MacEwan University's Adoption of Restorative Practice in Response to Academic Misconduct

Paul Sopcak, PhD

MacEwan University, Canada

sopcakp@macewan.ca

Overview

- Post-Secondary's Citizenship Education Mandate & Restorative Practice

- Definition & Principles of Restorative Practice

- MacEwan University's Restorative Resolution Procedure

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES AND STUDENT SUCCESS

- Post-secondary institutions are increasingly focusing on fostering civic responsibility, engaged citizenship, and ethical decision making in students (Boyte, 2015; Jorgensen & Shultz, 2012)

- *Student success* is defined in terms of academic *and* citizenship skills

- Growing evidence that RP affords experiential learning opportunities in areas related to moral development, emotional intelligence, and engaged citizenship (e.g., Karp & Sacks, 2014).

MacEwan UNIVERSITY

- Karp and Sacks (2014): "restorative justice practices were routinely found to have a greater impact on student learning than model code hearings" (154).

- RP promotes *student success through experiential learning* in six specific learning outcomes tied to student conduct and development theory:

  - just community/self-authorship
  - active accountability
  - interpersonal competence
  - social ties to the institution
  - procedural fairness
  - closure

What Makes a Process Restorative?

- "A focus on HARMS and consequent NEEDS of those affected;

- Addressing OBLIGATIONS that result from those harms;

- Using inclusive, COLLABORATIVE processes;

- Involving those with a legitimate stake in the situation; and

- Seeking to REPAIR harms and put right the wrongs to the extent possible."

(Zehr, 2003, p. 33)

Restorative Practices

"The aim of restorative practices is to develop community and to manage conflict and tensions by repairing harm and building relationships."

- Proactive (building relationships and developing community) and

- Reactive (repairing harm and restoring relationships)"

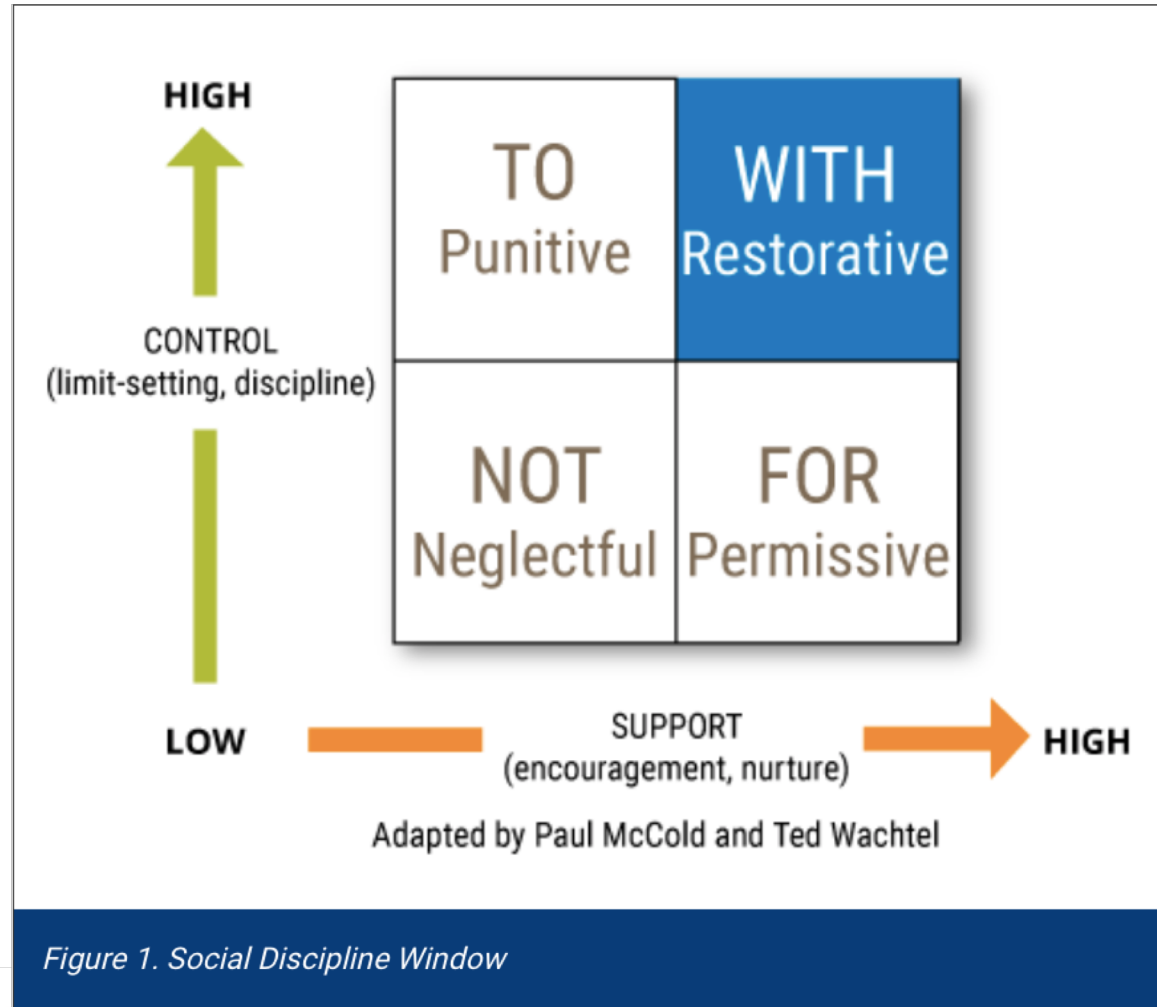https://www.iirp.edu/what-we-do/what-is-restorative-practices

Restorative Practices

- "The use of restorative practices helps to:
  - reduce crime, violence and bullying
  - improve human behavior
  - strengthen civil society
  - provide effective leadership
  - restore relationships
  - repair harm"

  Source: https://www.iirp.edu/what-we-do/defining-restorative/

Social Discipline Window

Figure 1. Social Discipline Window

Source: https://www.iirp.edu/defining-restorative/social-discipline-window

"The fundamental unifying hypothesis of restorative practices is that "human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things with them, rather than to them or for them." This hypothesis maintains that the punitive and authoritarian "to" mode and the permissive and paternalistic "for" mode are not as effective as the restorative, participatory, engaging "with" mode" (Wachtel 2013).

A RESTORATIVE CONFERENCE

A restorative process involves, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense or event and to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations, in order to heal and put things right.

Proulx, C. (2003)

International Institute for Restorative Practices
Restorative Questions

To responsible parties:

- *What happened?*

- *What were you thinking of at the time?*

- *What have you thought about since?*

- *Who has been affected by what you have done?*

- *In what way have they been affected?*

- *What do you think you need to do to make things right?*

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR RESTORATIVE PRACTICES
RESTORATIVE QUESTIONS

To harmed parties:

- *What did you think when you realized what had happened?*

- *What impact has this incident had on you and others?*

- *What has been the hardest thing for you?*

- *What do you think needs to happen to make things right?*

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES AT MACEWAN

MacEwan is supporting the growth and application of RP:

– In its response to the TRC's call to action

– In its efforts to continue to grow a healthy community

– To align with its focus on *student success* and *experiential learning*

– To "promote a culture of integrity" ([ISP](#), p. 17)

– To continue to build a "socially […] sustainable and responsible university" ([ISP](#), p. 15).

– In response to academic (and non-academic?) misconduct (new policies)
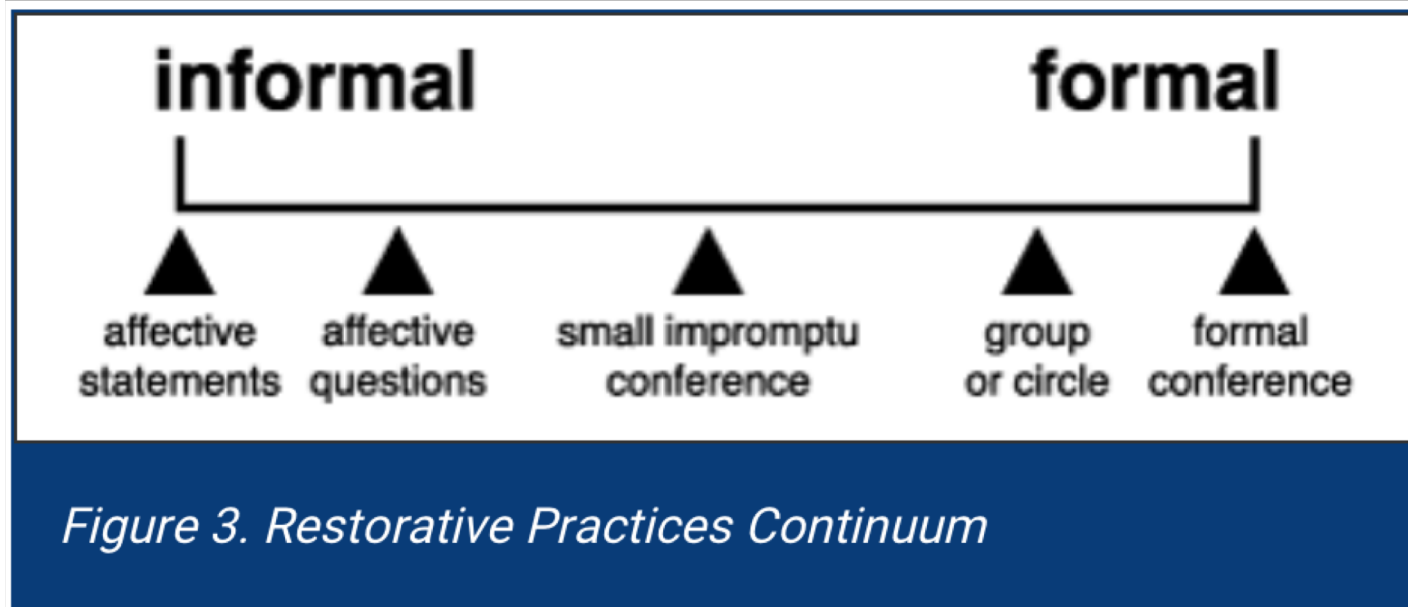
SOME CONCRETE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY EXAMPLES OF
(NEED FOR) RP ALTERNATIVES:

- Underreporting by faculty/align with pedagogic vocation

- Helping international students succeed

- Flexibility to make response to (academic) misconduct process culturally appropriate

- Ability to tailor educational and restorative response to needs on case by case basis

MacEwan's Academic Integrity Policy & Procedure

- [Macewan's Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Macewan's Academic Misconduct Procedure](#)
- [MacEwan's Academic Integrity Website](#)

Restorative Practices Continuum

Figure 3. Restorative Practices Continuum

Source: https://www.iirp.edu/what-we-do/defining-restorative/

- Video: Restorative Practices Continuum

EXAMPLE 1 OF RP APPLIED TO ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT INCIDENT

- Instructing Faculty:
  - Suspects academic misconduct (e.g., plagiarism, cheating…)
  - Notifies student of their concern and invites student to meet

- If instructor feels confident that:
  - Restorative process might be helpful and
  - They are in a position to be fair/unbiased, then
- Apply restorative principles/questions in conversation with student
- Decide on appropriate sanction, if any
- Send decision email to student, copying chair and AIO, and attaching „record of conversation (i.e., incident report)

Example 2 of RP Applied to Academic Misconduct – Instructor is Harmed Party

- If instructor suspects substantial academic misconduct, feels harmed, and/or in favour of fully restorative resolution:
  - Instructor notifies student and AIO of their concern
  - AIO assigns trained restorative conferencing facilitator (RCF) to case
  - RCF begins pre-conferencing work
  - If all parties agree and conditions are met (no risk of further harm, responsible party does not deny misconduct, etc.), restorative conference is scheduled.
  - Restorative conference is held, agreement signed on actions to repair harms, and AIO copied
  - RCF and/or AIO follow up on fulfilment of agreement

Activities to Promote Restorative Practice

- Info session for deans
- Info sessions for faculty and students
- Training on restorative conference facilitation
- Community of restorative practice
- Inviting speakers

REFERENCES

- Alberta Education (2018). *What are Restorative Practices?* Retrieved from https://education.alberta.ca/restorative-practices/what-are-restorative-practices/

- Boyte, H. C. (Ed.). (2015). Democracy's education: public work, citizenship, & the future of higher education. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

- Integrated Strategic Plan 2014/15 to 2018/19 (2014). *MacEwan University: A new beginning: An integrated strategic plan to develop a distinctive, student-focused undergraduate university*. Retrieved from http://macewan.ca/contribute/groups/public/documents/document/integrated_strategic_plan_2014.pdf

- Jorgenson, S., & Shultz, L. (2012). Global Citizenship Education (GCE) in Post-Secondary Institutions: What is protected and what is hidden under the umbrella of GCE? *Journal of Global Citizenship & Equity Education*, *2*(1). Retrieved from http://journals.sfu.ca/jgcee/index.php/jgcee/article/view/52

- Karp, D. R., & Sacks, C. (2014). Student conduct, restorative justice, and student development: findings from the STARR project: a student accountability and restorative research project. *Contemporary Justice Review*, *17*(2), 154–172. https://doi.org/10.1080/10282580.2014.915140

- UNESCO (1998). World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century: Mission and Action. Retrieved from http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/wche/declaration_eng.htm

- Wachtel, T. (2013). *Defining Restorative*. Retrieved from https://www.iirp.edu/what-we-do/defining-restorative/

- Zehr, H. (2009, November). *10 Ways to Live Restoratively.* Retrieved from https://emu.edu/now/restorative-justice/2009/11/27/10-ways-to-live-restoratively/