

The Effect of Restorative Practices  
on Disruptive Behaviors

by

Marie Bland

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Education

May 2019

Goucher College

List of Tables	i
Abstract	ii
I. Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Statement of Research Hypothesis	2
Operational Definitions	2
II. Literature Review	6
What are Restorative Practices?	6
Implementing Restorative Practices	7
Effects of Restorative Practices on Student Behavior	9
Summary	10
III. Methods	11
Design	11
Participants	11
Instrument	12
Procedure	12
IV. Results	14
V. Discussion	17

Implications	17
Theoretical Consequences	19
Threats to Validity	19
Connections to Literature	20
Implications for Future Research	21
Conclusion	23
References	24

## List of Tables

1. Means, Standard Deviations, and t-statistic for number of MIR under Traditional Classroom Management and under Restorative Practices

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of restorative practices on disruptive student behavior. The measurement tool was minor incident reports (MIR) from the second and third quarter of the 2018-2019 school year. This study used a variant of a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design in which data was collected over a 5-week baseline and 5-week intervention period. The mean number of MIR under Restorative Practices (Mean = 6.92, SD = 4.07) was significantly lower than under traditional classroom management (Mean = 10.93, SD = 4.36) [ $t(3) = 5.59, p = .01$ ]. Further research would be beneficial to see the effects restorative practices can have when it is implemented school wide and over a longer duration of time.

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### Overview

There are many things that students need in order to be able to flourish in school. One of them is a safe learning environment with little or no distractions. Unfortunately, in schools today there is an increase in disruptive behavior that not only impacts the learning of the child who is being disruptive, but also everyone around them. This researcher noticed that there was an increase of disruptive behavior in the classroom. Much of the school day was being used to deescalate students and deal with negative behaviors, and as a result time was being taken away from actual learning and academics. Often these types of behaviors are disciplined with a negative punishment. Restorative practices look at the underlying problem of why disruptive behavior is occurring. The goal of using restorative practices is help build relationships within the classroom to help decrease disruptive behavior so more time can be devoted to student learning.

Restorative practices recognize the importance of building school wide relationships. This includes relationships between students and the relationships between students and teachers. It is a practice that was built from the belief that we are all connected through a web of relationships and when wrongdoing has occurred the web becomes torn. In a recent two-year evaluation of the implementation of restorative practices in two schools, a decrease in the amount of discipline referrals, as well as suspensions was found in both (Kline, 2016). These two schools promoted the importance of fostering relationships in a school community, responsibility and accountability for one's own action and their impact of others, and respect for others. Using

restorative practices helped increase student attendance as well as decrease suspensions and disruptive behaviors.

When a school suspends a student for misbehaving, that student loses the routine of the school day and academic time. The student may come back to school feeling behind and not knowing important content that was previously taught. These negative feelings could then retrigger the unwanted behavior. It becomes a cycle. Restorative practices aim to end that cycle. Although suspensions remain a widely utilized approach to school discipline, it has recently shown more harm than good. There is a lack of evidence that suspensions prevent future misbehaviors or that they make school a safer place (Gregory, Clawson, Davis, & Gerewitz, 2016). Restorative practices aides in the student's needs for social and emotional learning in a positive way. It helps to address issues in a proactive way as opposed to only a reactive way.

### **Statement of Problem**

The purpose of this study is to determine the effects of restorative practices on the frequency in which children with a history of behavioral difficulties exhibit significant disruptive behaviors.

### **Hypothesis**

The null hypothesis is that there will be no difference in the mean frequency of MIRs among fifth grade students with a history of behavioral difficulties when under traditional classroom management procedures or under restorative practices procedures.

### **Operational Definitions**

**History of behavioral difficulties-** Students were selected based on having a history of

significant disruptive behaviors. On average there are about two to three calls made to the A-team daily to remove a student from the classroom for significant disruptive behaviors. The children selected for this study were the ones that had required the most frequent A-team interventions.

**Significant disruptive behaviors-**These are behaviors that warrant calling the A-team such as students persistently calling out, leaving their area without permission, engaging in physical aggression, acting disrespectfully towards others, repeatedly refusing to follow directions, or demonstrating other unsafe behaviors.

**MIR-** These are reports of significant disruptive behavior that are used by the school for monitoring behavioral problems. They are produced whenever there is a call for the A-team. A MIR is produced for each child involved in the incident.

**Traditional classroom management procedures-** Students are given three warnings in the classroom before the A-Team is called and a MIR is written. There is a 1-2-3 chart in the classroom. The beginning of each day each student is under superstar. If a student needs a warning about a disruptive behavior, their name gets moved to a 1. If the behavior continues after another warning, their name goes to a 2. If the behavior continues with 2 warnings, their name is then moved to a 3 and that is when the A-team would be called, and the MIR form would be written. Before the start of restorative practices, the A-team member would remove the child from the classroom setting. The student would sometimes be escorted to the office to sit down and calm down, or if another adult was available the student might be able to walk around the building for a break.

**Restorative practices procedures-** These consist of morning community circles, restorative



conversations, restorative circles, relationship building, and virtue language.

**Morning community circles-** These are daily fifteen-minute meetings for the purpose of building student relationships, increasing positive peer interactions, and providing students the opportunity to share their thoughts on various topics.

**Restorative conversations-** Restorative conversations occur after a disruptive behavior occurs and is between the student and the teacher. This is a time for the student and teacher to talk one on one about the effects of the student's behavior and to talk about strategies the student can use next time to eliminate the disruptive behavior in the classroom. The A-team member would stay with the remainder of the class during this time. The teacher and student could have a conversation for up to 20 minutes before returning to the classroom. If the student needed additional time after that, a counselor or administrator would be called to step in. A MIR form is still produced even when a restorative conversation takes place.

**Restorative circles-** These are used when more than one student is involved in a conflict. Everyone in the circle has an opportunity to speak and to be heard. It is a way to respond to problems that arise and to help build the classroom relationships. The procedures are comparable to that of a restorative conversation except that the circles involve more than one student.

**Relationship building-** This involves earning the student's trust and rapport. This is built by having meaningful conversations and positive interactions with the student.

**Virtue language-** Students learn one virtue term a week during morning circle, including discussing examples of students demonstrating that virtue and why it is important or helpful to our school, and try to demonstrate the virtue throughout the school day.

**A-Team**-School wide team that responds when a student is exhibiting significant disruptive behavior in the classroom.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Many schools around the country are noticing that traditional behavior management programs are no longer working. Many schools resort to disciplinary measures and out of school suspensions as a first option. Restorative practices are a strategic approach that helps transform a school's culture and climate by holding students accountable for their actions and by building a positive school community in order to support students. It is a way for students to learn from their mistakes, while staying in school and not missing additional time. This literature review will define what restorative practices is, how restorative practices can be implemented into the school, and the effects of restorative practices on student behavior.

#### **What are Restorative Practices?**

Restorative practices focus on building student and teacher relationships, fostering constructive conflict resolution and working towards equitable disciplinary practices (Gregory et al., 2016). The goal is for students to take responsibility for any wrong doing, but also for them to find a way to make it right. This practice promotes empathy in students and equity for everyone. It is a chance for students to keep their dignity in any situation, to be accountable for their actions, and for both the student and teacher to understand how a certain behavior can be avoided in the future by implementing different action steps (Martin, 2015). Restorative practices were derived from the development of criminal justice strategy called restorative justice. Being restorative means having the ability to restore strength, health, and a feeling of well bring. Decisions are best made, and conflicts are best solved by the people who are most directly involved. Restorative practices in schools include peer mediation, classroom circles to resolve

problems, and family group conferencing. All practices involve face-to-face resolution to address the multiple impacts of a student's offending behavior. Those most affected by it play an important role in resolving the incident (Chmelynski, 2005). It changes the way students and teachers think about discipline and behavior management. Students and teachers will be able to get along because each party will feel respected.

Suspension remains a widely utilized approach to school discipline. With there being a lack of evidence that says suspensions prevent future misbehaviors or make schools safer, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a statement that the effectiveness of suspensions, exclusionary discipline, is increasingly questionable. It has been shown suspensions can have harmful effects on the student and his or her future. It has been found that each additional suspension that a student has decreases the student's odds of graduating high school by 20% (Balfanz, Byrnes, & Fox, 2014). The goal for restorative practices is to keep students in school, but to also have them take responsibility for their actions and to find a way to right their wrongs.

### **Implementing Restorative Practices**

Two elements of restorative practices include prevention and intervention strategies. Prevention practices promote building relationships and developing communities. Affective statements are also used in response to negative or positive events in the classroom and school. Proactive circles are used in the classroom and can be run daily or weekly. Many schools use morning circles as a form of proactive intervention. During this time students are greeted respectfully by one another, they share their thoughts or feelings about a question, and have the opportunity to set goals. Morning circles helps set the tone for the day and let the students feel comfortable and confident (Goldys, 2016). Fair process is another form of a prevention practice that is used to engage students in decision making that explains the reasoning. The goal is for

these strategies to be used in order to prevent unwanted behaviors in the school. Staff and community should model and use restorative practices among school staff and with student families in order to support student and encourage these proactive measures (Gregory et al., 2016).

Interventions are used after an incident occurs and is used to repair harm and to restore community. Restorative questions are used with the student to address negative behaviors, for example, “Who was affected by what you did?”, and “What do you think you need to do to make it right?” Responsive circles are also used as an intervention tool. This gives the students the opportunity to work together in a collaborative climate to solve problems together. The goal of the circles is to build trust and empathy. Traditionally, problem solving focused on placing the blame on someone and then deliver a consequence (Goldys, 2016), but during this time the students are supported, and their actions are understood. Problem solving gives the students the chance to take responsibility and repair harm that has been done. Small impromptu circles can be used to address negative behaviors by asking the wrongdoer and those harmed to answer restorative questions in front of each other. This gives the students the opportunity to work together in a collaborative climate to solve problems together. When hurt or harm is repaired with restorative meetings, students are learning empathy and accountability. When students feel they are valued equally, know that respect is an expectation, and social justice is a priority for everyone, conditions in a school environment will become favorable and there will be a decline in the levels of hurt and harm within the school community (Macready, 2009). Restorative practices give students a chance to really understand why what they did was wrong, how it affected others and what they can do to right their wrong. Restorative practices offer students the opportunity to learn social responsibility at both the reactive and proactive level.

In the past the student teacher relationship was all about the teachers being in control. Teachers and administrators would make and enforce the rules and the students were expected to follow them or suffer a consequence. When using restorative practices, students are engaged in the conversation concerning a breakdown of relationships within a school community. Restorative practices require a different mindset on the part of educators. Implementation requires a cultural shift. It can be difficult for some educators to accept this change (Varnham, 2005). Teachers and students work together to create a school community that is safe and respectful of one another. The careful implementation of restorative practices can provide schools a positive path with behavior management and conflict resolution.

### **Effects of Restorative Practices on Student Behavior**

Research shows that restorative practices can transform student behavior and build school communities. Prior research has shown that punishment alone only intensifies problems for students, schools, and communities. Restorative practices can offer a preventative, as well as a reactive component. Kline (2016) analyzed a 2-year evaluation that was done at 18 different schools (one special education, seven primary, and ten secondary schools in urban, suburban and rural areas), and found a decrease in both in-school discipline referrals and out of school suspensions. These schools concentrated on the importance of fostering social relationships in school community and mutual engagement; responsibility and accountability for one's own actions and their impact on others, respect for other people, their views and feelings, empathy with feelings of others affected by their own actions, fairness, commitment to equitable process, and a willingness to create opportunities for reflective change in the school community. From this study all 18 schools made progress and 14 schools made significant achievement

A different study was done also over a 2-year timeframe in Sydney with a school who

piloted restorative practices. After 2 years, the school reported a significant shift in staff, students, and parent feelings reflecting the essential principles of restorative practices. They also reported a significant reduction in behavioral referrals and detentions, as well as out of school suspensions. Teachers also stated that they felt great about breaking down previous “teacher barriers” when it came to manage their student’s behavior and using restorative attitudes (Harrison, 2007). If teachers have proper training and are well supported, restorative practices can be implemented without becoming a huge challenge.

### **Summary**

Many schools have been using a disciplinary system that was operating out of fear and compliance as opposed to trust, positive relationships, or a sense of community (Martin, 2015). It is important to remember that restorative practices are not a quick fix to fixing behavior issues in school. Building trust and relationships in order to learn new behaviors takes time and practice. Restorative practices require students, teachers, and parents to collaborate in order to successfully solve problems. Respect and empathy are essential factors in order for restorative practices to be successful.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODS**

The purpose of this study is to determine the effects of restorative practices on disruptive student behavior.

#### **Design**

This study used a variant of a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design in which data was collected over a 5-week baseline and 5-week intervention period. Subjects served as their own controls. The independent variable was a type of classroom management: traditional classroom management procedures (baseline) or restorative practices procedures (intervention). The dependent variable was number of MIR referrals.

#### **Participants**

This study took place in a suburban area of the mid-Atlantic region at a Title I school where 98% of students receive free and reduced meals. This school has about 400 students ranging from pre-kindergarten to 5th grade. There are 3 full day pre-kindergarten classes as well as a Judy Center to service students who are younger than school age. Each classroom contains a heterogeneous mix of ability levels, race, behavior, and gender.

The study took place within a classroom of 24 students, or 14 females and 10 males. There is no regrouping in fifth grade, so these 24 students stay together with the same teacher for the entire academic school day. Restorative practices were used with the whole classroom; however, there were only 4 students used as subjects in the study. They were selected based on having the highest number of MIR referrals for the first two quarters of the year. The 4 students



were all male. Two of the subjects were on grade level in academic subjects and two were below grade level.

### **Instrument**

Student behavior data was collected using MIR (minor incident report). These forms were created by the PBIS team and were used throughout the school to document problematic behavior. MIR forms were completed by the teacher for a student each time the A-team was called for unsafe or disruptive behavior. Only MIR forms or office referrals that were completed by the researcher were used for data collection purposes; consequently, if a MIR form was completed by a special area teacher, it was not included in the study data. These forms were completed for disruptive behaviors that included leaving the area without permission, repeated disrespect to others, refusal to follow directions, repeated calling out, physical aggression and unsafe behavior. Each MIR consists of 3 carbon copy sheets. One was given to the office, one was kept by the teacher and the last one was sent home with the student for the parent or guardian to sign. The number of MIR per subject over the baseline and intervention period was determined by counting the number of MIR sheets maintained by the teacher, who was also this researcher. There is no reliability or validity data for these forms.

### **Procedure**

Students were not exposed to restorative practices during the first two quarters of the current school year. Before the start of restorative practices, the first fifteen minutes of the day was used as a time for students to prepare for the day and to check homework. When a student was displaying disruptive behaviors in class, the teacher would call for a member of the A-team to come to the room for assistance. The A-team member would then remove the student from the

classroom setting to take a break in the office or to do a lap around the building with an adult. Disruptive behaviors could include calling out, leaving their area without permission, physical aggression, disrespect towards others, repeated refusal to follow directions and unsafe behaviors. With each call to the A-team, a MIR form would be filled out by the teacher in order to document the disruptive behavior. If there was a conflict with more than one student that caused disruption in the classroom, the A-Team would be called, and each student would be removed. They would go sit in the office to cool down, or if a counselor was available at that time they would intervene and try to help the students through their problems. After each student calmed down, they would return to class. If each student was disruptive then a MIR would be written for each individual student.

The baseline period was the second week of the second quarter through the sixth week. There were 6 weeks (school or vacation) between the last day of baseline and the first day of the intervention. break between the baseline and intervention period. One rationale for the break between the baseline and intervention was that it was a way to avoid using behavioral data from the week before winter break, which is a period in which children often act differently due to excitement and there are often variations in the school schedule due to special events.

Restorative practices were introduced during the second week of the third quarter. The first fifteen minutes of each day began with every student sitting in a circle on the rug. The teacher would begin the circle by posing a question to the students. The students would have time to think of a response and then the circle would begin. A talking piece was used during this time, which is an object that the class quickly votes for each day just by a quick show of hands. Only the student holding the talking piece shares their answer while the other students listen intently. The student would start off by greeting the classroom and saying, “Good morning,” and

the rest of the class would greet the student back. The student then shares his or her response and then passes the talking piece to the next student. Every student has a chance to share and to be heard by his or her classmates. The goal of morning circle is to help build a stronger sense of community and to start each day on a positive note.

With the implementation of restorative practices, the A-team would still be called for disruptive behaviors, however the A-team member would stay back with the class and continue the lesson so that the teacher and student can have a discussion about the student's behavior. Some questions the teacher asks the student include *What happened, and what were you thinking at the time of the incident?, What have you thought about since?, Who has been affected by what happened and how?, What about this has been the hardest for you? and What do you think needs to be done to make things as right as possible?* These questions are the building blocks for repairing the relationship or addressing challenging behavior. Having a conversation with the student instead of sending him or her to the office to cool down or meet with an administrator, helps build that student teacher relationship and gives the student a chance to reflect on his or her behavior and to think about how it affected others. The student and teacher could have a conversation that lasts up to fifteen or twenty minutes. If after twenty minutes the student is still not ready to enter the classroom, the member of the A-team would step in to assist with the student so that the teacher can go back to the classroom. A MIR form will still be completed and documented.

If multiple students were having a conflict or disrupting the learning of others a restorative circle may be used. The A-team would be called to monitor the class while the teacher has a circle with the students. A restorative circle could also be used during free-play or lunchtime if the teacher decided to use that time. The teacher acted as the facilitator and gave

each of the students a chance to share their feelings in a supportive environment. A MIR would still be written for both students if disruptive behavior in the classroom occurred, which is why the restorative circle needed to be used.

MIR counts were prorated to adjust for individual absences and school closures. The adjusted mean number of MIR during the 5-week traditional classroom management period and the 5-week restorative practices intervention period were compared with a non-independent samples t-test.

**CHAPTER IV**  
**RESULTS**

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of restorative practices on disruptive student behavior.

A non-independent samples t-test was conducted with the independent variable being the type of classroom management--traditional classroom management procedures (baseline) or restorative practices procedures (intervention) and the dependent variable being the number of MIR referrals. The mean number of MIR under Restorative Practices (Mean = 6.92, SD = 4.07) was significantly lower than under traditional classroom management (Mean = 10.93, SD = 4.36) [t(3) = 5.59, p = .01]. Please see Table 1. Consequently, the null hypothesis that there will be no significant difference in the mean frequency of MIRs among fifth grade students with a history of behavioral difficulties when under traditional classroom management procedures or under restorative practices procedures was rejected.

Table 1

*Means, Standard Deviations, and t-statistic for number of MIR under Traditional Classroom Management and under Restorative Practices*

Condition	Mean	SD	t-statistic
Traditional Classroom Management	10.93	4.36	5.59*
Restorative Practices	6.92	4.07	

N = 4

\* Significant at  $p \leq .01$

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of restorative practices on student behavior. The null hypothesis was that there will be no significant difference in the mean frequency of MIRs among fifth grade students with a history of behavioral difficulties when under traditional classroom management procedures or under restorative practices procedures. Restorative practices included morning community circles, restorative conversations, restorative circles, relationship building, and virtue language. The results of the experiment rejected the null hypothesis. The mean number of MIR forms documented were less during the time when restorative practices was implemented, as opposed to the weeks prior when it was not yet in place.

#### **Implications**

This study shows that the implementation of restorative practices can positively impact students' behavior in the classroom. The total number of MIR forms written for the 4 students during the time before restorative practices that was implemented was 44. During the implementation of restorative practices this number declined to a total of 27. Every subject experienced a decline in the number of MIR forms that were written based off of disruptive behaviors. Disruptive behaviors decreased during this time for individual students as well as peer conflicts.

Using the time for a restorative conversation between the student and teacher and identifying the underlying problem of the disruptive behavior helped to build the student teacher relationship. At first each of the students were a little reluctant to use this time to talk about the

problem and how to fix it, however after a few more attempts each student began to open up and became an active participant in the process. During the restorative conversation the teacher was able to give the student some coping strategies they could use in the classroom to help improve the disruptive behavior. It also gave each student the opportunity to reflect about their behavior and to identify how their behavior not only affected them, but also how it affected others in the school. Although having restorative conversations between the teacher and students did encourage the student-teacher relationship and help decrease disruptive behaviors, one practical concern about this practice was the amount of time that the teacher was out of the classroom and missing instructional time.

Morning circles were used to help create a positive classroom community. Students had a chance to share their thoughts and opinions with their classmates in a safe and judgment free zone. Morning circles focused on different virtues and values each week that the teacher determined were a need for the class. Some questions that were posed each day were why is this value or virtue important? How can we demonstrate this virtue in class? When was a time you demonstrated this virtue or value in school? At the end of each week, students would use morning circle time to rate how they felt they did demonstrate that virtue for the week. Having daily morning meetings helped build the student to student relationship and create a positive classroom environment.

The goal of restorative practices is to help build a school or classroom community, and to offer the opportunity for each student to learn social responsibility. Overall, restorative practices helped create healthy relationships between the students and teacher, helped hold students accountable for their actions, and built a classroom community. Based on these results, it is recommended that the strategy be used in individual classrooms and across the school. Teachers

should be given training so that they can administer the intervention effectively. It is also important to have support staff available to supervise classrooms if the teacher is unable to do so because of restorative conversations or circles.

### **Theoretical Consequences**

On a theoretical level, the results of this study support the theory that students benefit greatly from positive teacher-student relationships, and from building a positive class environment. Restorative practices are a strategic approach that helps transform a school's culture and climate by holding their students accountable for their actions and by building a positive school community in order to support students. It is a way for students to learn from their mistakes, while staying in school and not missing additional time.

### **Threats to Validity**

During this study, there were many threats to validity that may have impacted the results. For example, a threat to validity was the small population of students used. This reduced the power of the study. Although the researcher was able to obtain significant results despite the limited power of the study, it is possible that the sample of 4 students was not adequately representative of children with behavioral problems. This creates a threat to external validity.

The students selected for the study were not randomly selected, they were identified as being students who had the most behavior difficulties in the classroom. This creates the risk of statistical regression in which individuals whose performance is at an extreme move towards a performance that is more towards the mean. This is a threat to internal validity. Further, the results can be generalized only to individuals with a history of significant behavioral difficulties. Restorative practices may be less effective or less practical to use with individuals with more



typical classroom behavior. This is a threat to external validity.

Another threat of validity was the impact of the availability of the A-Team on the integrity of the administration of the intervention. When restorative practices were completed as designed, in the event that a student was displaying disruptive behaviors in the class, the teacher would pull the student out of the classroom to have a restorative conversation with the student in hopes to identify the underlying problem of the disruptive behavior and to coach the student on how to right their wrong. However, it was not always possible to implement restorative practices as planned. If the A-Team were assisting other teachers, in a meeting, or if they were out due to illness, they were not able to the classroom immediately which then led the restorative conversation being delayed and at times making it less meaningful. Consequently, under circumstances in which there was insufficient classroom coverage, the restorative practice steps were not implemented properly. This is a threat to internal validity.

Another threat to validity was the short time frame of the implementation of restorative practices. The results can be generalized to the impact of the intervention only over a short duration. This is a threat to external validity.

A final threat to validity was potential experimenter effects. Since the researcher was the only one collecting data on the students, there could have been an unintentional bias when it came to call the A-team for study participants. This is a threat to external validity.

### **Connections to Literature**

Current results are similar to a study that was done in Sydney, Australia in 2007. This study was also done in a school that had issues with student behavior. Harrison (2007), discussed the implementation of restorative practices benefited the school in that there was a

decrease in behavioral referrals, detentions and out of school suspensions. This Australian study was run over a longer period of time than the current study as it was a 2-year study. It also differed from the current study in that it stressed the importance of a whole school approach to restorative practices. Unlike the current study, this one had every teacher trained in the program so that way restorative practices were used in each classroom and area of the school. The school also had parents involved so that practices with problem solving were being carried over to the homes as well (Harrison, 2007). Both studies proved that positive teacher-student relationships can reduce the amount of disruptions behaviors in class, as well as the amount of behavior forms completed to document these behaviors. Although the current study was briefer and involved only one classroom, it was still able to provide evidence that the intervention is effective. This suggests that restorative practices can be successful even when they are administered on a smaller scale than they were in the Australian study.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Restorative practices are becoming more popularly used in schools. Teachers and students work together to create a school community that is safe and respectful of one another. Within the current study, restorative practices were only used in the researcher's classroom and not when students were in other areas of the school, such as special areas or the lunchroom. In order for restorative practices to be as effective as possible, it is important to have the whole school community participating so that the expectations and practices are effortless and repetitive. As Macready (2009) states, "When children and young are living in a socially responsible culture in which all individuals are valued equally, where respect for others is expected in all day to day activities, where social justice is a priority for everyone in the school, conditions will be favorable for a decline in the levels of hurt and harm within and beyond the

school community” (p. 219). It is important to have restorative practices extend from just the classroom to the entire school community in order for it to have the most impact and benefits. According to McCluskey et al. (2008), R\restorative practices seemed most effective when behavior was seen as an issue to be addressed through restorative strategies that involved active learning for all children and for staff across the school. The more people who are trained in restorative practices and who use it throughout the school community will help to increase the success of this intervention. For future studies, it would be beneficial to implement restorative practices in all areas of the school, as opposed to just one classroom, to examine its effectiveness when used on a school wide basis. It would be important for the educators to be well educated on restorative practices so that it is used in a uniformed way across the school community. Educators and Administrators would need to make sure data collection are reliable and valid. There would need to be a set of behavior expectations that are followed and a list of what types of disruptive behaviors would warrant and MIR or other discipline form.

It would also be beneficial for future research to focus on a longer duration of time for the intervention. The short time span of this intervention indicates negative behaviors can be decreased, however the lasting effects of this intervention over the length of the school year is not known. It would be a good idea for a school to begin the new school year implementing restorative practices. Future research could compare the studied group’s data from the year before, when restorative practices was not introduced, with the data collected during the new school year when restorative practices are implemented from the beginning of the school year. The careful implementation of restorative practices can provide schools a positive path with behavior management and conflict resolution.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of restorative practices on student behavior. The null hypothesis that there will be no significant difference in the mean frequency of MIRs among fifth grade students with a history of behavioral difficulties when under traditional classroom management procedures or under restorative practices procedures was rejected. After analyzing and comparing the baseline data and the intervention data, there was a decrease of disruptive behavior from the four subjects. Further research would be beneficial to see the effects restorative practices can have when it is implemented school wide and over a longer duration of time. In conclusion, the current study provides evidence consistent with other positive behavioral supports literature that restorative practices decrease disruptive behaviors in the classroom. This suggests that restorative practices have the potential to have a wide impact on overall school climate, which is important to student behavior and academic success.

## References

- Balfanz, R., Byrnes, V., & Fox, J. (2014). Sent home and put off-track: The antecedents, disproportionalities, and consequences of being suspended in the Ninth Grade. *Journal of Applied Research on Children*, 5(2). Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com.goucher.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1188519&login.asp&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Chmelynski, C. (2005). Restorative justice for discipline with respect. *Education Digest: Essential Readings Condensed for Quick Review*, 71(1), 17–20. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com.goucher.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ741097&login.asp&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Goldys, P. H. (2016). Restorative practices from candy and punishment to celebrations and problem-solving circles. *Journal of Character Education*, 12(1), 75–80. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com.goucher.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1151544&login.asp&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Gregory, A., Clawson, K., Davis, A., & Gerewitz, J. (2016). The promise of restorative practices to transform teacher-student relationships and achieve equity in school discipline. *Journal of Educational & Psychological Consultation*, 26(4), 325–353. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com.goucher.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1121357&login.asp&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Harrison, L. (2007). From authoritarian to restorative schools. *Reclaiming Children and*

- Youth: The Journal of Strength-Based Interventions*, 16(2), 17–20. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com.goucher.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ771344&login.asp&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Kline, D. M. S. (2016). Can restorative practices help to reduce disparities in school discipline data? A review of the literature. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 18(2), 97–102. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com.goucher.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1100549&login.asp&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Macready, T. (2009). Learning social responsibility in schools: A restorative practice. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 25(3), 211–220. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com.goucher.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ864974&login.asp&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Martin, C. (2015). Empathy, equity, empowerment: using restorative practices to build character and community while reducing suspensions. *Voices in Urban Education*, 42, 14–18. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com.goucher.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1082779&login.asp&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- McCluskey, G., Lloyd, G., Stead, J., Kane, J., Riddell, S., & Weedon, E. (2008). “I was dead restorative today”: From restorative justice to restorative approaches in school. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 38(2), 199–216. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com.goucher.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ799388&login.asp&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Varnham, S. (2005). Seeing things differently: Restorative justice and school discipline. *Education and the Law*, 17(3), 87–104. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com.goucher.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ820184&login.asp&site=ehost-live&scope=site>