

HOW CAN RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRACTICES BE UTILIZED TO CREATE A  
POSITIVE CLASSROOM CLIMATE IN A K-2 SETTING?

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## **Introduction**

This project aims at answering the question, *How can Restorative Justice practices be utilized to create a positive classroom climate in a K-2 setting?* Restorative Justice practices within the education system are gaining traction worldwide. Implementing Restorative Justice in Education (RJE) is about changing the hearts and minds of people. Thorsborne and Blood (2013) explain that at the heart of RJE is a desire to create and repair relationships with love at the center (Thorsborne & Blood, 2013). To fully implement RJE one must make a paradigm shift. This paradigm shift allows teachers to view misbehavior in the classroom as an opportunity for learning, not punishments. As teachers and administrators begin to shift into a restorative mindset they are cognisant of their classroom community as a whole. Resolving conflict should be done within the community and not just with individual students.

My first year of teaching was a humbling experience. I struggled with classroom management and knew I needed to shift my approach to handling problematic behavior in my classroom. Through my research and some professional development, I began to implement restorative practices within my classroom. I started with learning about the paradigm shift from traditional forms of discipline to restorative ones. I then worked to implement a morning Circle each day with my students. Afterwards, I reflected on my restorative language and at the end of my first year of teaching, I was resolving conflict restoratively within my classroom. My personal success with implementing RJE led me to create a website that would allow more teachers to have the support and resources they need to do the same.

## Website

I break my website down into four areas of learning, History of RJE, Circle Keeping, Restorative Language, and Conflict Resolution. I encourage viewers of this website to begin with the History of RJE and finish at the Next Steps page. I believe that implementing restorative practices takes time and a teacher should only move on to another section of the website once they feel comfortable with the previous one.

Within each section of the website there are videos, quotes, resources, and visuals that teach and demonstrate how certain restorative practices could be used in a primary classroom. Each section has opportunities for self reflection through the use of journal prompts. Viewers are encouraged to have writing materials with them to write their responses and reflect on the questions posed. One of the last sections of the website is called, Next Steps. On this page I compile book recommendations, videos, and resources to help teachers continue their learning on restorative practices. I want participants to know that learning and implementing restorative practices is a lifelong process.

This website was created with primary teachers in mind. I have found through my own research that there are not many resources that share how to use restorative practices with young students. My website encourages and supports primary teachers to implement restorative practices even with the youngest learners.

Website: <https://sites.google.com/hamline.edu/rje-implementation/home>



*"Restorative Justice is facilitating learning communities that nurture the capacity of people to engage with one another and their environment in a manner that supports and respects the dignity and worth of all."*

*(Evans & Vaandering, 2015, p. 15)*

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