…is the friendship around the whole circle. How everyone became closer to everyone since we are expressing ourselves to each other…so it's the friendship bond"	
			Being happy together and deepening friendships	
			The reflective questions, posed during the topic of the day were another supportive element because they stimulated self reflection and encouraged the exchange of ideas….this opened space for them to explore meaningful issues together, which positively affected the relational bonding described in the study	

Table 23: Grid Method - Deepening and developing relationships

Study →	Bruhn (2020)	Lustick (2020)	Sandwick (2019)	Schumacher (2014)
Overarching concepts ↓	* second order constructs in bold * first order constructs in italics			
Cultivating empathy	**the work of this team is to know kids intimately, to understand how they are experiencing their school, their friendships, their familial and romantic relationships, to bring compassion and empathy to the turbulence of adolescence.** **Kate and Jackson empathize with their teachers, recognizing the tensions, acknowledging the difficult, time-consuming work of establishing relationships with students,**	*"it's gotten kids to understand each other more"* **At this, her friends demonstrated their empathy with her wanting to expand her circle, and said they were "okay with" her doing this**	**Aided the development of stronger and more empathic relationships, creating a structure for community members to be heard and to hear others.**	**Cultivating empathy** **Respecting and making the effort to understand another's perspective are foundational for cultivating mutually empathic relationships and are essential in the management of conflict.** **The knowledge that they were similar not only made them feel understood but also safe because they no longer felt isolated.** *"helps me see what is going on with the people I am around"* *"I always just looked from my point of view until I sat down with all of these girl"*

Table 24: Grid Method - Cultivating empathy

Study →	Sandwick (2019)	Schumacher (2014)	Ortega (2016)
Overarching concepts ↓	* second order constructs in bold * first order constructs in italics		
Trust	**Some student and staff interviewees described anxiety**	*"nobody will go out and say what you have*	**Negative outcomes (main theme)**

	about opening up to others in the school community, including concerns about sincerity, respect, and commitment of both students and staff	*said – like the personal stuff"* – student *"speak more….like give more of an insight of myself"* *"if we talk about something, we don't like spread it in the school" -* student **Students feel able to trust each other and not feel alone**	**Frustration** *"She should have told the truth! she was sitting right there [in Circle]"* **Youth discussed being disappointed when their peers were unwilling to be vulnerable in the circle**

Table 25: Grid Method - Trust

Appendix 1.3 – An example of constructing shared terminology across papers

Concept: shared ownership	
Bruhn (2020)	**'Instead, he puts the responsibility on both their shoulders'**
Bruhn (2020)	**'There is a sense of shared ownership in the conflict and the restoration necessary to repair the underlying relationship…'**
Lustik (2020)	**'This social responsibility is key to what makes restorative practices unique'**
Ortega (2016)	**'Ownership of the process'**
The concept of Shared Ownership was used to describe all of these concepts, despite the exact wording not being present in all of them. It was my judgement that ownership and responsibility could be used interchangeably to suggest something for which you are taking (at least some) accountability for. Lustik (2020) uses responsibility but situates it within 'social' rather than shared, however by nature of situating responsibility within the social field it becomes shared with other actors .	

Table 26: Sharing terminology across papers

Refutational Concept	Trust
Explored in:	Sandwick (2019) Schumacher (2014) Ortega (2016)
Refutational nature of concept	Schumacher (2014) described the community building circles enacted as part of restorative approaches as fundamental in developing trust between the young people. This is described within the context of students feeling less alone and understanding that what is said within he circle will not be repeated elsewhere. This was consistently supported by first order constructs. Conversely, Sandwick (2019) and Ortega (2016) described trust as something that needed to be present in order for restorative approaches to be able to be enacted to their full benefit. Ortega (2016) highlighted the theme of frustration, which came from students who felt their peers weren't always being truthful. The authors concluded this was because they did not feel safe to be vulnerable, even within this restorative environment. Sandwick (2019) reached similar conclusions, noting that some students did not feel they could trust students or other staff enough to disclose in the way they felt restorative approaches asked of them. The authors concluded that this could bring about anxiety for students.

Table 27: Exploration of refutational construct - Trust

Appendix 2 – An ethical and methodological critique

Appendix 2.1 – Co-research information and consent forms

Co-Researcher Information Sheet

Action Research: How might we understand the role restorative approaches may play in promoting children's participation in their school community?

Researcher:	Laura Halliwell (Trainee Educational Psychologist)

University Contact Details	School of Education, Communication and Language. King George VI Building, Queen Victoria Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, Ne17RU
Email	l.halliwell2@newcastle.ac.uk
Email of supervisior	Emma.miller@newcastle.ac.uk

Please read this document carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

The purpose of this study is to research is to develop understanding of the role restorative approaches may play in promoting children and young people's participation within a school community. I am hoping to recruit a small group of co-researchers to work alongside from one school that already implements restorative approaches . As a co-researcher, you will have the opportunity to shape the research question and design to suit the needs and interests of your school, and your school development plan, in line with the broad theme of participation. The participatory action research format will allow changes to be implemented in practice as part of this study.

This is an action research study, which aims to develop professional practice in this area. A systematic literature review has highlighted a lack of research within the UK focussing on how restorative approaches may support the development of relationships, and as such participation, within a school community. The Children's and Families Act (2014) and SEND Code of Practice emphasises the importance of ensuring children and young people are provided with the information, advice and support to enable them to participate in decision making around issues that impact upon them. I am interested in exploring how existing restorative frameworks within a school can support and develop this.
You have been invited to take part in this study because you are a school that is already using restorative approaches and as a staff member you have experience of using these approaches. You also have an interest in developing practice around participation and restorative approaches.

If you are interested in this study, you will be invited to:

An individual meeting with myself to go through the research aims and requirements, to receive all information for you to provide informed consent.

If you consent to take part in this study, you will be asked to:

1) An initial meeting as a group of co-researchers. This will provide us with an opportunity to explore the school context within the broad themes of this research and to plan the research. This would include input from me on the range of research activities (such as focus groups and interviews) that would be available to us. Such research activities would be audio-recorded.

2) A period of action and reflection where we work together to explore how restorative approaches may be utilised to promote children and young people's participation. The concept of participation will be negotiated and agreed in line with your school's needs and interests.

3) A review meeting to reflect on what has been learnt and decide next steps to inform practice.

4) Implementation of practice changes that have been agreed by the co-research group, that have been agreed with relevant staff within your setting.

5) A review meeting to reflect on changes and evaluate findings,

It is anticipated that this action research will run through **summer 2023 and autumn 2023.** Meetings will be arranged at a time that is convenient for you. Whilst the time commitment will depend on the agreed actions of the collective research group, individual sessions will last no longer than an hour each.

What are the benefits for me and my setting?

- Involvement in research which will aim to benefit the wider school community and lead to lasting change.
- Involvement in research which can be shaped by your school's needs, interests and development plan.
- An opportunity to reflect on practice with an outsider researcher and be supported to implement positive changes in practice.
- Opportunities to develop a model of good practice for other settings within the authority.

Why is this research important?

- Pupil participation is a key element in the SEND Code of Practice and other key legislations (e.g., Children's and Families Act; United Nations Conference on the Rights of the Child)

- Meaningful participation challenges issues associated with social exclusion and positively contributes to the wellbeing of children and young people, their families and wider communities.

- Restorative approaches are said to be underpinned by relational values (Jordan & Kapoor, 2016; Vaandering, 2010), and are suggested to be an anti-oppressive approach to repairing harm and building community in a school (Jordan & Kapoor, 2016; Veloria, Bussu, & Murry, 2020). It is hoped this research will further understanding of how restorative approaches can facilitate a community where participation is developed.

- Pupil participation may lead to improved pupil-staff relationships and increase

Once research has been completed, you will also be given a full copy of the research paper that I produce.

Participant's Rights

- **You are free to decide whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences for you. You can do so without any explanation.**

- **You may withdraw from the study without penalty of any kind.**

- **Participation in this study is optional. You can express an interest to find out further information, with no obligation to participate.**

- **All non-identifying and identifying information you provide, will be kept in a password-protected electronic database, tagged with an anonymous ID number. Pseudonyms will be used during the following data analysis and write up, and anything said which could identify individuals or the school setting will be redacted during transcription.**

- **Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as Newcastle University needs to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate under UK General Data Protection Regulations. If you withdraw from the study, Newcastle University will keep the information about you that has already been obtained. To safeguard your rights, the minimum personally identifiable information will be used. You can find out more about how Newcastle University uses your**

information at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/data.protection/PrivacyNotice and/or by contacting Newcastle University's Data Protection Officer (rec-man@ncl.ac.uk).

If you have any questions, requests or concerns regarding this research, please contact me via email at l.halliwell2@newcastle.ac.uk.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences Ethics Committee at Newcastle University (12/04/2023)

…………………..

References

- Vaandering, D. (2010). The Significance of Critical Theory for Restorative Justice in Education. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies, 32*(2), 145-176. doi:10.1080/10714411003799165
- Veloria, C., Bussu, A., & Murry, M. (2020). The Transformative Possibilities of Restorative Approaches to Education. In (pp. 298-320).

Newcastle University
School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences

Co-Researcher Consent form

How can we understand the role restorative approaches may play in promoting participation in a UK school community?

Declaration of Informed Consent

- I agree to participate in this study, the purpose of which is to explore how restorative approaches may promote participation in a school community.
- I declare that I have understood the nature and purpose of the research.
- I have read the participant information sheet and understand the information provided.
- I have been informed that I may decline to answer any questions or withdraw from the study without penalty of any kind.
- I have been informed that all my responses will be kept confidential and secure, and that I will not be identified in any report or other publication resulting from this research.

- I have been informed that the researcher will answer any questions regarding the study and its procedures. The researcher's email is l.halliwell2@newcastle.ac.uk.. The research supervisor can be contacted at emma.miller@newcastle.ac.uk.
- I will be provided with a copy of this form for my records.

Any concerns about this study should be addressed to the School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences Ethics Committee, Newcastle University via email to ecls.researchteam@newcastle.ac.uk

_____

Date   Participant Name (please print)   Participant Signature

I certify that I have presented the above information to the participant and secured his or her consent.

_____

Date   Signature of Researcher

Appendix 3: Empirical Research Project

Appendix 3.1: Recruitment email

Good morning,

 My name is Laura Halliwell, and I am currently completing a doctorate in Applied Educational Psychology at Newcastle University and I am on placement as a Trainee Educational Psychologist at [Local Authority]. I am contacting you as we have previously had contact through [Local Authority Project] or a colleague has shared that you previously accessed training on Restorative Approaches through the Educational Psychology Team.

As part of my doctoral training, I am completing research into the role restorative approaches may play in promoting the participation of children and young people within a school community. I am hoping to recruit a small group of staff co-researchers in one school who have experience of implementing restorative approaches and who are interested in developing these through action

research. This is an opportunity to explore and develop practice with an outsider researcher and implement change within your setting.

Please see the attached co-researcher information sheet for more details and please get in touch for an informal discussion if you would like any further information.

Best wishes,

Laura Halliwell

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Newcastle University

l.halliwell2@newcastle.ac.uk

Appendix 3.2: Co-researcher group contract

This contract is an adapted version of the Research Protocols highlighted by Kemmis et al (2014) for critical Participatory Action Research. The specific elements were co-constructed as a research group, during a meeting on 20/07/2023. This can represent a dynamic document, which will be regularly reviewed and updated.

1. **Respect and open communication.**

   * Group members agree to communicate respectfully and openly with one another throughout the project.

   * Each group member agrees to respect the rights of others to withdraw from the study at any time, or to decline participation in particular aspects of the study, or to have information they have provided removed from any reports emanating from the study. Group members agree to respect the right of any group member to withdraw from the group, the study, or part of the study.

   * Specific discussions within the group are to be kept confidential during the process and the nature of what is shared with the wider school will be negotiated as a research group.

   * All co-researchers to adopt a non-judgemental stance, which receives others' stories in this spirit.

Access to empirical material.

* All group members will have access to empirical material/transcripts that are generated or collected within the context of the group meetings (that is, as 'common empirical material').

* Group members agree that where others are involved (such as other staff members outside of the research group) such release of empirical material to the group will occur only with the consent of those involved.

* Group members agree that if they wish (for their own publications and/or research purposes) to use common empirical material generated within this project, they need to negotiate that use of the empirical material with other members of the group.

3. Identifiability in reports and publications.

* Group members understand that there may be instances where they may be identifiable in any reports or publications on the participatory action research project (e.g., in footnotes or in 'Acknowledgement' sections of reports of published accounts of the research). Group members agree that this needs to be considered in all phases of the project and agree to act with discretion so that the group members can be appropriately safeguarded.

Considering the conditions outlined above, group members agree that:

* any acknowledgement of group members (for instance in acknowledgement or footnotes) will be negotiated as a research group.

* non-gender specific pseudonyms (e.g., for direct quotes) are to be used in the main text of accounts so that it is difficult for readers to attribute particular comments to particular people; and

* if, through the course of the project, the group members collectively decide that the naming of the group members in accounts of the research (beyond general acknowledgements) would be beneficial to both the individuals concerned and the institution, and not harmful to others, then individual written consent to be named would be obtained from each of the group members before anyone is named.

4. Reflecting on the research process.

* In order to ensure that the research process does not compromise the integrity of the group, or impact negatively on those involved, group members agree to periodically review (as a group) how the research is unfolding and impacting on the group and the individual group members.

5. Representation.

* The authors of any reports about the work of the group will notify the group about the writing and the existence of the reports, and will give group members access to the report and, so far as is practicable, will make copies available to group members on request.

6. Certification of agreement

We, the undersigned, collectively, individually, and voluntarily give consent to our participation in the critical participatory action research initiative. In providing our group consent, we agree that:

* We have each read a co-researcher information sheet, discussed it, and understand the purpose, methods, potential risks and benefits of the research.

* We agree that our participation will be of value to us as professionals reflecting on our own practice and likely to contribute to the development of participatory action research as a research approach.

* We regard the study as an extension of and contribution to what we are already committed to doing in our professional practice and in our involvement with this group. We see the study as an addition to our established process of collective self-reflection.

* We undertake individually and collectively to participate in the study in accordance with the group protocols above, and in keeping with the values of respect, justice and beneficence.

* Each of us recognizes that we have a right to withdraw without penalty at any time. If a group member withdraws, we respect the group member's right to determine what of his or her previous statements can be used in the research.

* We understand that not everyone may be able to attend every meeting dedicated to the research project and assume that evidence will continue to be gathered in a group member's absence.

Co-researcher 1

Name _____

Signature _____

Co-researcher 2

Name _____

Signature _____

Co-researcher 3

Name _____

Signature _____

Co-researcher 4

Name _____

Signature _____

Appendix 3.3: Example of data familiarisation table

Positioning: I am a TEP interested in relational approaches in schools, particularly restorative approaches. I view restorative approaches philosophically, as a way of being which centres community and relationships. I am concerned by the rise of zero tolerance, punitive measures in school, and the societal tendency to situate young people as the site of change.

Initially following familiarisation, I noticed:

- The focus on relationships within the context of restorative approaches (rather than seeing them as a response to harm) was immediate – *what does this tell me about the understanding of my co-researchers?*
- There seemed to be a tension throughout between the expectations driven by "individualistic education" (A, page 10) and "relationships" (S page 5) with the former asking teachers to encourage students to "get loads done"(J, page 6) and take "responsibility for their own learning*"* (S, page 16) – *how will this tension play out in future discussions?*
- Real focus on restorative approaches being something that are long term, ongoing, take time and determination

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Initially following familiarisation, I was surprised by:

- Whilst restorative approaches appeared to be constructed as a relational way of being, the responsibility for constructing the relationships was situated very much with the teacher.
- I had never considered before that restorative approaches weren't always about restoring a relationship (because what if the relationship before was the site of the problem?) but could also be about a process of constructing a new "more balanced friendship" (A, page 17).

Tension I experienced:

- Given my frustration with children often being situated as the site of change (and wider neo-liberal conceptualisations of individualism), I experienced tension when discussions centred on the individual responsibility children should be taking for their learning (however it is interesting that this was discussed in relation to their learning).

• The discussions around the behaviour policy, recognition that this wasn't "it doesn't make sense…like a restorative idea" (J page 18). What is interesting though is how this was conceptualised as "rules of our community" (S page 19)
Reflections on the process: • Almost immediately in the discussion about values parallels were drawn between the process in schools and the PAR process – e.g., "So having we're working together with you on this but also as a cohort, working together to figure out things is always a good idea" (J page 5) – *this feels like something useful to explore as a group in future sessions* • The activity of reflecting on values appeared to set the scene for discussions (as reflecting on axiology is key to any research process).

Figure 14: Data familiarisation example.

Appendix 3.4: Example of initial coding on paper

Figure 15: Example of initial coding on paper

Appendix 3.5: Example of theme development stage of analysis

Process creating spaces to reflect		Supporting staff to reflect on their own good practice		Spaces for staff to learn from and with	Staff room as a space to moan and-or learn	Process has centred relationships
Do you know what I I think it's quite nice to have the opportunity because we're talking about the chance to reflect and think about what we do erm but we would not have had this conversation without you and and actually it's really valuable. I think it's great to know and to then be able to think about it because there is a lot of good things that happen but we just accept them, we take them for granted because… (S2)		So, erm I think initially it is to it's to develop your practice, yeah, It's as a part of a professional development. So, erm, there is a structure for professional development where you are introduced to something that is modelled to…best practice would be that you were introduced to something and it is explained where it fits into a particular, you know, a particular perhaps priority area, why that's important. Erm It's modelled what their expectations are and then you are given some time to go away. And develop that in your own practice. (A2)		Yeah, I just get that from S. So I learn that from S and sometimes, obviously. Well, what they're doing isn't their intended outcome, they're wanting something else. (J2)	Yeah, the one thing I'd say is the staff room, obviously, I don't always. I said to TEACHER 1 like, the staff room is a really great environment that we have because…I've been told and I've seen other staff rooms and other schools, not many personally, but….You're able to ask anything and there's loads of little bits of information that came out. So we went over loads of administrative stuff and I said, well, you know, TEACHER 3 said that probably wasn't going to start for a couple of weeks, but she went and sat in the staff room but again, it could be on about venting on something so she might be upset or annoyed about something and you're able to offload and gain advice or whatever and	Yeah, I think one of our first sessions was it was it was before the summer and I knew that I was going back into a class that I had already taught before and there were children in there that I had had a good relationship with that had a bit of a wobble last year and I was like, right and it really. Like, right, my focus. At the beginning of the next year has to be initially to re establish those relationships and actually what's happened this year is that there are that those those the ones that were good last that the ones that were good the year before. I was like with that when. (A3)
I think for me the thing that it most does is help to crystallize things that are just floating about in my head that I normally wouldn't have time to think about. So that we all appreciate the value of a a well community but would never have thought…just to think about it in those terms. So even from today, just the use of like Community Wellness, I've already identified 3 pockets of support that we need to find a way to help those people. And but before that in our previous sessions, it helps. It's really				Yeah, the one thing I'd say is the staff room, obviously, I don't always. I said to TEACHER 1 like, the staff room is a really great environment that we have because…I've been told and I've seen other staff rooms and other schools, not many personally, but….You're able to ask anything and there's loads of little bits of information that came out. So we went over loads of administrative stuff and I said, well, you know, TEACHER 3 said that probably wasn't going to start for a couple of weeks, but she went and sat in the staff room but again, it could be on about venting on something so she might be upset or annoyed about	Erm, so I think the staff room is, really important and…So I have said this lots of times. That like it I. Think it's important that we eat our lunch in the staff room…that we will touch base that we go into the staff room and	I think so I think so also helped in, erm So it's helped to inform some of those discussions in SLT. It's helped to inform my practice in the classroom, but also my practice in with parents, you know, so all of those things and it's actually…sort of… valuing the work that we do in building relationships. So if you put a spotlight on it, you are recognizing it as something valuable and something that we would want to continue. Whereas perhaps before we started this journey, it was happening but I haven't stopped to think about why we invested so much time in building relationships with parents or relationship with children or or was there anything else I could do to improve those?

Figure 16: Example of theme development stage in Excel.

Theme description: Creating Spaces
This theme asserts that restorative approaches require co-construction (through dialogue) and reflection, but in doing so it acknowledges the space for this in busy school environments can be limited. The theme is called creating spaces to acknowledge the need for physical and metaphorical space to made in the school community (in the widest sense) to support co-construction and reflection. Ideas around performativity and efficiency offer a lens through which not having enough time to 'stop and think' is understood.

Figure 17: Example of theme description.