

Restorative Justice Approach

Hackney Community College: Output 2

Output 2 is a case study demonstrating how the College has used the Restorative Justice approach to managing challenging behaviour by learners with learning difficulties and disabilities resulting in significantly improved behaviours. This approach shows how the learners are able to reflect and learn rather than be faced with the often more punitive disciplinary procedures used in other colleges, which offer little supported opportunities for reflection. The case study includes the story of an incident and the impact of the restorative conference on a young person together with notes on staff training, minutes of the case conference and a video clip of the reflections of the learner.

Case Study: Output 2a

Student C is 17 years old and came to the college from a local special school in 2010. He is a student at Hackney ISP (Independent Specialist Provider). Previously Student B had attended two other secondary schools but was very unsettled.

When he arrived at the college Student C was reluctant to take part in anything the class did. He didn't want to be seen with his peers and would go to any length to avoid going out with them. He believed they had disabilities and he didn't. However, he was very aware that he was behind his peers in literacy and numeracy. He had very low self esteem and at times lacked confidence.

Student C has a short concentration span and finds it difficult to retain information. His literacy levels are very low as he struggles to read and write. Therefore, doing literacy lessons normally results in him getting very agitated and storming out of the class. He is working on an ASDAN course in Personal and Social Development, Entry 1 and generally has 1:1 support when reading or writing in class.

There were two incidents where Student C and another student in his class took a student phone and sold it. They also took an LSA's phone, smashed it to pieces and put it back in the LSA's coat pocket.

Initial restorative 'chats' took place with the learners, his tutor and the Head of Department. They were invited to suggest ways in which to repair the hurt done to others. They were told that, due to the serious nature of the incidents, they would be asked to attend a bigger meeting to include their parents, the victims (and parent), as well as representatives from the community.

What is Restorative Justice?

Hackney Community College is developing its student disciplinary process to incorporate a more restorative approach to behaviour management for young people across college and for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. This approach is a process which facilitates dialogue between all those affected by the wrongdoing or conflict and encourages those responsible for the

harm to become accountable for their actions and responsible for putting things right. It ensures that all those involved or affected are given the opportunity to share their story, their feelings and their needs and be involved in finding ways forward. It not only helps to repair the damage done by behaviour that has a negative impact on others but also helps to mend relationships between those affected. The benefits of restorative practices when working with these young people are that students with challenging behaviour which harms others are involved in a process which clearly shows the consequences of their actions and highlights the impact on all those affected. This is in contrast to a more traditional, often punitive approach which does not always allow for learning and the building of relationships to take place in the same way.

The College enlisted the services of The Learning Trust to deliver staff training for all teachers last year and the Educational Psychologist has begun to use the Restorative Justice approach with the young people in the Department for Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities. Although the College is not in a position to share the training materials used for staff development, there follows an outline of the training delivered and some useful references are provided as a starting point for those providers who would like to investigate further.

Staff Development Session on Restorative Approaches: Output 2b

Date: Monday 4th January 2010 Venue: Community College Hackney Time: 09:00-15:30

Number: All teaching staff (approx. 250) for Overview of Restorative Approaches
 Then 60 targeted staff divided into 3 workshops

Objectives: - For all staff to be aware of what restorative practices are
 - For selected staff to have an understanding of the values underpinning Restorative Approaches
 - For selected staff to be aware of how Restorative Approaches operate in practice

1 **Overview of Restorative Approaches**

Presentation to all staff (20 minutes)

2 **Workshops** – each workshop to last 1 hour and 20 participants/workshop. The workshops will run three times so all 60 participants will attend all 3 workshops.

Workshop 1

Restorative Language – introduce chat and practise role plays

Workshop 2

Restorative Meetings – Look at how restorative meetings are carried out and what outcomes can be achieved from working restoratively

Workshop 3

Harm activity and links to anti-bullying work

Evaluation comments from training:

- *Use the questioning techniques in small conflict situations in my groups*
- *Clearer on the process and the follow up*
- *Learners need to understand how they can best respond to negative situations to benefit from restorative*
- *I am interested in introducing restorative approaches at HCC*
- *Can use and involve class reps in this process*
- *Be mindful of bullying situations in the classroom and work together with students to eliminate these kinds of situation in the classroom*
- *Look at my tutor groups and identify where the bullying is happening*

- Gave me a good overview
- New approaches to behavioural issue in college
- Could help on track students especially in times of conflict
- Consider further training; consider becoming a key person to support
- Pick up ideas form here if bullying occurs
- Bring this to the attention of my teams
- I would like to go on the 3-day training to explore this more
- More training days made available as soon as possible
- More time - too big an issue to cover in one hour. Response from group was massive. This should be followed up
- I would like to try the classroom conference

Restorative approaches: useful reading and watching...

Morrison, Brenda (2007). *Restoring Safe School Communities: a whole school response to bullying, violence and alienation.*

Thorsborne, Margaret & Vinegrad, David (2009). *Restorative Justice: Pocketbook.*

Thorsborne, Margaret & Vinegrad, David (2006). *Restorative Practices in Schools: Rethinking Behaviour Management.*

Zehr, Howard (2002). *Little Book of Restorative Justice.*

The Woolf Within: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1s6wKeGLQk>

The Restorative Case Conference notes: Output 2c

Following an incident in the Department for disabilities and learning difficulties, the Educational Psychologist arranged a meeting for all concerned. Before the meeting she handed the perpetrators and those who were harmed a sheet with key questions for them to reflect on and to prepare their responses to. The tutor of the group hadn't time to go over these with them beforehand, but this reflection would normally be an important stage of the process as they form the basis of the conference:

- What happened?
- What was your part in it?
- How did you feel?
- Who was hurt?
- How can we make things right?
- What do you think you should do now?

Restorative Approaches Session Facilitator: Educational Psychologist Date:
18.11.2011

Attendees: Student C, Student D, Student C's mother, Student D's mother, Student D's sister-in-law, Student A (victim), Student A's father, Head of Department LLDD, Safer Neighbourhoods Police Officer and PCSO, Class teacher and tutor, Student Support Assistant (victim).

Context:

- A mobile phone had been taken from a member of staff and later returned to his pocket broken beyond repair.
- Another mobile phone had been taken from a student and not returned.
- Two students had admitted being involved in taking the mobile phones.

- College considered whether to involve the police and what the consequences should be.
- College requested the use of Restorative Approaches from the EP.
- The EP agreed to chair a Restorative Conference, which includes all of the people who may have been affected by the incident: Students, Students' family, College Staff, Police (representing the wider community).

Outline of discussion:

All members of the group shared that the incident had impacted on them in some way. Some feelings shared included:

- Stress,
- Upset,
- Sadness,
- Lack of control,
- Feeling as though it shouldn't have happened in the first place,
- Anxious about other students feeling safe,
- Worried that it might happen again,
- Disappointed and sad because I care for these students and what happens to them.
- Hurt that my property had been taken.
- Tom and Kay shared what may have happened if the college decided to involve the police in investigating this situation as a criminal offence.

Everyone agreed that if the following solutions were followed then a line could be drawn under this incident and we could all move on.

Solutions agreed:

	Action	By whom	By when
1	Students to pay back money to John (LSA) £30.50 each	Students C and D to give money to Head of Department (HoD)	Friday 25 th November 2011
2	Students to return Student A's phone if they are able to safely	Students C and D to give to HoD to check it is intact	Friday 25 th November 2011
3	If it is not possible to return Student A's phone then Students C and D to pay £40 each to tutor	Students C and D to give money to (HoD)	Friday 25 th November 2011
4	An apology to LSA and Student A	Students C and D	Done prior to and at meeting
5	All college members and staff to respect each others' privacy	Everyone	Immediately and ongoing
6	No further discussion about confidential information that was accessed on phones	Students C and D with everyone	Immediately and ongoing
7	Ongoing respect shown to all LSAs	Everyone	Immediately and ongoing
8	Students to speak to Student A nicely in college to cheer her up	Students C and D	Immediately and ongoing
9	Students to take this seriously and not laugh about this situation	Students C and D	Immediately and ongoing

10	No phones to be taken from anyone else without permission	Everyone	Immediately and ongoing
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Impact and feedback from Student C: Output 2d

The restorative approach worked well in this case – everyone complied with the actions agreed. When it was explained to Student C that we wanted to video him about his views for this project, he was happy to speak about the process and what it meant for him.

[Please see video clip](#)

There has been a significant change in Student C's behaviour as a result of restorative chats, the Case Conference and tutorials. His general attitude towards others and his work is more positive and his tutor has noted that he is more focused. He has begun work experience in the Painting and Decorating Department where his supervisor has been impressed with his cooperation and motivation. There is a real sense that Student C has become a role model for the rest of his class.



Lessons learned and next steps

As mentioned above, the pre-Case Conference questions form the basis of the meeting. When the Conference took place, Student C left the room half way through and had to be encouraged to return by the Educational Psychologist. Had Student C been given the time to consider the questions he would be asked before going into the meeting, he would have been less anxious and therefore better prepared.

The work begun on the restorative justice approach must be an ongoing process - with learners with learning difficulties and disabilities in particular - as not all have the same reaction as Student B and lessons may take longer to learn. The next step for the College is to secure further training and guidance on what to do when faced with repeated wrongdoing whilst still using this approach.