

Canada Panel – Restorative Justice and Academic Integrity – Facilitated by Naomi Paisley

Discussion started on does restorative justice actually work?

What do we mean by restorative justice – realized what we really want is restorative practices

How do we approach the situation, what are the types of questions we ask. We need to focus on affective questions.

Restorative practices offer a compassionate, student-centered approach to addressing cheating that aligns with educational goals of personal and moral development.

They must be implemented thoughtfully, with clear guidelines, training, and support

Should be used as part of a broader academic integrity strategy that includes prevention, education, and, when needed, appropriate sanctions.

Restorative approaches engage students in reflecting on their actions, understanding the impact on others (including peers, instructors, and the institution), and considering how to make amends.

We don't necessarily want to embarrass the student by calling them out in front of the rest of the class.

Instead of avoiding responsibility or simply serving a suspension, students must acknowledge their wrongdoing, often through dialogues, written reflections, or mediated conversations.

Restorative processes prioritize communication between the harmed and the harmer, helping repair damaged relationships.

Research in both K-12 and post-secondary contexts has shown that restorative justice can reduce repeat offenses, as students are more likely to internalize values of honesty and integrity through reflection rather than fear of punishment.

Restorative practices can help uncover underlying issues that may have led to cheating (e.g., stress, misunderstanding of expectations, lack of support), and provide opportunities for targeted interventions such as academic skills support, time management coaching, or mental health resources.

Some educators and students may view restorative approaches as "soft" on cheating. Without visible consequences, it can appear that academic integrity is not being taken seriously, potentially undermining trust in institutional policies.

Restorative practices require time, skilled facilitators, and buy-in from all parties. In large institutions or in cases with multiple stakeholders, implementing a meaningful process can be challenging and resource-heavy.

Implementing restorative practices effectively requires a cultural change within an institution. Faculty need training, policies must support alternatives to punitive discipline, and students must trust the process. Without these, the restorative approach risks being superficial or misused.