**Transforming School Culture Through Restorative Practices**

**Academic Year 2018-2019**

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| **Facilitator Information** |
| Instructor: Lindsey HalmanEmail: lindsey@upforlearning.org Phone: (802) 598-3445Office hours: FlexibleCourse location: UP for Learning / 155 Elm Street / Montpelier, VermontCourse meetings (all dates 9am – 4pm): * October 18, 2018
* December 6, 2018
* February 7, 2019
* May 16, 2019
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| **Course Description** |
| *We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society grounded in respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace.*— From the Preamble to the Earth Charter**Restorative Practices Overview/Background:**All humans are hardwired to belong. Just as we need food, shelter and clothing, human beings also need strong and meaningful relationships to thrive. **Restorative Practices (RP)** is an emerging social science that studies how to strengthen relationships between individuals as well as social connections within communities. Every member of a school community has a sphere of influence. This sphere contains an interwoven network of relationships which can influence decisions, policy and practices. The outcomes ultimately depend on the strength of the **relationships** between students, teachers, administrators, families and community members. There is an inherent right of every child to be treated as fully human and to intentionally learn to refuse any less-than-human treatment. Still, it is controversial because the schools we have now are often committed to control through punishments and rewards—sorting, ranking, competition, and the treatment of young people as objects to be acted upon rather than human beings who themselves act in and on the world. Restorative practices are a positive, disruptive force to realizing greater equity in education and stronger relationships. They provide greater balance and strength to the youth-adult partnerships in learning, greater opportunity for building empathy, bridging differences, and strengthening more just, joyful, and sustainable communities. Restorative practices are truly a form of participatory democracy in that they build and heal communities, and serve as a means to work through, resolve, and transform conflicts. RP largely originated as an alternative approach to conflict (Restorative Justice). However, as it has been implemented around the world, it has become clear that RP are most powerful when implemented throughout the community. When implemented holistically, RP help develop a culture where everyone’s voice is heard and valued and relationships become the cornerstone of the community. Instead of top-down punitive practices that erode relationships, Restorative Practices put the emphasis on relationships, collaborative problem solving and collective responsibility. Students, teachers and administrators alike become facilitators of transformative discussion and develop a culture of support. When implemented in schools, RP builds, strengthens, and repairs relationships throughout the learning community. In essence, RP should be understood as a culture that can be developed over time by a learning community to foster healthy relationships and effective conflict transformation.Authentic youth engagement with Restorative Practices requires a shift in the mental models that both adults and youth have about each other. It requires respecting and valuing the unique gifts that come from each group, and valuing the positive results that come from working together. ***Research has proven that Restorative Practices:**** Improve school culture and climate for youth and adults
* Ensure **all** students are productive contributing members of the community
* Improve academic outcomes and close the achievement gap to keep youth in a learning environment
* Reduce educational services lost due to in and out of school suspensions and expulsion by keeping students in the classroom and learning
* Significantly reduce absenteeism
* Enrich current pedagogical practices with more strategies for student centered decision-making
* Work in collaboration with any existing Responsive Classroom/Developmental Design, mindfulness and personalized learning practices. Restorative Practices are a paradigm shift, not a program or initiative.

**Class Overview:** The central goal is to shift the culture of the school through the use of restorative practices. In order for this shift to occur, youth and adults must be at the table in a true partnership. This year long learning community is unique in that youth will sit side-by-side with adults as they work together to craft and implement a culture shift in their schools that supports equitable opportunities, engagement and empowerment. This learning community will support middle and high schools at all phases of implementation, learning and growth through the creation of a year-long learning community. **The goals of the RP learning community will be to provide opportunities to:*** Explore the fundamentals of restorative practices.
* Assess your individual and/or school’s current status relative to mental models and practices aligned with implementation best practices.
* Provide a learning community for problem solving, support and collaboration, given class peers variety of stages of implementation
* Identify the needs of the school community in response to the paradigm shift towards a restorative community
* Provide site-visit opportunities to other schools or community-based resources
* Explore individual inquiry questions through the action research process

A supportive and generative Professional Learning Community (PLC) will meet in person 5 full days throughout the year. These gatherings are rich opportunities to solidify your network of support, refine your skills and to be energized by our shared mission. We will share the joys and challenges of the work, reflect on individual classroom practices, offer practical solutions to common dilemmas and translate theory into practice. Readings will help deepen our understanding of restorative practices, shifting school culture, authentic youth voice, agency and youth-adult partnerships. Readings are chosen based on the interests and needs of participants. Course participants communicate electronically between PLC gatherings sharing reflections/blogging, new resources, and seeking advice on current dilemmas as a catalyst for dialogue within our professional community. The instructor is available throughout the year for on-site or off-site consultation. |

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| **Desired Results / Course Outcomes** |
| **Goal**: Adult team members and their youth partners will have the knowledge, skills and support to create a Restorative Practices implementation plan, problem solve inevitable challenges and assess its impact on the school community over the course of a year. |
| Enduring Understandings… *as a result of the course, learners will understand that:*Restorative Practices are intended to build community and maintain healthy relationships.Since all learning is social by nature, strong relationships fostered by restorative practices play a powerful gatekeeping role.Restorative Practices help an entire learning community understand each individual’s needs in order to create a more equitable experience and set of outcomes.Youth can and should work in collaboration with adults to make their school more engaging for all students. We value the relationship, energy, insight, and creativity that stems from a youth-adult partnership. Engagement in learning is influenced by a complex mix of factors which are subject to change. Being involved in school transformation requires deep personal reflection and a commitment to pedagogical changes based on new understandings. | Essential Questions: What is the role of freedom and democracy in the school setting?Why are we often more comfortable doing things ”to” and “for” students, rather than with them? What is the consequence of this? What is justice?What is restoration?What are the most just or fair ways to handle disciplinary issues in school?What needs to shift in order to empower students to be central players in their learning community? How can I better align my classroom/school practices to reach disengaged students or students just “playing the game of school”?How can I/we engage all stakeholders in understanding the guiding principles and values of restorative practices? What covert and overt institutional barriers to student engagement and voice exist in my school and how can we shift them?  |
| *Learners will know…*The theory, stories and practice of restorative practices in multiple settings and communities. The theory and practices of authentic youth voice and youth-adult partnerships in learning and decision making in transforming to a community that embraces restorative practices.  Characteristics of schools which have increased student engagement in learning and voice in decision making. How circles can be used for learning, conflict/resolution and support for all members of a school community. The three tiers of restorative practices and what they look in practice. How restorative practices can be infused into structures/initiatives that currently exist.The role of restorative practices in helping to shape a more joyful work and learning environment. | *Learners will be able to…*Reflect and expand on their own educational beliefs and practices, resulting in increased classroom engagement. Assess the learning and skill building needs of youth and adults in the school community and develop a plan for implementation. Be comfortable and confident in talking about the vision, language and action research aspects of restorative practices.Serve as advocates for the work. Formulate a systems perspective and strategy for increasing restorative practices and youth voice in learning and decision making based on experience and data.   |
| **Learning Opportunities & Assessment Evidence** 1) **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY**: This is the part of the course that will allow youth and adults time to talk about readings, brainstorm ideas and solutions to challenges, and discuss and learn from each other’s work. There is tremendous field-based expertise when we pool the experiences and talents of all involved in this work. ***How will we assess this?*** **Attendance** at the four full day sessions for our Professional Learning Community + a one day Circle Keeper Training provided by core trainers from the Community Justice Centers is mandatory. In addition, readings and reflective writing assignments must be done prior to meetings so all participants will be able to reference similar texts.  **2) REFLECTIVE WRITING:** Monthly reflective writing pieces documenting your learning. In addition to the monthly written reflection, a final end-of-year reflection presentation. You can address questions such as: what you did, what you learned, and how you are applying that learning to future work, as well as suggestions for refining the work.***How will we assess this?***Whenever possible, written work will be shared with all class participants to capitalize on this fact, developing a vital, virtual learning community. Written work will be assessed according to timeliness and demonstration of critical thinking and strong reflective practices in a proficiency based framework. The course will be in a seminar format utilizing consultancy and dialogue protocols. The course will be designed to energize, enlighten, inform and inspire.3) **YOUR RP ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT**: This course is centered on what you and your team will learn from the implementation of Restorative Practices. This project will stem from an inquiry question and will follow a project-based learning model (inquiry, research, connection with community partners, documentation, reflection and celebration). An outcome of this project will be an action plan for the following year, as there is a continuum of implementation. ***How will we assess this?***A team generated project capturing the impact of your learning and work in a way that is meaningful to your team. This can include photos, documents, drawings, writings, video documentaries, etc. It is up to you and your team to decide what format works best to capture your work throughout the year and be a useful presentation tool to reflect on and assess your journey at the end of the year. |   |

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| **Readings*****Required readings:***[*Shalaby, Carla (2017).Troublemakers: Lessons in Freedom from Young Children at School*](https://www.amazon.com/Troublemakers-Lessons-Freedom-Children-School/dp/1620972360) Beattie, Helen., Rich, Martha. (2018). [Youth-Adult Partnership: The Keystone to Transformation](http://www.upforlearning.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Youth-Adult-Partnerships_FINAL.pdf)*Other readings and resources will be provided throughout the year***Suggested readings:**Watson and Pranis (2015) *Circle Forward: Building a Restorative School Community**Zehr, Howard (2014)The Little Book of Restorative Justice: Revised and Updated (Justice and Peacebuilding)* Toshalis, E., Nakkula, M. (2012) [Motivation, Engagement and Student Voice: Executive Summary](http://archive.upforlearning.org/images/Exec_Toshalis-Nakkula.pdf). Students at the Center |

**Grading Policy**

The Field-based Graduate Program in Education feels strongly that the learning that occurs in each class is very individualized and that assessment should occur based on each individual’s ongoing improvement and progress. Evidence for that progress is therefore determined based on regular self, peer, and instructor assessment throughout the varying activities and discussions during every class session as well as any assignments given for outside of class time. Attendance at each class meeting is very important in order to provide that evidence of continual learning.

Unlike a fully evolved proficiency system, participants in this class need their final assessment in a letter grade form for reimbursement purposes. Each class member taking this course for credit will therefore include in their final paper a rationale for a grade translation based on their ultimate assessment in the three domains noted above. Instructors will review this rationale and issue or amend this proposed grade as deemed appropriate. If the grade is to be amended, the instructor(s) will discuss this with the class participant in depth.

**Attendance Policy**

A great deal of the instruction in this course will occur during in-class time as a result of the implementation of constructivist teaching and subsequent learning for all. It is therefore crucial to attend all class meetings. Planning ahead by looking at your site’s complete Master Schedule and prioritizing your graduate program is mandatory. However, emergencies do happen, and, in the very rare cases they occur, immediate communications with your instructor to determine how to proceed are required.

**Copyright Policy**

Southern New Hampshire University abides by the provisions of United States Copyright Act (Title 17 of the United States Code). Any person who infringes the copyright law is liable. The SNHU Copyright Policy can be accessed from the Shapiro Library’s Copyright LibGuide at http://libguides.snhu.edu/content.php?pid=5411. Questions regarding copyright may be addressed to the Dean of the University Library.

**Academic Honesty Policy**

Southern New Hampshire University requires all students to adhere to high standards of integrity in their academic work. Activities such as plagiarism and cheating are not condoned by the university. Students involved in such activities are subject to serious disciplinary action. Plagiarism is defined as the intentional or unintentional use, whether by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another without full and clear acknowledgment. Cheating includes the giving or receiving of unauthorized assistance on quizzes, examinations, or written assignments from any source not approved by the instructor.

For a full definition of academic dishonesty, please refer to the undergraduate or graduate catalogs.

Southern New Hampshire University is committed to and concerned with meeting the needs of students challenged by physical, sensory, psychiatric and/or learning disabilities with regard to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended, and Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act. At the beginning of each term, or as soon as you become aware of a disability, we encourage you to contact the Office of Disability Services to discuss accommodations for which you may be qualified. For questions concerning support services, documentation guidelines, or general disability issues: Office of Disability Services, Exeter Hall, Suite 59 Hyla Jaffe, Director 603.626.9100 ext.2386 h.jaffe@snhu.edu

**Disability Services - ADA/504 Compliance Statement**

For questions concerning disability related compliance matters, grievance or legal issues: Ms. Jet Goldberg, ADA/504 Compliance Officer Director of Wellness Center 603-645-9679 j.goldberg@snhu.edu

**Library Resources**

In addition to the intellectual resources available on site and online (http://www.snhu.edu/library), Shapiro Library makes available group and one-on-one instruction in information literacy, enabling students to define and articulate what knowledge- based resources are relevant to their research interests. Library staff are available to assist students in effectively and efficiently accessing information from credible sources, to compare new knowledge with prior beliefs, and to consider the related ethical, legal, and socio-economic issues that are inherent in scholarly investigation.

**Web-based Instruction Required**

**\_\_X\_ YES NO \_\_\_ The use of Web-based supplemental instruction is required in this course.**