8-2023

Barriers to Implementing and Sustaining Restorative Practice Programs in K-12 Education

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Abstract

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Document Type

Dissertation

Degree Name

Doctor of Education (EdD)

Department

Executive Leadership

First Supervisor

Michael W. Wischnowski, PhD

Subject Categories

Education

Barriers to Implementing and Sustaining Restorative Practice Programs in K-12 Education

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

EdD in Executive Leadership

Supervised by

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August 2023

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my best friend and husband Matthew Zelazny. Thank you for your unwavering support and love.

Biographical Sketch

Barbara Fagan-Zelazny is currently employed at the Rochester City School District. Ms. Fagan-Zelazny attended the State University College at Buffalo from 1989-1992 and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Social Studies Education. She attended Roberts Wesleyan College from 1995-1998 and graduated with a Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction. She attended Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts from 2001-2003 and earned a School District Administrator certification. She came to St. John Fisher University in the fall of 2020 and began doctoral studies in the EdD Program in Executive Leadership. Ms. Fagan-Zelazny pursued her research under the direction of Dr. Michael Wischnowski and Dr. Donna Riter and received the EdD degree in 2023.

Abstract

Restorative practice (RP) improves student learning by focusing on repairing relationships after acts of wrongdoing rather than administering punitive discipline. However, barriers frequently occur when implementing RP in American K-12 public schools. Thus, the purpose of this doctoral project was to acquire an understanding of the barriers impeding RP implementation. A literature review was conducted using the qualitative research synthesis (QRS) strategy to find appropriate RP qualitative studies for analysis with the normalisation process theory (NPT) framework and analytic technique. Four RP qualitative research studies were found with QRS that met the appraisal criteria for NPT analysis. The emerging themes from the NPT analysis identified barriers to RP implementation and strategies to avoid them. The primary barrier was the resistance by educators to change from using punitive discipline to RP after students committed acts of wrongdoing. This resistance to change was due to educators not understanding RP and its tenets as well as holding onto entrenched beliefs regarding student discipline. The preemptive strategy for preventing this barrier was having educators participate in RP circles before, during, and after the RP implementation process. The participation in RP circles helped educators shift their beliefs towards an understanding of RP's efficacy in dealing with student misbehavior. A prospective study is needed to determine if the preemptive strategy actually prevents the resistance-to-change barrier. However, the qualitative data found by integrating QRS and NPT for this project provided a better understanding as to why RP implementation has been so challenging in K-12 education.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

K-12 education is the indispensable process in which children acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed as adults in American society (Serdyukov, 2017). Since 1965, the United States government has instituted laws aimed at reforming the public school system to provide a high-quality education for children regardless of their disability and/or socioeconomic background (United States Department of Education, n.d.). The most recent law enacted in 2015, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), allowed public school districts to invest federal funds in evidence-based interventions designed for improving student learning outcomes (ESSA, n.d.; Ginsberg et al., 2022). These federally funded evidence-based interventions had varying degrees of success because they were rarely implemented as intended (Cook et al., 2019; Lendrum et al., 2013). Consequently, the American public has become cynical about the sustainability of federally funded education interventions and developed a reluctance to invest resources into future initiatives (Horner et al., 2017).

The American K-12 public school system needs education programs that produce high-quality, time- and cost-efficient learning outcomes. Since new education programs only generate successful learning outcomes if they are sustained after implementation, Serdyukov (2017, p. 7) posed these three questions:

1. "Why, with so many concerned with educational innovations, does our educational system not benefit from them?"
2. "What interferes with the creation and implementation of transformative innovations in our schools?"

3. “How can we grow and support innovations successfully?”

These questions suggested that educators need to better identify and understand the problems interfering with K-12 education in American public schools as well as the barriers inhibiting the implementation and/or continuation of initiatives that would resolve these problems.

Disciplinary Policies

Traditional exclusionary discipline procedures such as suspension and expulsion punished students for bad behavior by isolating them from their school (Hashim et al., 2018; Maag, 2012). Zero tolerance policies were developed to dictate a minimal punishment for bad student behavior in response to the increasing gun violence occurring in schools after the 1999 Columbine High School massacre (Buckmaster, 2016). Rather than improving student social behaviors, however, punitive disciplinary approaches promote low student achievement as well as high rates of incarceration, school dropout, and substance abuse (Fabelo et al., 2011; United States Department of Education, 2014). Furthermore, the use of exclusionary punishment has often been administered unfairly to African American and Latino students compared to their White and Asian counterparts (Anyon et al., 2014; Morris, 2018; Skiba, 2014). Mansfield et al. (2018) also found that male and disabled students were suspended at rates higher than their female and non-disabled peers for similar misbehaviors.

Welsh and Little (2018) suggested that disciplinary disparities were not a result of frequent student misconduct or poor socioeconomic conditions, but rather negative school policies and educator misperceptions. Supporting this notion, Joseph et al. (2020) suggested that racial bias and a lack of understanding about how adverse experiences profoundly affected child development led educators to view Black and Latino student behavior as deviant instead of a call for help. Despite equity, access, and inclusion being paramount issues in public education,

exclusionary discipline policies with strict penalties created a negative environment for all students and made schools less safe instead of safer (McNeil et al., 2016).

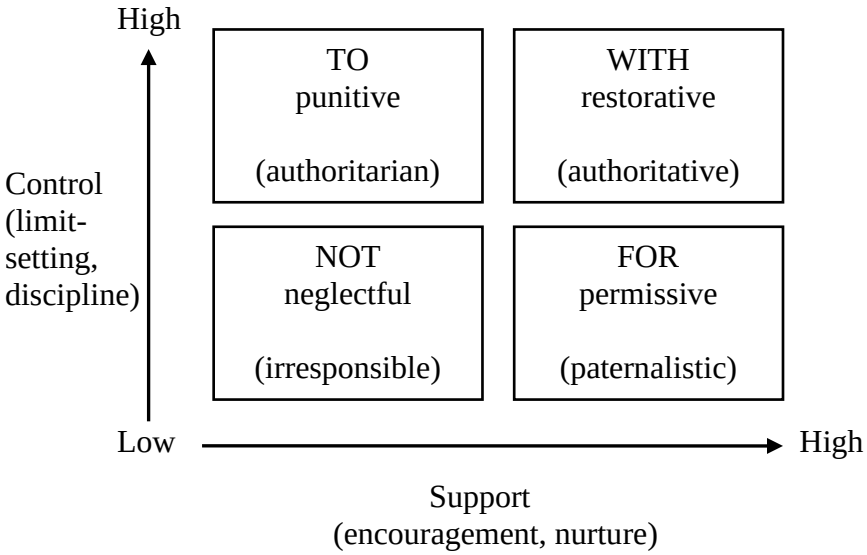
Restorative Practice

The negative impact of traditional and zero tolerance disciplinary polices on students' social growth prompted the need for an alternative model that would help educators develop, implement, and sustain effective policies protecting students from harm (Buckmaster, 2016). One such policy/program model is restorative practice (RP). RP focuses on repairing and restoring relationships between people and their communities after acts of wrongdoing (Wachtel, 2016). The use of RP in public schools has been shown to reduce suspensions/expulsions, increase access to education, and improve the learning environment for all students (Sandwick et al., 2019). RP helps troubled students grow into productive adults rather than experiencing the school-to-prison progression promoted by punitive disciplinary policies (Fronius et al., 2019).

In their seminal paper presentation, McCold and Wachtel (2003) defined RP as a collaborative process that brought those people affected by an offensive act together in a group discussion to repair the harm done by the wrongdoing. The group discussion is steered by the *social discipline window*, which is a tool used to guide the reflection on power and control in school communities (Figure 1.1). The social discipline window encompasses four approaches to maintaining social norms and boundaries, represented as combinations of control and support levels (Wachtel, 2016). Control is the influence over a situation or individual, while support is the means provided to help individuals in their development (Buckmaster, 2016). Using RP's social discipline window to guide group discussions ultimately produces happier students, who are likely to make positive behavioral changes because adults in positions of authority are doing things with them and not to or for them (Wachtel, 2016).

Figure 1.1

Social Discipline Window



Note. Each pane of the social discipline window describes a personality characteristic that a person uses to uphold the norms of society via behavioral boundaries. Restorative practice combines high control with high support, which promotes a person to do things with people instead of to them or for them. Adapted from *Defining Restorative,* by Wachtel, 2016, (https://www.iirp.edu/images/2022/WachtelDefiningRestorative2016.pdf). In the public domain.

Founded by Wachtel in 2000, the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) is an organization currently recognized by national education associations as the RP authority (IIRP, n.d.). The first K-12 school program developed by IIRP was SaferSanerSchools™, which is now known as the Whole-School Change program. Originally described by McCold and Wachtel (2003), this school program uses a continuum of informal and formal RP techniques to help students reflect on how their behavior has affected others (Figure 1.2). This RP continuum stimulates students and teachers to effectively communicate with each other about their feelings rather than teachers punishing students for their offending behaviors.

Figure 1.2

Restorative Practice Continuum

Note. See text for explanation of terms. Adapted from *Defining Restorative*, by Wachtel, 2016, (https://www.iirp.edu/images/2022/WachtelDefiningRestorative2016.pdf). In the public domain.

This continuum of informal and formal RP techniques helps students reflect on how their behavior has affected others. Affective questions such as "What happened?" and "What were you thinking about at the time of the incident?" are intended to start an impromptu conference (meeting) between the victims and the offenders to move them towards a resolution (Wachtel, 2016). This meeting is not a mediation process or counseling, but rather a victim-sensitive problem-solving method that helps people resolve issues in a productive forum (Wachtel, 2016). Based on the traditions of indigenous cultures around the world, restorative circles are a powerful means of bringing healing to the mind, heart, body, and/or spirit using a variety of settings (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Mehl-Madrona & Mainguy, 2014). A restorative circle is a proactive process that allows people to tell their stories from their perspective, which in turn promotes appropriate responses when resolving conflict (Wachtel, 2016). These circles are guided by simple rules agreed upon in advance that include listening respectfully to others, speaking honestly, speaking only when it is your turn, and agreeing to follow established expectations. Lastly, formal restorative conferences are a process whereby the primary

stakeholders come together with a facilitator to talk about what happened, how it impacted people, and how to repair the harm (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012).

Sandwick et al. (2019) suggested that RP effectively interrupted the school-to-prison pipeline, which disproportionately affects students by race, sexuality, and disability. Sandwick et al. further postulated that students experienced an enhanced learning environment when RP was embraced as a philosophy by educators due to an emphasis on addressing underlying issues, repairing harm, and building positive relationships. An earlier study by Gregory et al. (2016) supported this notion. Gregory et al. found that high RP-implementing teachers had more positive relationships with their students since they were perceived as more respectful and less likely to make disciplinary referrals compared to their non-PR counterparts. The findings from both of these studies suggested that fewer instances of conflict and rule breaking occurred in the school setting when teachers proactively built positive student relationships using RP.

Proactively building relationships and developing an overarching sense of community are the cornerstones of RP (Wachtel, 2016; Wachtel & McCold, 2000). Hulvershorn and Mulholland (2018) suggested that when RP is implemented with social-emotional learning (SEL) programs, an opportunity arises for educators to address issues concerning diversity, equity, and inclusion. Furthermore, Hulvershorn and Mulholland proposed that RP was a useful conduit for developing students' SEL skills (e.g., effective communication, kindness, empathy, and caring) since most states have already mandated inclusion of SEL components in K-12 public schools.

RP is also an effective tool for helping students deal with traumatic events in their lives. Chronic trauma adversely affects cognitive and behavioral function as well as relationships with family and friends (Breedlove et al., 2021). Almost 20 years ago, Kinniburgh et al. (2005) found that schools have a substantial number of children who were exposed to traumatic events; these

traumatized students typically presented with severe behaviors such as aggression, dissociation, and/or avoidance that resulted in negative school-relevant outcomes. Hence, Kinniburgh et al. surmised that these children needed a flexible model of intervention to address their continuum of trauma instead of exclusionary and punitive discipline practices.

Positive childhood experiences (PCE) are factors that offset the long-term effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACE), and contribute positively to student outcomes (Breedlove et al., 2021). Table 1.1 summarizes seven childhood PCEs described by Bethell et al. (2019) and five RP elements across school districts described by Anderson et al. (2014).

Table 1.1

Positive Childhood Experiences and Restorative Practice Elements

Positive Childhood Experiences	Restorative Practice Elements
Able to talk to family about feelings	Address needs of school community
Felt family stood by them during tough times	Prevent harmful behaviors
Enjoyed participating in community traditions	Repair harm and restore relationships
Felt a sense of belonging in high school	Resolve conflict and accountability
Felt supported by friends	Healthy relationship between educators and students
Had at least two nonparent adults who took interest in them	
Felt safe and protected by an adult in their home	

This alignment between RP and PCE suggests that RP may provide the set of tools and beliefs that promote healthy childhood development (Breedlove et al., 2021). For example, Bethell et al. (2019) reported that children with no ACEs and a high number of PCEs experienced the best mental health standing compared to their counterparts with ACEs and few PCEs.

The primary problem with implementing RP in K-12 public schools is a lack of understanding as to why implementation difficulties occur. Buckmaster (2016) reported finding little research that explored the underlying difficulties with implementing RP in American public schools. Later, Short et al. (2018) identified challenges to RP implementation: lack of school-wide consistency, staff turnover, competing school initiatives, lack of shared understanding of RP, and lack of stable funding resources. Stable funding resources are unstable because public schools use grants to fund RP initiatives; grants are allocated for a specific monetary amount to be spent over a specific time period (Mansfield et al., 2018). Instead, school districts should focus their grant funds on retaining teachers since they are the trained key practitioners responsible for building RP capacity in other educators (Mansfield et al., 2018). RP requires staff time, buy-in, and training that is more resource-intensive than exclusionary measures (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Staff turnover, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbated the need for steady funding and ongoing RP training.

Besides staff turnover, another challenge with RP implementation is the resistance, misperceptions, and/or unrealistic expectations concerning the efficacy of RP and its implementation process (Mansfield et al., 2018). For example, Gregory et al. (2016) reported that teachers perceived RP conferences and circles to be too time-consuming, interfered with instruction, and did not enhance their accountability or evaluations. Gregory et al. also found that RP required additional techniques to effectively engage teachers given their conflicting values

and fear of lost instructional time. McCold and Wachtel (2003) had previously suggested that teachers use a less resource-intensive and informal approach to provide students an opportunity to think about how their behaviors impacted others.

School districts should consider funding, preparation, and sustainability when planning RP implementation (Lendrum et al., 2013; Lendrum & Humphrey, 2012). Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) reported that educators benefited from using well-articulated, specific resources when implementing and evaluating RP school-based programs. Zakszeski and Rutherford (2021) identified three limitations that hampered practice implementation: (a) inconsistent definitions and descriptions of discrete practices or tools, (b) lack of implementation support and measurement of RP, and (c) evaluations lacked rigor. Zakszeski and Rutherford also suggested that RP was easy to learn from a theoretical/philosophical perspective, but difficult to actually put into practice. Zakszeski and Rutherford as well as Darling-Hammond et al. suggested that school districts integrate RP into existing MTSS and SEL programs rather than develop a stand-alone RP program that may create more work for educators.

Hulvershorn and Mulholland (2018) proposed that RP be implemented with SEL programs. Gregory and Evans (2020) not only proposed that RP be implemented in conjunction with other initiatives, but also suggested future studies identify best practices for how education leaders should synergize their efforts with members of their school community. Table 1.2 summarizes the recommendations Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), Fronius et al. (2019), and Zakszeski and Rutherford (2021) regarding how future research could improve RP implementation in public schools. These future research recommendations emphasized the importance of RP implementation strategies.

Table 1.2

Future Research Recommendations

Recommendations for Future Research
Establish an easily understood, standardized, and concise definition of RP
Assess the factors of a school's readiness to implement RP and how these factors would influence the effectiveness of this program
Identify factors corresponding with implementation fidelity
Investigate successfully implemented RP programs to identify the necessary conditions with the hope of finding replicable examples
Examine the integration or embedding of RP with other multi-tiered programs such as SEL and trauma-informed practices
Perform experimental or quasi-experimental quantitative studies to evaluate RP programs

Note. RP = restorative practice; SEL = social-emotional learning.

Problem Statement

No literature was found that truly synthesized educational research findings to determine what commonalities existed with the difficulties implementing RP in K-12 public schools. Thus, a thorough examination of the educational research literature was conducted using the qualitative research synthesis (QRS) technique under the framework of normalisation process theory (NPT). The results provided an understanding as to why RP implementation has been so challenging in K-12 public schools.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this doctoral project was to conduct a QRS of the RP educational research literature and analyze the literature via the NPT theoretical framework. Integrating QRS and

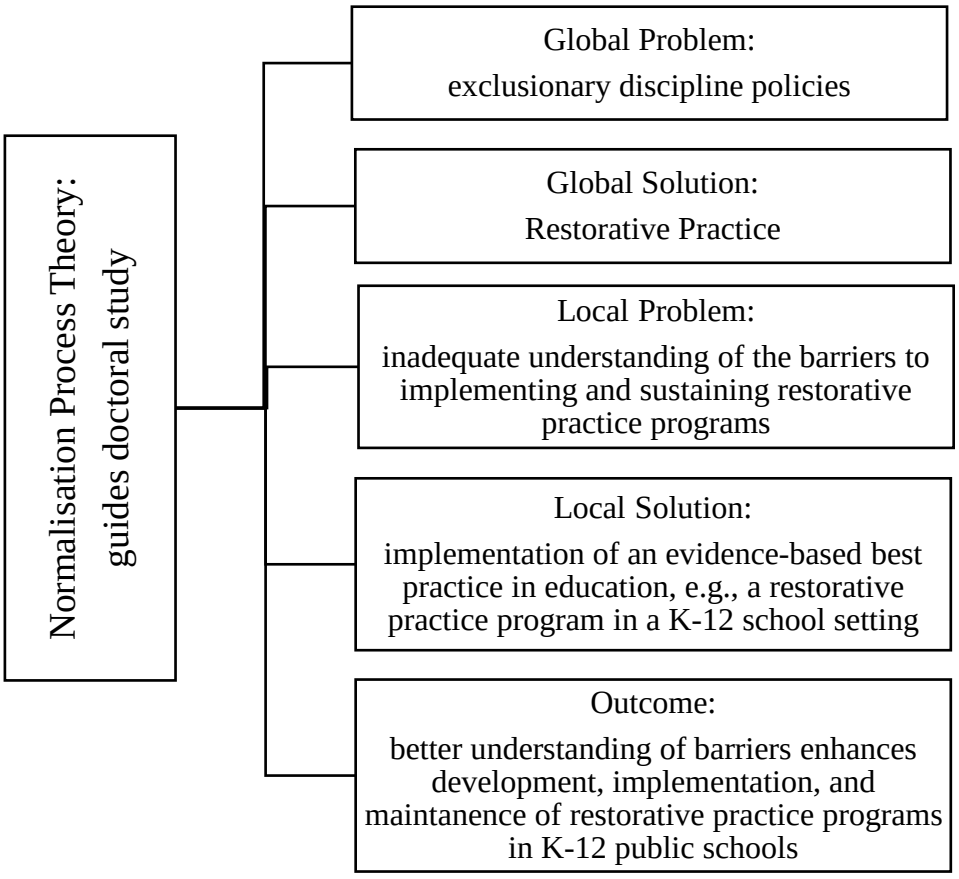
NPT allowed common themes to emerge regarding the difficulties K-12 public schools experience when implementing RP. This information provided literature evidence for improving administrative policy in K-12 public schools.

Research Question and Objective

This doctoral project was guided by this research question: What common RP implementation issues in K-12 public schools emerged from a QRS of the literature using NPT as the conceptual lens? The objective of this project was to acquire a better understanding of the barriers impeding the implementation and maintenance of RP programs in K-12 public schools. Figure 1.3 illustrates the framework for this doctoral project.

Figure 1.3

Doctoral Project Framework



Theoretical Rationale: Normalisation Process Theory

Implementation science uses theoretical approaches to explain how and why implementation succeeds or fails (Nilsen, 2015). NPT was developed to improve the understanding of how people engaged in their work as well as made sense of their actions in the workplace (May, 2006). Key NPT factors have been identified that foster and/or inhibit the implementation and integration of interventions; these factors allow for the tailoring of implementation plans within a particular setting with a specific group of people (May et al., 2020, 2022). Hence, the use of NPT for this doctoral project identified and explained the difficulties with implementing RP in K-12 public schools.

NPT was developed in the early 2000s to address the challenges of implementing and integrating new treatments in health service settings (May et al., 2009; May & Finch, 2009). NPT provided sociological tools to explain the processes by which a new practice of thinking, enacting, and organizing work could be operationalized in institutional settings (May et al., 2020, 2022). The implementation of new procedures requires an understanding of how they are integrated into the daily work routine (May et al., 2022). NPT is an explanatory model with four constructs that characterize the various types of work people engage in when implementing a new practice, intervention, and/or procedure (May et al., 2022). These four NPT constructs are coherence, cognitive participation, collective action, and reflexive monitoring. Each construct represents a generative mechanism of social action that corresponds with the types of work people do as they implement a new practice within their employment setting (May et al., 2022). Each of the four NPT constructs used for this doctoral project are described and defined via their sub-constructs as depicted in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3

Normalisation Process Theory Constructs and Sub-constructs

Construct	Sub-Construct			
Coherence	Differentiation: How people characterize the intervention from current ways of working	Communal specification: How people agree about purpose of the intervention	Individual specification: How a person understands the intervention	Internalization: How people determine potential value of intervention
Cognitive Participation	Initiation: How do key people push through the intervention	Enrollment: How do people join in with the intervention	Legitimation: How people agree that intervention should be part of their work	Activation: How people continue to support the intervention
Collective Action	Interactional workability: How people perform tasks required for intervention	Relational integration: How use of intervention impacts the confidence people have in each other	Skill-set workability: How the work of intervention is assigned to different people	Contextual integration: How work of intervention is supported by the organization
Reflexive Monitoring	Systematization: How people access information regarding effectiveness of intervention	Communal appraisal: How people collaboratively assess the value of intervention	Individual appraisal: How a person assesses the value of intervention	Reconfiguration: How people adjust their work relative to their assessment of the intervention

Note. May et al. (2022). Translational framework for implementation evaluation and research: A Normalisation Process Theory coding manual for qualitative research and instrument development. *Implementation Science, 17*, 19. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13012-022-01191-x

While May et al. (2009) defined coherence as the work that identifies and organizes the objects of practice, McNaughton et al. (2020, p. 220) later redefined coherence as the “making sense of it" piece of the planning process. McNaughton et al. defined cognitive participation as

the work that defines and organizes the enrollment of participants in practice and collective action as the work people do when they are trying to organize their thinking around a new practice. Lastly, May et al. and McNaughton et al. both defined reflexive monitoring as the work involved with evaluating the practice post-implementation.

These constructs act as mechanisms of social action to form the pillars of NPT, which are useful for evaluating the normalization of new practices as well as emphasizing the importance of the organizational work leading to strategic decisions and positive change (May et al., 2022). Over the last 20 years, NPT has been adopted as a theoretical framework for understanding the success/failure of innovation normalization in the healthcare field; it has not been used in the education field (Wood, 2017). Since healthcare and K-12 education both exhibit multifaceted natures, NPT should be successful as a framework for planning, implementing, and evaluating initiatives in K-12 education (Wood, 2017).

Education and healthcare professionals are responsible for delivering high quality service despite enormous challenges, since they both involve complex systems bound by professional standards, high-stakes accountability, and local contexts (Edmondson et al., 2016). The frontline workers in these professions are challenged to deliver critical services with successful outcomes despite scarce resources (Edmondson et al., 2016). Furthermore, a disagreement exists between the urgent need for innovation and the "daily reality of the education system" (Serdyukov, 2017, p. 16). While leaders are essential to the change process, an over reliance on them as the main driver of change has led to a hierarchical process of decision making (Wood, 2017). This hierarchical approach does not work well in schools because they are nonlinear systems that are adaptive rather than predictable, evolving rather than fixed, and an open part of much larger systems rather than a closed entity (Morrison, 2012; Wallace, 2003; Wood, 2017). Continuous

change and improvement are part of the everyday job for educators (Greany & Waterhouse, 2016). Given that American public education needs effective and sustainable innovations, one must consider the notion of implementing RP innovations in K-12 education (Serdyukov, 2017). The similarities between the education and healthcare fields suggest that NPT is an effective implementation framework for evaluating RP interventions.

Potential Significance of the Study

This doctoral project provided clarity of the issues concerning RP implementation in K-12 schools and identified the essential factors for RP implementation. The education system in the United States needs effective interventions that produce time and cost efficient, high-quality learning outcomes (Serdyukov, 2017). By using NPT and QRS to evaluate RP research in K-12 education, this project provided key insights into implementing RP interventions.

Definition of Terms

Circles: a versatile, proactive RP technique used to develop relationships and build community in response to wrongdoing and conflicts (Wachtel, 2016). Circles are commonly applied in K-12 school settings such as community buildings or talking circles for conflict resolution.

Normalisation process theory (NPT): a theoretical tool to sensitize people to issues concerning how practices become integrated into everyday routines in real world settings (May et al., 2022).

Qualitative research synthesis (QRS): a methodological approach used to analyze, synthesize, and interpret results from published qualitative studies (Wimpenny et al., 2014).

Restorative justice theory: a theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by criminal behavior (McCold & Wachtel, 2003).

Restorative practice (RP): a social science that describes how to build social capital and achieve social discipline through participatory learning and decision-making (Wachtel, 2016).

Social discipline window: a concept that describes four approaches to maintaining social norms and behavioral boundaries (Wachtel, 2016).

Chapter Summary

One challenge impeding RP from reaching its full potential in K-12 public schools is the lack of a theoretical framework guiding the implementation of new practices. NPT concerns the actions of individuals and groups that are crucial for implementing, embedding, and integrating new education practices. Previous research regarding the effectiveness of RP within K-12 public schools identified issues with implementation and the need to assess the factors associated with a school's readiness to implement RP as well as evaluate the effectiveness of the RP program. NPT provides a theoretical framework to identify factors that correspond with implementation fidelity and are associated with implementation issues in K-12 education. The following chapters discuss the literature review (Chapter 2), the methodology (Chapter 3), the qualitative results (Chapter 4), and the conclusive meaning of the qualitative data (Chapter 5) associated with conducting this doctoral project.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Previous innovations to improve the K-12 education process yielded limited results due to politics, constrained monetary budgets, and long-established paradigms that influenced policy and practice instead of research evidence (Serdyukov, 2017). Although implementing restorative practice (RP) has been shown to enhance K-12 education, RP programs have not been sustainable due to barriers blocking educators and administrators from demonstrating its value to students and their parents (Slavin, 2020). For this doctoral education project, the Normalisation Process Theory (NPT) guided the discovery of the barriers inhibiting the use of RP and the constructs necessary to use when establishing a sustainable RP program in K-12 public schools.

As previously mentioned, the theoretical tenets of NPT have rarely – if at all – been applied to using RP in K-12 education. Therefore, a literature review was conducted to examine implementation and evaluation processes using NPT. Specifically, this doctoral literature review focused on (a) identifying the topics studied, (b) how NPT was used and in what implementation phase, and (c) what benefits the authors reported concerning the use of NPT. The Education Source, PubMed, and ERIC databases were searched using these key terms: normalisation process theory, systematic review, restorative practice, education, 2010-2020 years, and English language. This literature search found three systematic review articles that described the application of NPT within the national healthcare system of the United Kingdom (UK): McEvoy et al. (2014), May et al. (2018), and Huddlestone et al. (2020). The following discussion describes each of these publications in this format: research topic(s) identification, stage(s) of implementation using NPT, and authors' reflections regarding NPT.

McEvoy et al. (2014)

McEvoy et al. (2014) conducted a systemic review of 29 studies published between 2006-2012 that used NPT to investigate implementation processes in a United Kingdom (UK) healthcare setting. McEvoy et al. sought to discover how NPT was operationalized, what interventions were being analyzed, and what benefits were reported. McEvoy et al. found in the qualitative studies they reviewed that NPT was used to implement multidimensional interventions, which promoted a new way of working in a health care setting.

NPT Research Topics

McEvoy et al. (2014) identified a variety of healthcare topics in which NPT was used such as telemedicine, e-health, speech and language therapy, mental health in primary care, chronic heart failure, and diabetes. Although these NPT studies concerned healthcare topics, the NPT processes involving implementation of complex healthcare interventions should be applicable to implementing RP interventions in the complex systems of K-12 school/districts. The use of NPT processes to evaluate healthcare interventions should also be relevant to evaluating RP implementation in education settings that would improve learning outcomes.

How NPT Operationalized

McEvoy et al. (2014) found that 11 studies utilized all four NPT constructs, 17 studies used collective action, and one study only used coherence. Table 2.1 summarizes the operationalization of NPT constructs in the 29 studies reviewed by McEvoy et al. Overall, McEvoy et al. found that NPT was used to organize, analyze, and report research findings. However, McEvoy et al. also identified phases of the implementation process that demonstrated a novel use of NPT: intervention design (five studies), development of research questions (three studies), and creation of implementation tools (two studies).

Table 2.1

Normalisation Process Theory Construct Analysis

Construct	Analysis
Coherence	Emphasis on understanding and conceptualization of interventions and their work
Cognitive Participation	Emphasis on beliefs of legitimization and buy-in
Collective Action	Emphasis on resources, training, division of roles and responsibilities, level of expertise, and workability of interventions in clinical settings
Reflexive Monitoring	Emphasis on evaluating and monitoring intervention implementation

Note. McEnvoy et al. (2014). A systematic qualitative review of studies using the normalization process theory to research implementation processes. *Implementation Science*, *9*, 2. https://doi.org/10.1186/1748-5908-9-2

Authors' Reflections on NPT

McEvoy et al. (2014) reported that most investigators agreed NPT was beneficial as a conceptual framework with which to analyze implementation procedures, but that NPT needed to be developed further via the creation of new methodological tools. Furthermore, McEvoy et al. concluded that NPT was a generalizable theoretical framework that could be applied in other contexts – such as RP – to gain analytical knowledge of the implementation and evaluation processes. Lastly, McEvoy et al. recommended that future investigators (a) explain why they chose NPT, (b) consider whole-system analyses versus single stakeholder perspectives, and (c) use NPT for prospective data analysis and collection. As the original architects of NPT, May et al. (2020, 2022) applied these recommendations and further refined NPT as both a theoretical framework and analytical tool.

May et al. (2018)

May et al. (2018) conducted a systematic literature review with 108 studies that used NPT. In this review, May et al. concluded that NPT had been used for evaluating the implementation of healthcare interventions, which were organized into seven categories: service organization and delivery, diagnostics and therapeutic interventions, e-health and telemedicine, screening and surveillance tools, decision support and shared decision making, changes in professional roles, and guideline implementation.

NPT Research Topics

As the most prevalent topic, May et al. (2018) identified 29 UK studies in which service organization and delivery was investigated in diverse healthcare areas such as mental health in primary care planning, collaborative care for depression, and case management for chronic disease. As one example, Kennedy et al. (2013, 2014) performed a randomized controlled trial (RCT) to ascertain if the implementation of Whole System Informing Self-Management Engagement (WISE) developed to improve self-management of chronic diseases. Kennedy et al. found no statistically significant differences between the WISE trained patients and the control patients using the usual self-management practices. Consequently, Kennedy et al. conducted a follow-up study using NPT as the framework for analysis to determine the aspects of the WISE that did not work for multiple patients. Kennedy et al. discovered that the gap between policy presumptions and perceived lack of relevance for caregivers led to a decrease implementation of the WISE protocol. Similarly, NPT may provide a useful framework for evaluating educational innovation at a school or district demonstrating ineffective RP implementation.

May et al. (2018) identified diagnostics and therapeutic interventions as the second most prevalent topic in their review of 28 studies using NPT in the primary healthcare management of

chronic conditions such as pulmonary disease, kidney disease, diabetes, and back pain. For example, Martindale et al. (2017) evaluated the implementation of information cards in the UK that were developed to provide guidance for chronic kidney disease patients taking specific medications on days they did not feel well. Martindale et al. used NPT to analyze the data to determine the effectiveness of the information cards. As previously stated, NPT could similarly be used to effectively assess RP initiatives implemented in K-12 public schools because many RP programs include recommendations and guidance to educators and students.

May et al. (2018) identified 21 NPT studies in the e-health and telemedicine category that included surgical assessment, substance abuse management, and mental health services. For example, Owens and Charles (2016) conducted a feasibility study using NPT on a text-messaging intervention for adolescents who engaged in self-harm. Owens and Charles concluded that competing priorities, heavy workloads, and loyalty to existing practices increased the work needed to test the efficacy of an intervention. Similar to these RP implementation roadblocks, Short et al. (2018) identified school-wide inconsistency, staff turnover, and a lack of understanding RP impeding RP implementation in public schools. Thus, K-12 public schools and districts could benefit from using NPT to guide their prospectus planning of RP interventions.

May et al. (2018) identified 11 NPT studies in the screening and surveillance tools category that sought to improve screening for genetic conditions, partner violence, and chlamydia. May et al. also identified eight studies in the decision support and shared decision-making category, seven studies in the changes in professional roles category, and four studies in the guideline implementation category. The NPT-related methodologies used in these studies could be used to investigate and understand the barriers to implementing and sustaining RP programs in K-12 public schools.

How NPT Operationalized

May et al. (2018) identified 73 studies involving process evaluations. In one example, Segrott et al. (2017) used a mixed-method design with RCT and interview techniques to evaluate the implementation process of the Strengthening Families Program (SFP) in the UK. Segrott et al. used the NPT framework to assess the effectiveness of SFP behavioral outcomes and better understand the interactive relationship between the SFP intervention and local delivery systems. With this study, Segrott et al. demonstrated the usefulness of NPT as a tool for identifying and measuring the key factors that influenced the reliable implementation of SFP. RP is a complex social intervention like SFP that is difficult to measure and evaluate when implementing it in an education setting (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Zakszeski & Rutherford, 2021). Hence, NPT may provide the necessary framework for RP educational research.

May et al. (2018) identified 25 feasibility studies. For example, Finch et al. (2014) used NPT as an analysis tool in a feasibility study aimed at exploring cognitive behavioral therapy interventions (CPTi) for adults suffering from a fear of falling. Using the coherence construct of NPT, Finch et al. identified two areas of work that the stakeholders found necessary for developing and implementing the CPTi intervention. The ability to use NPT and its constructs to identify and understand the needs of the stakeholders prior to implementation may be a critical component for developing and implementing effective RP behavioral interventions.

May et al. (2018) identified seven field studies. For example, Lhussier et al. (2015) conducted a field study that used NPT as a framework for identifying markers of embedding care planning into ten UK primary care practices. Lhussier et al. found that care planning was a good intervention for managing co-morbidity of chronic diseases and improving patient outcomes.

Similarly, Gregory and Evans (2020) noted that as schools implement RP program, they should be embedded within school wide systems as well as in conjunction with initiatives as with SEL.

May et al. (2018) identified one study that used NPT as an intervention design. For example, Brooks et al. (2015) used NPT as a sensitizing tool in combination with qualitative interviews to identify the perspectives of key people regarding the factors informing practice and policy on mental health management. In particular, Brooks et al. sought to identify the barriers that influenced implementation of training led by both clients and caregivers. In this manner, NPT could be used to design schoolwide RP processes to improve implementation outcomes.

Lastly, May et al. (2018) identified one study that used NPT for a retrospective analysis. For example, Willis et al. (2012) used NPT to analyze documents obtained from a RCT study in Australia. Willis et al. demonstrated that NPT was a useful method for analyzing data associated with the implementation and sustainability of complex interventions. This finding suggested that RP research benefited from the NPT retrospective analysis when investigating barriers to implementation of RP programs in K-12 schools.

Authors' Reflections on NPT

May et al. (2018) found in their review that investigators used NPT as a conceptual framework to describe implementation processes, develop research design, and conduct data analysis. For example, Martindale et al. (2017) reflected that NPT led to key insights into the comprehensive use and evaluation of their patient information cards. May et al. also reflected that NPT-based methodologies provided researchers with an explanation of the processes aiding intervention development, implementation planning and evaluation, which ultimately led to a better understanding. Similar to McEvoy et al. (2014), the positive results found in the May et al. review article suggested that the NPT framework could be used to evaluate RP implementation

processes, reduce barriers, and improve learning outcomes for children in public schools. Lastly, May et al. recommended that investigators focus on using the collective action construct for implementation studies as well as developing true mixed method studies that would better elucidate the subtleties of the implementation processes within different settings.

Huddlestone et al. (2020)

Huddlestone et al. (2020) expanded the work of the earlier systematic literature reviews by examining NPT-related studies conducted in UK primary care settings that were published between 2012-2018. Huddlestone et al. sought to understand how and why clinical investigators and primary care providers increasingly used NPT, ultimately arriving at similar conclusions as May et al. (2018).

NPT Research Topics

Huddlestone et al. (2020) reviewed 31 research articles describing the operationalization of NPT and found that 17 studies focused on chronic mental health conditions, six studies examined communication and consultation, six studies assessed prescription and medication processes, five studies investigated health care referral services, and two studies described improving health overall. These topics were very similar to the May et al. (2018) literature review – even including some of the same studies.

How NPT Operationalized

Huddlestone et al. (2020) reported 26 of the studies involved process evaluations after various phases of implementation and five studies examining intervention development. For example, Reeve et al. (2018) acknowledged the need for multifaceted interventions to resolve the complex problems faced by healthcare providers and their clients, while also noting the difficulties in translating research findings into practice. Reeve et al. used NPT to evaluate the

implementation of a mental health care intervention in primary care settings, identifying problems in various primary care contexts. Reeve et al. found that the NPT framework successfully allowed the systematic identification of key components, which were then used to modify the complex mental health intervention for improved patient care. The study by Reeve et al. drew attention to the use of NPT as a development tool and not just for implementation of a complex healthcare intervention. Furthermore, Reeve et al. described the use of NPT in the research process to generate practice-based evidence. School districts struggling with effective implementation of RP could benefit from a similar process.

Authors' Reflections on NPT

Huddlestone et al. (2020) reported that the rationale for using NPT included aiding the implementation planning, analysis, and design to identify facilitators and/or barriers to enhance the understanding of a stakeholder's perspective regarding implementing an intervention. Huddlestone et al. concluded:

> NPT provided researchers within the UK primary healthcare system an effective and flexible method for understanding a diverse range of interventions implemented…, the tools to understand theoretical and practical challenge of implementation design and evaluation…, a constructive framework for explaining critical implementation processes…, and appears helpful in understanding the implementation and evaluation of interventions in resource constrained contexts (p. 12).

Public schools frequently utilize grants to fund new RP initiatives and frequently have to manage competing priorities (Mansfield et al., 2018). The findings by Huddlestone et al. (2020) indicated that NPT may be an effective theoretical framework with tools to improve the implementation process and ultimately learning outcomes in public schools. Huddlestone et al. also suggested

that future researchers provide a rationale for using NPT when publishing their work, so other researchers could decide if NPT was an appropriate tool for their study. Huddleston et al. not only recommended NPT as a research tool to gain knowledge on whole systems, but also encouraged the use of NPT to examine multiple stakeholder's perspectives. These recommendations by Huddlestone et al. align with the suggestions may by May et al. (2018) and McEvoy et al. (2014).

Normalisation Process Theory in Education

One study was found that linked an aspect of UK public education and NPT. Chambers et al. (2020) sought to identify key factors that policy makers should consider when implementing educational interventions, based on how stakeholders felt about the implementation of the Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) program in Scotland. Chambers et al. performed a qualitative case study with 29 school stakeholders in Year 1, 18 school stakeholders in Year 2, and 19 local authority stakeholders. After the interview and observational data were coded using the NPT constructs, Chambers et al. analyzed the qualitative data documenting the stakeholders' perspectives, then cross-referenced the results to provide insights on how different opinions depended on the stakeholder's role. Chambers et al. organized their findings based on the NPT constructs coherence, cognitive participation, collective action, and reflexive monitoring as well as their corresponding sub-constructs.

Chambers et al. (2020) found that the most significant learning area was connected to the degree of understanding (i.e., coherence) various stakeholders held about the purpose of the UFSM program. Chambers et al. described how the sense-making about this program differed between the education staff and policymakers, which impacted the cognitive participation and Collective Action work relative to the successful implementation of USFM. For example,

Chambers et al. noted that the catering staff perceived the educational staff to be partially committed to the implementation of UFSM yet unwilling to take the lead. Chambers et al. also found that the educational staff perceived a disconnect between themselves and policymakers regarding the amount of time spent delivering UFSM as well as the inappropriate low funding levels necessary for proper implementation. These findings illustrated that the staff perceived the UFSM as making their jobs harder not easier, which jeopardized long-term buy in of this program. Lastly, Chambers et al. reported a lack of appraisal beyond the initial start of USFM, which threatened long-term viability. The insights generated from an NPT study such as Chambers et al. provides critical lessons for effective implementation of RP in K-12 schools.

Chapter Summary

The literature review studies by Huddlestone et al. (2020), May et al. (2018), and McEvoy et al. (2014) demonstrated the usefulness of NPT as a model for change in various settings and under multifaceted conditions. Furthermore, Huddlestone et al., May et al., and McEvoy et al. arrived at similar conclusions regarding the effective use of NPT for implementing and evaluating complex healthcare interventions. However, Huddlestone et al., May et al., and McEvoy et al. expressed concern about future researchers rigidly using NPT that would force all findings into one construct. Thus, Huddlestone et al. suggested that data falling outside of the NPT constructs not be viewed as problematic since the architects of NPT recommended its heuristic use. The flexible nature of NPT suggested it could be successfully applied in non-healthcare fields (e.g., education), interventions (e.g., RP program), and settings (e.g., K-12 public school).

Both May et al. (2018) and Huddlestone et al. (2020) noted the increased prospective use of NPT, whereas McEvoy et al. (2014) found the majority of investigators applied NPT

retrospectively. Increasingly, researchers shared their rationale for using NPT as noted in the reviews by May et al. and Huddlestone et al. and previously encouraged by McEvoy et al. Lastly, Huddlestone et al. and May et al. noted that NPT studies mostly focused on the action of implementing (delivering) a complex intervention rather than considering the perspective of the workers receiving the intervention.

Available research literature on RP and NPT is nascent. Chambers et al. (2020) was the only study found that linked education and NPT. These investigators noted that despite being implemented as prescribed by the stakeholders, critical issues arose with (a) reconciling differences between practice and the opinions expressed by the educator/catering staff and (b) lack of attention on the long-term goals of the program. Furthermore, no literature was found that described using QRS to examine high-quality research evidence concerning RP implementation in K-12 schools and/or using an implementation theoretical framework like NPT for data analysis. RP implementation is a challenging process due to significant barriers. Using the QRS technique may lead to a better understanding of RP implementation challenges and barriers, which would allow for the development of improved evidence-based practice and policy.

Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Many American school districts have implemented restorative practice (RP) to improve their climate and culture as an alternative to exclusionary discipline (Maag, 2012). Research findings in education and other disciplines have shown that interventions were rarely implemented as intended, which resulted in varying degrees of successful outcomes (Lendrum et al., 2013; Lendrum & Humphrey, 2012). RP programs would improve student learning outcomes in K-12 public schools if they were implemented without barriers that presented as roadblocks to success (Buckmaster, 2016). No education literature was found that synthesized research findings to determine the best practice for implementing RP in K-12 public schools nor how to circumvent any barriers. This doctoral project rectified this problem by examining the education qualitative research literature using qualitative research synthesis (QRS) and normalisation process theory (NPT) to answer this research question: What common RP implementation issues in K-12 public schools will emerge from a QRS of the literature using NPT as the conceptual lens? The following information describes the methodology used to conduct this doctoral project.

Research Design

QRS is a methodologically grounded approach that uses qualitative methods to analyze, synthesize, and interpret results from published qualitative studies (Wimpenny et al., 2014). Using the QRS procedure developed by Major and Savin-Baden (2012), a synthesis of high-quality qualitative studies was conducted that thoroughly examined current RP practice literature. Table 3.1 illustrates the steps in the QRS procedure performed to complete this doctoral project and answer the research question.

Table 3.1

Procedure for Qualitative Research Synthesis

Steps
Literature Search/Quality Appraisal
1. Identify studies related to a research question.
2. Organize qualitative studies across a large area of literature.
3. Examine the theories and methods used in each study.
Data Analysis using normalisation process theory
4. Compare and analyze findings in each study.
Conclusion aka Chapter 5
5. Undertake an interpretation of findings across the studies.
6. Present an interpretive narrative about the synthesis of findings.
7. Provide a series of recommendations.

Note. Adapted from *An introduction to qualitative research synthesis: Managing the information explosion in social science research*, by Major and Savin-Baden, 2012, (https://www.perlego.com/book/1617140/an-introduction-to-qualitative-research-synthesis-managing-the-information-explosion-in-social-science-research-pdf). In the public domain.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection began after approval was obtained by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at St. John Fisher University. A search for relevant literature in the Education Source and ERIC databases was conducted using these key terms: restorative practice qualitative research, implementation, evaluation, and K-12 education. The literature search was refined using the inclusion and exclusion criteria described in Table 3.2. Each article was then personally reviewed and chosen for its relevancy to the research question. Major and Savin-Baden (2012) surmised that four, and up to 10, qualitative studies provide sufficient data for QRS.

Table 3.2

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
empirical qualitative research study	quantitative research study
occurred between 2017-2023	systematic literature review study
conducted in the United States	secondary qualitative research study
data relates to implementation of restorative practice in K-12 schools	
research design details evaluation of RP implementation process	

The final sample of literature was summarized in a data table (Appendix A). The qualitative research articles were then critically appraised for quality and congruence as per Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

Criteria for Study Quality Appraisal

Quality Appraisal Questions
1. Is there acknowledgement of researcher stance?
2. Does congruity exist between researcher stance and methodology?
3. Does congruity exist between the research question and goal?
4. Does congruity exist between research question, data collection and analysis techniques?
5. Does congruity exist between research methodology and interpretation of the findings?

Note. Adapted from *An introduction to qualitative research synthesis: Managing the information explosion in social science research*, by Major and Savin-Baden, 2012,

(https://www.perlego.com/book/1617140/an-introduction-to-qualitative-research-synthesis-managing-the-information-explosion-in-social-science-research-pdf). In the public domain.

Data Analysis Procedures

Phase 1 of the data analysis identified the overarching first order themes via coding the quotes from the literature found with the QRS technique into qualitative data. The NPT data analysis/coding process was conducted per the NPT coding manual so to establish the translational framework for RP implementation and evaluation (May et al., 2022). Appendix B shows how the QRS data elicited from each article was coded via the four NPT constructs: (a) coherence: how people work together to plan and implement an intervention; (b) cognitive participation: how people work together to create practices associated with an intervention; (c) collective action: how people work together to put into action the intervention; and (d) reflexive monitoring: how people work together to evaluate interventions (May et al., 2022).

Phase 2 of the data analysis involved coding the Phase 1 second order thematic data into third order themes using the NPT sub-constructs. (The NPT sub-constructs were briefly described in Table 1.3 and are thoroughly defined in Appendix C.) The process of moving from second order themes to third order ones promoted detection of the "important patterns and connections among first order themes and ensuring that iterative cycles of interpretation occur" (Major & Savin-Baden, 2012, p. 67). This interactive interpretation allowed third order themes to emerge as concepts to be compared, reviewed, and reconsidered (Major & Savin-Baden, 2012). The recurrence of themes suggested saturation throughout the NPT analysis process.

Plausibility

Transparency about the data collection, analysis, and interpretation processes were key aspects of this project (Major & Savin-Baden, 2012). While creating transparency was not

always concretely possible, this project identified the four primary criteria guiding the quest for plausibility as described by Major and Savin-Baden (2012): (a) locating realities, (b) locating the researcher, (c) locating included studies, and (d) locating the research results. This process was not linear with aspects of these criteria identifiable throughout the study design.

- Locating realities refers to the efforts made with establishing confidence about the truthful handling and interpretation of the data, ultimately creating an accurate representation of the experience of participants. This study used NPT to analyze, code, and interpret the qualitative data in an organized manner.
- Locating the researcher refers to how the researcher positioned themselves in relation to the methodology as well as how data was managed and constructed for analysis and interpretation.
- Locating included studies refers to examining the way data was organized with consideration of how the authors could have categorized the data differently. Appendices A-C contain the comparative summary and analysis of the qualitative studies selected for this project to allow the data to be displayed for transparency and establish credibility.
- Locating the research results refers to the notion that the research should authentically reflect how one's perspective shapes the contexts of their life as well as represent each participant's lived experiences.

In summarizing each study, the research demonstrated an awareness of the differences in the voices of the participants via an exploration of how each person's perspective shaped the context of their data (Major & Savin-Baden, 2012). Additionally, an important influence on this project was the fact that the researcher has more than 12 years of experience working with RP as

an expert educator and school leader. Furthermore, the researcher has participated in RP training and is a recognized expert RP consultant among school educators in numerous school districts.

Chapter Summary

American school districts try to implement RP in the hopes of improving school climate and culture as an alternative to exclusionary discipline. Consequently, RP research literature has proliferated in recent years to document effective practices of RP implementation. The information in this chapter described the research design for this doctoral project and the methods used for literature search and data analysis. QRS was used to search for, appraise the quality of, and decide on the appropriate RP qualitative research literature. The chosen published qualitative research articles related to RP implementation then underwent NPT analysis to reveal common themes involving the barriers to RP implementation in K-12 public schools. The resulting thematic information may enhance the understanding of RP and promote the development of evidence-based practice and policy in K-12 public schools.

Chapter 4: Results

The qualitative data presented in this chapter were the result of conducting a qualitative research synthesis (QRS) of restorative practice (RP) educational research literature and analyzing pertinent articles with normalisation process theory (NPT). These findings served to answer the research question: What common RP implementation issues in K-12 public schools emerged from a QRS of the literature using NPT as the conceptual lens? The resulting qualitative data provided information regarding the barriers to implementing RP programs in K-12 schools.

Literature Search/Quality Appraisal

Data collection began after IRB approval was obtained for this doctoral project. A total of 861 citations were found in the Education Source database when searching for English-language articles published during 2017-2023 in peer-reviewed academic journals using the key term of restorative practice qualitative research. The number of citations fell to 313 after refining the search with the key terms of implementation and evaluation. The number of citations was further reduced to 30 after applying the key term of restorative practice in abstract. When the exclusion criteria of non-research articles, systematic review articles, non-United States based study, and non-K-12 education study were applied, 13 citations remained that described qualitative, case study, and/or mixed methods (i.e., combined quantitative and qualitative methodology) research articles. Repeating the literature search process with the ERIC database produced six additional citations that included one qualitative case study and five dissertations. A Google search using the same terms produced one additional qualitative study. A grand total of 19 studies involving RP were found for this doctoral project.

Each of the 19 research articles/dissertations were individually scrutinized to determine if they truly described a qualitative study relevant to the research question. For inter-rater reliability and second opinion, an independent evaluation of the articles was simultaneously conducted by an experienced researcher. When compared, both evaluations found the same seven qualitative research articles relevant to the research question (summarized in Appendix A). These seven articles underwent the quality appraisal process; the results are shown in Table 4.1. Only four qualitative research articles met all the quality appraisal criteria and underwent NPT analysis: Sandwick et al. (2019), Kervick et al. (2020), Joseph et al. (2021), and Hall et al. (2021).

Table 4.1

Quality Appraisal of the Seven Qualitative Research Study Articles

Quality Appraisal Questions	Study 1 Sandwick et al. (2019)	Study 2 Kervick et al. (2020)	Study 3 Joseph et al. (2021)	Study 4 Hall et al. (2021)	Study 5 Smith et al. (2021)	Study 6 Crowe (2018)	Study 7 Motsinger (2018)
Was there acknowledgement of researcher stance?	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Was there congruity between researcher stance and methodology?	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Was there congruity between research goal and question?	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no
Was there congruity between research question, data collection, and data analysis?	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no
Was there congruity between methodology and interpretation of findings?	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no

Data Analysis

The four qualitative research articles meeting all the quality appraisal criteria were analyzed via NPT. The most important quotes designated as the qualitative findings were organized under each individual NPT sub-construct for each of the four articles (Appendix B). Table 4.2 summarizes the overall themes found within each NPT construct. The narrative data further describes the thematic results for each NPT construct and sub-construct.

Table 4.2

Overall Themes per Normalisation Process Theory Construct

Construct	Theme
Coherence	Training and its continuation are vital to developing an understanding of restorative practice and its proper utilization within the K-12 public school setting.
	Active participation in training activities serves to promote an understanding of restorative practice and its requirements, which in turn helps people shift their beliefs regarding how it works to resolve conflict.
Cognitive Participation	Barriers to implementing restorative practice in K-12 schools are directly related to the advocacy of the school principal and district leaders.
	When school leaders actively promote and directly participate in the implementation of restorative practice, they serve to develop trust between staff, teachers, and parents. In turn, people develop the belief that restorative practice is an effective response to wrongdoing.
Collective Action	School leaders must explicitly prioritize restorative practice by embedding it into existing K-12 public school systems while providing resources such as additional staff, training, and support. Such leadership actions enhance the buy-in of staff and teachers.
	Barriers to implementing and sustaining restorative practice include the lack of providing adequate resources and professional development as well as the persistent nature of school districts to solution hop from initiative to initiative.
Reflexive Monitoring	Clear and consistent communication from school leaders regarding restorative practice and its positive effects are essential to sustaining buy-in and offsetting skepticism.
	Leadership must create professional development opportunities for staff and teachers to reflect, collaborate, and improve on the restorative practice initiatives once restorative practice is embedded into the K-12 school system to aid its future sustainability.

Narrative Data

NPT has four constructs that are each composed of four sub-constructs (May et al., 2022). When each of the four qualitative research articles underwent NPT analysis per the procedure described by May et al. (2022), the qualitative data aligned within all four constructs. Most of the quotes fell under the collective action construct; the reflexive monitoring construct contained the fewest quotes. The NPT analysis of the four articles identified qualitative data within 15 out of the 16 sub-constructs. The sub-construct, individual appraisal under the reflexive monitoring construct, was the only one in which no data were found in any of the four qualitative research articles. Several themes regarding RP implementation were identified as a result of the NPT analysis. The following discussion articulates this information within each construct and sub-construct.

Coherence

Coherence refers to how the school employees worked together to understand RP and plan its implementation (May et al., 2022). The identified themes related to coherence centered on the logistics of RP implementation and its inherent value when used in a K-12 school system. Most quotes aligned with the communal specification sub-construct and the fewest ones with internalization.

Differentiation. Differentiation focuses on how people distinguished RP from their current ways of working (May et al., 2022). When comparing RP to exclusionary discipline, the concept of RP was viewed as cumbersome (Sandwick et al., 2019). As one person said, "Compared to traditional punitive measures, RP felt burdensome… there was no guarantee that the underlying issue would be resolved by the end of a given RP response" (Sandwick et al.,

2019, p. 20). A school leader spoke about understanding the need to reduce suspensions but did not understand how RP translated into terms of consequences.

> I just want more ideas, especially for our alternative consequences. I believe that when a child does something they deserve a consequence, but what are some alternative ones? It doesn't always have to be suspension, but what are things we can do that are more purposeful? (Joseph et al., 2021, p. 106)

Additionally, some educators' long-established beliefs about punitive discipline versus RP made them resistant to change. One social worker stated, "Overall, some of the teachers have a very punitive approach. It's hard for them to shift between the former ways of being more punitive and going into more of the restorative approaches" (Hall et al., 2021, p 373).

These qualitative findings illustrated the struggle many educators experienced with the differentiation between RP and traditional disciplinary practices because of their difficulty understanding how RP translated into behavioral consequences. These findings also showed the difficulty educators had with accounting for the time required to use RP, which may explain why some of them resisted change and defaulted to their original punitive disciplinary practice.

Communal Specification. Communal specification concerns how people agreed on the purpose of RP (May et al., 2022). Most people did so by comparing RP to their existing school behavioral system, which served to clarify understandings. One person stated:

> People really don't understand what [RP] fully is or where it could go. I mean we're already doing PBIS, right? So, there's already an emphasis on incentivizing positive behaviors rather than crazy punishing infractions. So, I think many people just feel like [RP] is a natural extension of PBIS. (Kervick et al., 2020, p. 172)

Another way people agreed on the purpose of RP was to identify their beliefs. One administrator stated, “I believe that not all students should be given a suspension. It should be more differentiated, just like with instruction…students being able to have a voice and being heard is what’s most important here” (Joseph et al., 2021, p. 106). Another administrator commented that he had not anticipated the difficulties people experienced with understanding the purpose of RP.

> We did not foresee all the problems there would be as people learned about it [RP] and then they went back. We didn’t foresee the misunderstanding that people would have about it. It’s hard to push back on something when it’s done correctly. But it’s easy to push back on it when it’s done incorrectly. (Hall et al., 2021, p. 374)

A school principal echoed this resistance to change: “Most staff preferred things to happen organically so [new] suggestions to formalize more practices and standards were getting pushback” (Sandwick et al., 2019, pp. 20-21).

These qualitative findings suggested that communal specification was enhanced when teachers were able to compare and align RP with existing school-wide systems. However, when teachers were unable to make explicit sense about the purpose of RP and its tenets, they resisted any changes and relied on their current knowledge of disciplining students. Hence, time spent on identifying a teacher’s beliefs regarding student discipline and their misconceptions about RP may minimize any resistance to change when implementing this intervention.

Individual Specification. Individual specification relates to how an individual person understood the time and effort required when implementing RP programs (May et al., 2022). The qualitative findings revealed the need for ongoing training to develop a thorough understanding of RP and its use for resolving student conflict. Several participants noted that “the retreat event [professional development] as the starting point for the staff to learn about RP and consider how

it might be utilized within their school setting" (Kervick et al., 2020, p. 169). Other people considered RP training activities such as circles "enhanced [their] understanding of the intensive labor involved and strengthened trust that RP could improve relationships and reduce conflict" (Sandwick et al., 2019, p. 19). One person stated, "Circle practice was introduced, and we had some nice professional development with a guest teacher, and we took part in circles. So that was when it got a little bit more focused" (Kervick et al., 2020, p. 169).

In schools that did not use professional development with participation in RP circles, staff and teachers struggled to understand how and when they were to use RP during an already packed day. One teacher stated, "One of the challenges I've faced is getting that time to do it. And I think there's other teachers that would be totally open. They love the idea of it. They're just thinking: How do I fit this in?" (Hall et al., 2021, p. 372). An administrator said, "It really does take a tremendous amount of time since we're really trying to use RP as it's designed" (Hall et al., 2021, p. 372). These comments illustrated the difficulties faculty/staff had in making sense about what specifically RP demanded of them.

These qualitative findings suggested that individual specification of RP may be facilitated through professional training with participation in RP circles. RP circles serve to provide the context necessary for people to make sense of the required time and effort when using RP. Otherwise, teachers remain entrenched with logistical questions without this opportunity to make meaningful sense of RP.

Internalization. Internalization refers to how school employees construct an understanding of the importance, value, and benefits of RP in their work at school (May et al., 2022). The qualitative findings demonstrated the usefulness of embedding RPs in school settings

for both children and adults, particularly using RP-related activities to provide a firsthand opportunity for experiencing and/or witnessing the benefits of RP. As one teacher remarked:

> One of the really wonderful things about this community is that they utilize certain times like retreats to introduce us to this practice. And then they don't just do it. We don't just as adults, we do it with children, and then we do it as adults again during our faculty meetings, and then we do it as adults again during the PTO. (Kervick et al., 2020, p. 169)

Internalization was constructively affected when a school had a positive climate and culture before starting an RP intervention. Several people described their school as a family, which suggested a bond existed that directly informed the school's commitment to RP. One parent said, "You don't suspend your child, right? Some of them [kids] are going to drive us up the frikking wall, but they're ours" (Sandwick et al., 2019, p. 16). Focusing on the values and beliefs of the school community provides an effective framework for understanding the value of RP. As one person said when adults took responsibility for the role they played in a conflict: "RP could be seen as a threat to the traditional authority of educators… People need to be able to understand how this new power dynamic [RP] serves their existing needs" (Sandwick et al., 2019, p. 17).

These qualitative findings show the internalization required by people to make meaning regarding the potential value of an RP intervention. A person's ability to internalize the value and benefits of RP was enhanced in schools that, prior to implementation, had established a positive school culture and climate. This notion denotes the benefits of focusing on the school community's values and beliefs prior to RP implementation.

In summary, the qualitative findings aligned with all four coherence sub-constructs; the most quotes fell under communal specification and the fewest under internalization. The identified themes related to coherence centered on the logistics of RP implementation and its

inherent value when used in a K-12 school system. Coherence was gained when people agreed on the purpose and value of RP, had a thorough understanding of how RP changed their workflow, and understood the amount of time and effort required to use RP.

Cognitive Participation

Cognitive participation describes how people work together to create groups and systems of participation (May et al., 2022). Themes emerging from the qualitative findings centered on the degree that the leadership was onboard with and/or directly involved in advocating RP. Direct leadership participation served to facilitate RP by developing trust between the staff and teachers, while encouraging the belief that RP was an effective response to wrongdoing. Most quotes aligned with the initiation sub-construct and the fewest with enrollment.

Initiation. Initiation refers to how the school leadership introduced and championed the RP intervention (May et al., 2022). The qualitative findings illustrated the necessity of a school principal's involvement with RP. One participant stated, "It helped that the school principal was really passionate about RP, and it helped when the leader was really on board" (Kervick et al., 2020, p. 170). The desire to have the principal as a partner and accessible resource when using RP was highlighted by this teacher:

> You're not just sort of adrift. Like, we're doing this new thing and sometimes we get directives from the district that are like you are kind of on your own once you get it, and it's nice to feel like, oh, we have somebody who's learning to be an expert in the building, and we're able to rely on them and learn together and be on the same page. (Kervick et al., 2020, p. 170)

Conversely, most people felt that the lack of administrative support was problematic. "When you have administration support from the top, the whole school will come. If you don't, it's going to

be an uphill battle to create a climate and culture as a restorative school" (Hall et al., 2021, p. 370). Another participant voiced the need for strong principal buy-in: "That without strong leadership, it could be challenging to secure a place for it [RP] in the daily school structure or get adequate training" (Hall et al., 2021, p. 369). These comments highlighted the need for strategic prioritization when implementing RP. While teachers can initiate RP without their principal's support and resources, doing so may be difficult within an existing punitive system. As one teacher said:

> I welcome it, anything that keeps the kids out of suspensions, anything that doesn't feed the pipeline… If I do give detention, it's just between the student and myself. If the student doesn't go to the school detention, they are not automatically suspended. We work it out if they serve detention with me. (Joseph et al., 2021, p. 110)

Hence, the strategic initiation of RP proceeds more smoothly with a school principal's high level of commitment, active participation, and effective ability to provide the necessary resources.

Enrollment. Enrollment concerns people joining and participating in the RP intervention (May et al., 2022). Few quotes were found that aligned with this sub-construct, possibly because enrollment in an RP intervention is primarily decided by the school district leadership. As previously discussed, the success of the RP intervention was heavily dependent on the school principal's buy-in and personal beliefs. A teacher's statement illustrates this sentiment:

> Principals have to be on board completely. They have to be hands-on, cannot just be like, "Oh, yes, I give you permission to come onto our campus." No, they [must] be in it. Like advocating for us, letting their teachers know that this is going to be a decision made by them to change the mindset, or the culture, or the atmosphere of the campus to become more restorative. (Hall et al., 2021, p. 369)

One principal was surprised at the degree of enrollment in the RP invention by his teachers. “People were doing multiple circles a day and every single class was doing it. So, it [RP] far exceeded, and was far beyond, what he thought it would be” (Kervick et al., 2020, p. 170). This statement exemplified the value of having school leadership enthusiastically promote the RP intervention as teachers and staff enroll in it. Otherwise, folks were left to decide for themselves whether or not to use RP at their school.

Legitimation. Legitimation refers to the stakeholders agreeing that the RP was an appropriate intervention within their school system (May et al., 2022). The qualitative findings showed that skeptics believed RP was a weak intervention that did not result in a change of student behavior. Sandwick et al. (2019) noted that “Participants expressed concerns that RP is too soft (make light), results in no consequences (nothing was done), does not change behavior, and does not prepare students for the harsh reality beyond the school building (shielding them)” (p. 17). Similarly, most participants in the Hall et al. (2021) study reported that school administrators struggled with pushback from teachers. As one district administrator stated:

> We have some veteran teachers who are like “that’s not going to work, we need to be a little bit more tough on kids.” So that’s challenging. The other thing that makes implementation challenging is that you still have people’s biases, like “well these kids just need harsh consequences. These kids need to learn the hard way.” It’s like, well, “what do you mean when you say that? What kids are you talking about?” I’m sometimes idealistic like we’re going to rise above that and not deal with that, but we deal with it. (Hall et al., 2021, p. 373)

This comment described the employee push-back due to entrenched biases adversely influencing RP implementation, which results in a barrier to using RP in public K-12 schools. Conversely,

the qualitative findings showed that active participation in RP circles led to a better understanding of RP's usefulness when resolving student conflict. One participant stated:

> I remember our first circle [in a staff meeting]. That was actually really intense. Really emotional. I think by that point everybody was on board with it. We felt this is actually a useful way even adult to adult. Even to engage each other in a way that's more constructive. (Sandwick et al., 2019, p. 19)

As teachers and staff work towards legitimation, they must decide to agree that RP is an appropriate intervention. Educators' entrenched beliefs regarding student misbehavior serve as a barrier to legitimation that must be addressed via active RP circle participation.

Activation. Activation characterizes the educators' continued support for the RP implementation (May et al., 2022). The qualitative findings showed that ongoing training and support was critical for sustaining RP implementation, particularly when RP was considered an abstract way of thinking that involved skills developed through practice. A comment by a social worker illustrated this notion:

> Because they're fearful, burnt out, overwhelmed, and don't have the skills, teachers don't know what to do and they don't understand. If a teacher is directed to discipline differently, it may feel disempowering if they have not learned and mastered the skills to run a classroom restoratively. (Hall et al., 2021, pp. 371-372)

Sandwick et al. (2019) explained that "even people who were deeply invested in RP might find that the emotional strain of an acute incident could spark a struggle with a knee-jerk reaction, tempting them to revert to ingrained habits of power and punishment" (p. 17). This comment suggested that ongoing training and administrative support was critical to sustain momentum for the RP intervention and prevent a slide back to the old ways.

The qualitative findings also demonstrated that while embedding RP within existing schoolwide systems served to initially facilitate RP implementation, every stakeholder must move beyond its superficial recognition. As Kervick et al. (2020) observed:

> On the one hand, teachers embraced RP as a framework that fits naturally with SWPBIS, social/emotional curriculum, and responsive classroom within the elementary setting. On the other hand, they identified a need to develop a clear vision for how those different mechanisms align and communicate that vision to all stakeholders (p. 172).

This comment highlighted the need for specific ongoing training concerning RP as well as support throughout the phases of its implementation to prevent the back-slide barrier.

In summary, the critical influence of school leadership was revealed as a theme related to cognitive participation. The active engagement by the school principal was vital to the success of the RP implementation process, particularly in offsetting skeptics who viewed RP as a weak and ineffective intervention. Another emerging theme was the importance of leadership to provide ongoing communication, support, and professional training throughout the phases of RP implementation. Lastly, school leadership must communicate a clear vision for where and how RP aligned with the existing system. Together, these themes enhance the RP intervention and prevent the occurrence of barriers to its implementation.

Collective Action

Collective action describes how the school employees worked together to enact the RP intervention (May et al., 2022). Most of the quotes fell under the contextual integration sub-construct while the fewest ones were under relational integration. The major theme that emerged from the NPT analysis was the need for prioritization toward providing training and ongoing support. Another theme was the embedding and aligning of the RP intervention with existing

school systems and stakeholder beliefs. The identified barrier themes were the inadequate provisioning of resources and professional development, plus the persistent nature of a school district to hop from one intervention to another without an appropriate evaluation.

Interactional Workability. Interactional workability refers to how everyone in the school system is doing the necessary work required by the RP intervention (May et al., 2022). The qualitative findings uncovered one strategy that enabled RP implementation: incorporating RP into existing school systems via allocating space and time for RP within the established daily schedule. Sandwick et al. (2019) reported:

> All schools had one or more of the following: weekly staff meetings for RP preparation and processes, internal and external professional development, and RP student leadership built into classes and clubs. Relatedly, most schools had designated spaces for circles, mediation, restorative conversations, and/or relationship building (p. 17).

One method found for enhancing RP implementation was to overtly align RP circles with existing PBIS and SEL programs. The use of restorative circles helped to develop shared understandings about skills and/or expectations necessary to incorporate RP. A teacher stated:

> Well, I felt like it was a great fit because I felt like it wasn't necessarily something so vastly different from the best practices [that] we'd already been using from various other programs… Whether it was Responsive Classroom or PBIS or anything else emphasizing the positive inclusion… it just gave some additional kind of protocols to use and information to use to make our circles and our practices even more fair and inclusive, I thought. (Kervick et al., 2020, p. 172)

Teachers also used restorative circles as a tool for promoting respectful discourse.

> If a particular social skill was being introduced, for example, friendship problem-solving, teachers used a circle process to facilitate exploration of that particular concept. Problem-solving circles were also used to address issues that arose in the classroom related to schoolwide behavioral expectations. If conflicts arose or schoolwide behavioral expectations established through SWPBIS needed to be revisited, teachers used RP circles to engage in a class wide discussion. (Kervick et al., 2020, p. 171).

These comments show that RP was viewed as a strategic means to an end instead of a separate stand-alone entity. The qualitative findings also revealed how people do the work required of RP by getting the courage to try it. As one teacher stated:

> So, we always like to ask students what they think they need to do to fix things or to be successful in a sense after they messed up. There are different things available. We have dialogue, conferences, but I also have sort of like an essay. If I think they were sincere, I go over that with them. If they break their commitment, then they would return to being on our Chronic Hall Walker List. (Joseph et al., 2021, p. 106)

This comment not only revealed the value of stakeholder buy-in, but also demonstrated how this particular teacher made sense of RP and used it as an alternative to punitive discipline. Also, this comment illustrated how the teacher reassured themself that they could return to using punitive disciplinary measures if RP was unsuccessful in changing student behavior. Lastly, this comment showed how people responded to the work of implementing RP by embedding it within an existing practice such as an existing punitive system.

Three themes emerged relative to the interactional workability of RP. The first theme identified the importance of allocating time and space for conducting RP activities when incorporating RP into existing systems. The second theme aligned RP circles with existing PBIS

and SEL programs to develop a shared understanding about expectations and skills necessary to incorporate RP. The third theme indicated that educators must have the courage to try RP and view it as a strategic means to an end instead of a separate, stand-alone entity. Together these three themes illustrated how people operationalized the interactional workability of RP.

Relational Integration. Relational integration refers to the confidence people have in each other when using the RP intervention (May et al., 2022). RP was frequently viewed as problematic when no systemized plan existed, which consequently created no shared understanding regarding how to apply RP. One participant stated, "[Acknowledging RP aligns in places] But it would be nice if in some areas, there were a little bit more consistency, because it can be confusing for kids" (Kervick et al., 2020, p. 172). Students became confused without an organized approach, and staff inadvertently divided, as teachers attempted to adopt RP while working within a system built around exclusionary punitive methods.

The qualitative findings highlighted the issues related to those educators clinging to long-held beliefs about punishment and traditional punitive practices. RP training was often facilitated by outside organizations within the context relative to stakeholder groups. Sandwick et al. (2019) noted "some interviewees described an underlying institutional conflict between NYPD-employed school security agent (SSAs) and school personnel, citing divergent mandates, training, and authority" (p. 21). Comments from one SSA illustrated the perspective of skeptics:

> I'm like, Listen, this [student's physical behavior directed at me] is a serious offense. This can't be done. It's like let's make light of the situation… Nothing was done with the student… It was the excuse of "Well, you know restorative justice." I said, "Restorative justice is not used in that way. He needs to know what [he] did was wrong." Sometimes we do them a disservice and shielding them from the real world… not letting him know

> when he goes outside and he does that to a police officer, it might not be the same outcome. (Sandwick et al., 2019, p. 19)

Although SSAs had the same training, their particular worldview and job mandate for school safety promoted distrust and conflict with faculty and staff who championed RP over punitive measures. These discrepancies in beliefs and practices serve to interfere with Relational Integration because they erode the confidence people have in RP and each other.

Skill-set Workability. Skill-set workability refers to an organization distributing the work required by the RP intervention (May et al., 2022). The few quotes found under this sub-construct may be due to RP initiatives being decided at the school district level in K-12 education with the assumption of staff and teacher participation. The qualitative findings did show that not enough resources were allocated for teachers. Consequently, many teachers felt overwhelmed when using RP in their classroom as illustrated by this person's comment from Hall et al. (2021): "The district level is struggling to meet the demand for training and support, we need more people. There's only so much that five people can do, right?" (p. 371). Kervick et al. (2020) also noted "Of particular interest to participants was [the need for] individualized coaching and staff discussions about how to consistently align discipline procedures with RP philosophy as well as strategies and knowledge to move beyond tier one RP implementation strategies" (p. 173). One idea championed by educators was the need for a school building-based RP team. A social worker emphasized this need for developing school building-based expertise:

> No one above me has any expertise in RP. But they believe in what I believe. They believe that I know what I'm talking about. RP was already in our Local Control and Accountability Plan. There's been a lot of talk, but not a lot of real work. (Hall et al., 2021, p. 371)

As previously discussed, ongoing professional training and supportive resources were imperative for maintaining a RP intervention. Regarding skill-set workability, school administrators must develop a plan to provide both the initial and continual training as well as supporting resources required by all school employees before implementing an RP initiative.

Contextual Integration. Contextual integration concerns the amount of work required by a school district to support RP implementation within individual schools (May et al., 2022). Prioritizing the provision of formal support measures such as allocating for additional staff, professional development, and scheduling led to "most staff feeling broad support from leadership and colleagues in their efforts to develop RP" (Sandwick et al., 2019, p. 16). Conversely, a barrier to RP implementation occurs when school leaders do not prioritize professional development and adequate support for the teachers and staff as explained by a district-level administrator:

> Because otherwise [teachers] feel like they might get caught and they don't want to feel like they're doing the wrong thing; they're supposed to be doing academics. It can be difficult for teachers to go against the status quo and prioritize social and emotional support in their classrooms. (Hall et al., 2021, p. 369)

Another administrator commented:

> An ideal implementation would incorporate all components from the district level to the school site level, to all of the stakeholders understanding what RP are. So, demystifying what RP is, to lead then, or give space to implement RP in a way that's really going to impact the community – all facets of the community. (Sandwick et al., 2019, p. 18)

These comments from school administrators implied that prioritizing RP was the best path toward successfully facilitating RP implementation without experiencing barriers.

The qualitative findings showed that RP implementation was affected by existing school district policy and frequent changes in priorities. Several participants spoke about "The fickle nature of education policy posed a challenge with effective RP implementation" (Hall et al., 2021, p. 375). One district-level administrator commented:

> If we don't decide to commit to RP as an approach in the county, we'll do what we always do in education which is start something and stop as soon as it doesn't work. Because [if] you don't see results right away, you think, well, research says it doesn't work and so does our experience. (Hall et al., 2021, p. 375).

This sentiment was echoed by another high-level administrator speaking about his wish that the state education department would prioritize RP: "If you're going to do it really well, you have to be serious about it, and you have to put the resources into it" (Hall et al. (2021). Furthermore, school administrators considered present and historical district policy served as a barrier to RP implementation. An administrator stated:

> To actually see that zero tolerance was our board policy, we have to change that. It can't be the way in which we do things. In California, teachers have the right to suspend the student for the day. They can suspend a student out of their class for the remainder of the day and next day. They have the power to do that. A teacher can say that they don't want the student in their class for a day. And so that's a challenge as well. (Hall et al., 2021, p. 377)

Similarly, Joseph et al. (2021) found that when RP was implemented within an existing punitive system, the results caused "inequity in discipline protocol, led students to respond to RP with antagonism, and left teachers to institute their own measures of social justice when disciplining students" (p. 108). This counterintuitive nature of implementing RP within an existing punitive

system necessitates that school board policies be updated to align with the RP perspective. Doing so enhances the facilitation of RP implementation across the school district. The qualitative findings revealed the themes related to contextual integration as (a) the need to prioritize providing formal support measures to faculty and staff, (b) integrating RP with existing exclusionary/punitive school district policy, and (c) managing the frequent changes in priorities by school leaders.

In summary, several themes emerged regarding how school employees should work together to put RP into action. First, district and building leaders need to explicitly prioritize RP by providing adequate resources such as additional staff, ongoing training, and administrative support. Second, embedding RP within existing schoolwide systems enhances educators' buy-in to implementing RP initiatives. Identified barriers associated with the collective action construct involve the lack of providing adequate resources, lack of professional development opportunities, and continuation of exclusionary policies. Another barrier involved the persistent propensity of school districts to solution-hop from initiative to another initiative.

Reflexive Monitoring

Reflexive monitoring refers to how school employees work together to evaluate the RP intervention (May et al., 2022). Most quotes fell under the communal appraisal sub-construct, while no quotes were identified under individual appraisal. The emerging themes centered on the lack or insufficient nature of reflexive monitoring.

Systematization. Systematization refers to how people obtain information about the effects of RP (May et al., 2022). The qualitative findings showed that stakeholders needing information about the effects of RP had difficulty accessing the information. School principals and RP specialists were typically responsible for communicating the results of RP

implementation. However, RPs were relational entities that frequently involved RP circles where participants shared sensitive, confidential information. A balance in follow-up communication concerning RP implementation is needed so school employees can develop an understanding of RP without breaking trust. A staff member stated:

> When teachers know what's happening, they feel better. When specifically impacted by a given incident, teachers don't know what's happening, so they become upset. Following up with impacted community members should be central to the RP accountability processes as a basic act of respect for those harmed. (Sandwick et al., 2019, p. 20)

This comment illustrated the victim-centered tenant of RP and logistical needs of the teachers. Several school staff members voiced the underlying reason for the difficulties in communicating RP outcomes: "School data systems were designed to record punitive disciplinary events and required updating to better document multi-faceted RP responses" (Sandwick et al., 2019, p. 20). The qualitative findings showed that barriers to RP implementation included a combination of relying on overworked individuals, the personal nature of RP responses, and misaligned student management systems.

Another emerging systematization-related theme was that leaders needed to think beyond the initial dissemination of information regarding RP implementation plans. Several parents expressed their concerns:

> The initiative moved forward primarily due to the principal's agency and wondered how more information about the rationale for implementing RP could be communicated to the broader school community, including families who, despite these efforts to ensure communication and accessibility, may not be fully aware of the RP initiatives. (Kervick et al., 2020, p. 171)

This comment suggested that a lack of cohesive and ongoing communication about the purpose and effects of RP served as a barrier to its implementation. The qualitative findings relative to systematization showed that a combination of four barriers occurred during RP implementation. These barriers were (a) relying on overworked employees for individualized communication, (b) the personal nature of RP responses, (c) misaligned student data management systems, and (d) need to go beyond the initial dissemination of information regarding RP implementation plans.

Communal Appraisal. Communal appraisal refers to the necessity and consistent nature of communication to stakeholders, which was a continuing theme when considering how people collectively assessed whether RP was worthwhile (May et al., 2022). Participants in the Sandwick et al. (2019) study noted:

> This [lack of communication] was seen as a key barrier to building trust in RP. If there was insufficient follow-up about RP responses with students who witnessed an incident or a referring staff member, it could diminish confidence that a situation was being addressed in good faith (p. 19).

This comment suggested that when RP outcomes and processes were not effectively communicated to the stakeholders, an opportunity was lost to build trust and deepen the understanding of RP. As one person stated:

> People want to know that something's going to be addressed. When the teachers know what's happening, they feel better. I myself had an issue with a physical altercation in my class last year and I had no idea what they were doing to handle it. I was getting furious and then [once I learned what the RP staff had been doing] I told them, I was like, You did so much. I wish I had known this. (Sandwick et al., 2019, p. 20)

Hence, frequent communication during the RP implementation process not only satisfies the needs of educators and staff, but also reduces negative feelings they may feel toward RP.

The qualitative findings also showed that collaboration was viewed by most people as a facilitating factor to RP implementation. “I feel like in this school everyone feels like a team, like we’re a big team, and we go full force ahead into a new thing. Okay, we’re all gonna do this, and we believe it’s the best thing” (Kervick et al. 2020, pp. 169-170). Another person reflected on the importance of ongoing collaboration relative to their RP expertise and development. They said:

> I can sit there every day and do RP and feel like I’m doing it right or feel like I’m doing it wrong, but without the opportunity to reflect with someone, a third person, about what they are seeing or noticing by what I’m doing or what the class is doing, then I really don’t see any room for growth. (Kervick et al., 2020, p. 173)

Someone else recognized the need to evaluate progress and plan next steps. “I think it’s time now to share. These are the things that are working. These are the things that aren’t working” (Kervick et al., 2020, p. 173). These communal appraisal qualitative findings demonstrated that providing opportunities for people to reflect with colleagues about their RP experiences successfully built community acceptance of it. Furthermore, frequent communication during the RP implementation process satisfied the needs of educators and staff by providing information useful for assessing the worthiness of RP.

Individual Appraisal. Individual appraisal refers to the person themself assessing the value of the RP intervention (May et al., 2022). No quotes were identified for this sub-construct.

Reconfiguration. Reconfiguration concerns how a people responded to the RP intervention and adjusted their work accordingly (May et al., 2022). The qualitative findings revealed that the overall school leaders’ response to RP implementation was to provide educators

with ongoing professional development and the necessary resources to continue their teaching responsibilities. One administrator commented:

> The follow-through [requires] continuously training our staff and continuously providing more strategies and more in-depth knowledge for RP. Not just say, here it is and go do it, but give them more research. Participants mentioned that when teachers are directed to do something new without being provided proper assistance or modeling, optimum results are not produced. (Hall et al., 2021, p. 370)

Another person noted:

> The first year of implementation was exploratory and that one of the things they learned was that they needed more conversations around how to consistently integrate use of RP across all settings and incorporate it into schoolwide systems for tracking and responding to behavior. (Kervick et al., 2020, p. 173)

While staff members and teachers agreed that integrating RP into existing schoolwide initiatives was necessary, they "unanimously stressed a desire for more training and professional development" (Kervick et al., 2020, p. 173). Together, these reconfiguration-related comments suggested that providing ongoing professional development and continued leadership support resulted in successful implementation of RP programs.

Reflexive monitoring contained the least number of identifiable quotes after performing the NPT analysis. Nevertheless, a theme emerging from the qualitative data illustrated the essential nature of consistent communication to the school stakeholders regarding RP to sustain buy-in and offset skepticism. Another emerging theme was that creating opportunities for teachers and staff members to reflect and collaborate on RP implementation was an effective means of assessing the value of RP. The last theme to emerge revealed that school district

administrators must evaluate and adjust the need for ongoing professional development as they implement RP and integrate it into existing schoolwide systems.

Chapter Summary

QRS was used to search for, appraise the quality of, and decide on the appropriate RP qualitative literature to use for this doctoral project. Four RP-related qualitative studies were chosen and underwent NPT analysis to reveal common themes. The resulting quotes forming the qualitative data were categorized under all four NPT constructs and all but one sub-construct. The qualitative findings revealed themes identifying three major barriers to RP implementation in K-12 public schools: (a) peoples' entrenched beliefs about student discipline, (b) principals failed to prioritize RP, and (c) insufficient resources were provided to faculty and staff. The qualitative findings also revealed themes identifying three tactics to facilitate RP implementation in K-12 public schools: (a) participation in restorative circles, (b) district-level leaders and school principals prioritize RP implementation, and (c) the provision of sufficient resources. The barriers to RP implementation and tactics to use to avoid them are discussed with supporting literature in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Restorative practice (RP) programs have been implemented in K-12 public schools across the United States with limited success (González et al., 2019). RP programs would be more successful if they were implemented without barriers (Fronius et al., 2019). However, no consensus among educators exists as to the best practice(s) for implementing RP programs in K-12 public schools nor how to circumvent the formation of barriers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Hence, this doctoral project examined qualitative education research articles using the qualitative research synthesis (QRS) and normalisation process theory (NPT) methodologies. The analytic assessment of education literature answered this research question: What common RP implementation issues in K-12 public schools emerged from a QRS of the literature using NPT as the conceptual lens? The themes found among the qualitative data results are discussed in this chapter along with implications for practice and research. This chapter also discusses the usefulness of NPT as both a framework and method for analyzing qualitative data.

The resulting qualitative data from the NPT analysis identified three themes concerning barriers to RP implementation, and three themes regarding strategies to avoid them. The identified barriers to RP implementation were:

1. resistance to change from using punitive discipline to RP,
2. school leaders do not prioritize the RP intervention, and
3. insufficient resources for school employees.

The identified strategies for avoiding these barriers were:

1. school principals, teachers, and staff members participate in RP circles before, during, and after the RP implementation process;
2. district-level leaders and school principals prioritize the RP intervention; and
3. school leaders provide sufficient resources to all employees throughout the RP implementation process.

The remaining information in this chapter describes the usefulness of NPT as a framework and analytic technique, then discusses the implications of the qualitative findings with supportive literature. Next, the limitations of this doctoral project are identified followed by recommendations for practice and research. The final section of this chapter summarizes the premise, method, findings, and conclusions. Overall, this qualitative review generated valuable insights into the major barriers to RP implementation and identified effective strategies for facilitating RP implementation. This doctoral project provided an enhanced understanding as to why RP programs have been so challenging to implement in American K-12 public schools.

Normalisation Process Theory

As developed and described by May et al. (2022), NPT proved to be useful as both a theoretical framework and method for analyzing the qualitative data. NPT was beneficial for conceiving the research question due to the degree/depth/quality of its theoretical foundation. While QRS was helpful with the search and appraisal of the qualitative RP literature, NPT helped to conceptualize, organize, and categorize the research literature evidence regarding the adversity educators experience with RP implementation.

NPT also proved to be an essential analytic tool for this project. The coding manual developed by May et al. (2022) was easy to use for analyzing the qualitative research articles

found with QRS. The resulting qualitative data revealed themes in a coherent, structured manner that elucidated the characteristics of the challenges to implementing RP. Aligning the qualitative findings with NPT was valuable for articulating meaningful interpretations of the data and revealing the themes associated with the barriers to RP implementation.

Implications of Findings

Overall, the qualitative data results suggested that RP implementation was impeded by the stakeholders, who not only experienced difficulties understanding RP, but also resisted changing how they disciplined students. The qualitative findings generated these questions:

1. Is the perceived resistance to change explained by stakeholders established values and beliefs about student discipline and punishment?
2. Does resistance to change occur because stakeholders cannot understand the differences between the time and effort RP requires compared to their current way of working?
3. Does resistance to change occur because stakeholders view RP as too time consuming?
4. Is the resistance to change due to a combination of these three questions? If so, how does school leadership prevent barriers when implementing RP?

Themes surmised from the qualitative data results alluded to the answers for these questions.

Implementation Barriers

Resistance to Change. The first major barrier identified by the qualitative findings was the resistance by school faculty and staff to change their way of working. Two factors were identified that influenced the resistance-to-change barrier when implementing RP. First, resistance to change was related to the difficulties stakeholders had distinguishing the time

and/or effort requirements of RP compared to their current way of working within a traditional punitive disciplinary system. For example, Sandwick et al. (2019) found that "Compared to traditional punitive measures, RP felt burdensome… there was no guarantee that the underlying issue would be resolved by the end of a given RP response" (p. 20). This opinion was also expressed by Mansfield et al. (2018) who found that educator resistance to using RP was due to (mis)perceptions regarding the efficacy of RP when disciplining students. School districts typically adopted RP believing it to be a viable alternative to traditional exclusionary discipline (Hashim et al., 2018). School leaders have also sought to offset the disproportionality in suspensions by gravitating towards RP (Fronius et al., 2019). However, traditional punitive disciplinary practices and RP are very dissimilar methods to use when students commit acts of wrongdoing. Traditional punitive disciplinary measures are listed in student code of conduct manuals; they are supported by state and federal laws (Fronius et al., 2019). Also, traditional punitive discipline measures are delineated in school board policy and require minimal action from teachers beyond writing referrals and calling parents (Gonzalez et al., 2019). Incongruent with punitive discipline, RP is a philosophy rather than a penal-type system that relies on preventative measures through the purposeful development of personal and community relationships (Wachtel, 2016). The incongruence or dissimilarity between punitive practices and RP promoted the formation of the resistance-to-change barrier as described by the qualitive findings under the NPT construct of coherence. Educators frequently misunderstood RP and the time and effort requirements necessary to use it. Faculty and staff believed RP replaced the existing punitive disciplinary system and assumed it would resolve their student disciplinary issues (Mansfield et al., 2018). Furthermore, the qualitative results showed that educators

struggled to use RP when they were unable to distinguish between the traditional punitive discipline and RP methods. For example, one teacher stated

> I just want more ideas, especially for our alternative consequences. I believe that when a child does something they deserve a consequence, but what are some alternative ones? It doesn't always have to be suspension, but what are things we can do that are more purposeful? (Joseph et al., 2021, p. 106)

Based on this project's qualitative review, educators conclude RP has not value at their school when they cannot make sense of it. Consequently, educators resist changing and continue to practice traditional punitive discipline.

The second factor influencing the resistance-to-change barrier was the lifelong personal beliefs and values about student discipline. The qualitative findings illustrated the skepticism voiced by educators who believed RP was a weak intervention that did not change student behavior. For example, Sandwick et al. (2019) recorded that "Participants expressed concerns that RP is too soft (make light), results in no consequences (nothing was done), does not change behavior, and does not prepare students for the harsh reality beyond the school building (shielding them)" (p. 20). Earlier, Lieberman and Katz (2017) found that some teachers believed RP let students off without consequences, which resulted in more student misbehavior, while Gregory et al. (2016) noted that conflicting personal values of educators impeded RP implementation. In closing, the first major theme identified within the qualitative findings was the resistance or reluctance by educators to change their way of working by using RP. This barrier of resistance was related to a lack of understanding about RP and its tenets as well as how RP philosophy compared to their existing beliefs/values about student discipline.

Lack of Leadership Prioritization. The second major barrier identified by the qualitative findings was the lack of leadership to prioritize implementation and maintenance of an RP program. When school leaders failed to prioritize RP, this failure contributed to the confusion about RP's value, what RP entails, and how educators and staff were expected to use it. For example, one participant in the Sandwick et al. (2019) study said

> People want to know that something's going to be addressed. When the teachers know what's happening, they feel better. I myself had an issue with a physical altercation in my class last year and I had no idea what they were doing to handle it. I was getting furious and then [once I learned what the RP staff had been doing] I told them, I was like, You did so much. I wish I had known this (p. 20).

The school leaders' failure to prioritize RP also promoted the teachers' resistance to change and consequential return to established punitive disciplinary practices. As Sandwick et al. (2019) explained "even people who were deeply invested in RP might find that the emotional strain of an acute incident could spark a struggle with a knee-jerk reaction, tempting them to revert to ingrained habits of power and punishment" (p. 17).

The qualitative findings also showed that district- and school-level leaders tended to implement RP without fully understanding the required levels of resources, support, and ongoing training necessary for using RP. One school administrator in the Hall et al. (2021) study stated

> We did not foresee all the problems there would be as people learned about it [RP] and then they went back. We didn't foresee the misunderstanding that people would have about it. It's hard to push back on something when it's done correctly. But it's easy to push back on it when it's done incorrectly. (p. 374)

Liberman and Katz (2017) noted that without fully committed district- and school-level leaders, RP implementation was an uphill battle even with faculty and staff buy-in. As shown under the NPT construct of cognitive participation, the qualitative findings described the need for school administrators to prioritize the provision of initial and continual training as well as supporting resources before implementing an RP initiative. Furthermore, Darling and Monk (2018) suggested that the strategic collaboration between leadership and educators was a vital key to transitioning RP from an agreed-upon good idea to a galvanized team effectively implementing RP. School leaders must ensure the explicit identification of new practices with their school systems since they have the decision-making power regarding RP implementation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Without prioritization of RP by the principal, teachers are left on their own to find solutions for using RP with limited resources or resist implementing it all together.

Insufficient Resources. The third major barrier identified by the qualitative findings was the insufficient provision of resources for school employees to understand and use RP. The qualitative findings demonstrated the lack of adequate training, feedback, and time to reflect with peers about the quality of their RP practice. As one participant in the Hall et al. (2021) stated "The district level is struggling to meet the demand for training and support, we need more people. There's only so much that five people can do, right?" (p. 371) Supporting this finding, Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) reported that educators benefited from using specific, well-articulated resources when implementing school-based RP programs. These researchers also suggested that leadership underestimated the number of RP experts required to support RP implementation because RP was more resource-intensive compared to exclusionary disciplinary measures. A lack of supporting resources led to inconsistent application of RP and eroded people's buy-in, which in turn promoted a return towards practices tied to punitive/exclusionary

discipline. Joseph et al. (2021) found that when RP was implemented within an existing punitive system, results caused "inequity in discipline protocol, led students to respond to RP with antagonism, and left teachers to institute their own measures of social justice when disciplining students" (p. 108). Thus, RP implementation requires school leaders to make logistical decisions that prioritize RP and provide the necessary resources to the faculty and staff.

In conclusion, the qualitative findings identified themes describing three major barriers to RP implementation: resistance to change, leadership failure to prioritize RP, and provision of insufficient resources. Resistance to change was affected by people not understanding RP and its tenets, the integration of RP into existing school systems, and their entrenched beliefs and values about student discipline. All three barriers promote the inconsistent implementation of RP that diminishes educators' confidence that RP works to improve student behavior, which then results in a return to using punitive/exclusionary disciplinary methods.

Strategies to Facilitate RP Implementation

Participation in Restorative Practices. The preemptive strategy identified for preventing the resistance-to-change barrier was having all school employees participate in RP circles before, during, and after the RP implementation process. When school leaders, faculty, and staff members participated in restorative circles, they were able to shift their beliefs towards a better understanding of RP's efficacy in dealing with student wrongdoing. Sandwick et al. (2019) found that using RP circles during training activities "enhanced [their] understanding of the intensive labor involved and strengthened trust that RP could improve relationships and reduce conflict" (p. 19). The qualitative findings under the NPT construct of coherence illustrated that when restorative circles were not used during the RP implementation process, teachers struggled with the expectations of incorporating RP into their already full daily

schedule. Similarly, Wang and Lee (2019) found that teachers perceived a lack of time to use restorative circles, which diminished their confidence in leading the circles when they did try to use it. Fronius et al. (2019) suggested that participation in restorative circles helped teachers to understand the value of RP, which simultaneously prepared them to comfortably lead circles with their students. Thus, restorative circles provide the necessary context for educators to make sense of the required time and effort for using RP. Otherwise, teachers remain bewildered without this opportunity to make meaningful sense of RP.

Prioritization by Leaders. The preemptive strategy identified for preventing the-lack-of-leadership-prioritization barrier was the fundamental requirement that district-level leaders and school principals prioritize the RP implementation process. When school leaders directly participate in the RP implementation process, they develop trust between themselves, faculty, staff, and parents. One teacher participant in the Hall et al., 2021 study echoed this sentiment.

> Principals have to be on board completely. They have to be hands-on, cannot just be like, "Oh, yes, I give you permission to come onto our campus." No, they [must] be in it. Like advocating for us, letting their teachers know that this is going to be a decision made by them to change the mindset, or the culture, or the atmosphere of the campus to become more restorative. (p. 369).

Supporting this opinion, Liberman and Katz (2017) suggested that leadership buy-in was exemplified by their participation in RP activities and collaboration with the RP behavioral team. Liberman and Katz also found that leadership engagement with restorative circles enhanced professional development and shared decision-making with faculty and staff. Thus, increasing stakeholder buy-in facilitated the RP implementation process.

Other logistical issues should be prioritized by school principals too such as deciding what school to implement RP, when to implement RP, and/or how to integrate RP with existing school programs. Several researchers suggested one tactic for enhancing RP implementation was to overtly align RP circles with existing initiatives like PBIS and SEL programs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Gregory & Evans, 2020; Hulvershorn & Mulholland, 2018; Zakszeski & Rutherford, 2021). The qualitative findings under the NPT construct of collective action showed that integrating RP within existing school-wide systems such as SEL and PBIS led stakeholders to view RP as a strategic means to an end instead of a separate stand-alone entity. Additionally, aligning and/or integrating RP with existing programs helped educators identify opportunities for applying RP during an already allocated time period. As one teacher stated

> Well, I felt like it was a great fit because I felt like it wasn't necessarily something so vastly different from the best practices [that] we'd already been using from various other programs… Whether it was responsive classroom or PBIS or anything else emphasizing the positive inclusion… it just gave some additional kind of protocols to use and information to use to make our circles and our practices even more fair and inclusive, I thought. (Kervick et al., 2020, p. 172)

Furthermore, Gregory and Evans (2020) reported that RP leaders viewed SEL skills as aligned with RP philosophy since SEL skills may occur in the restorative circles format. The current qualitative findings verified this observation: teachers used restorative circles as a tool for promoting respectful discourse.

> If a particular social skill was being introduced, for example, friendship problem-solving, teachers used a circle process to facilitate exploration of that particular concept. Problem-solving circles were also used to address issues that arose in the classroom related to

> schoolwide behavioral expectations. If conflicts arose or schoolwide behavioral expectations established through SWPBIS needed to be revisited, teachers used RP circles to engage in a class wide discussion. (Kervick et al., 2020, p. 171)

The qualitative findings also showed that while embedding RP within existing schoolwide systems initially facilitated RP implementation, each stakeholder had to move beyond its superficial recognition. As Kervick et al. (2020) observed,

> On the one hand, teachers embraced RP as a framework that fits naturally with SWPBIS, social/emotional curriculum, and responsive classroom within the elementary setting. On the other hand, they identified a need to develop a clear vision for how those different mechanisms align and communicate that vision to all stakeholders (p. 172).

School leaders must prioritize RP by aptly embedding it into all didactic systems, resolving any logistical issues, and providing adequate resources to school employees.

Provision of Resources. The preemptive strategy identified for preventing the insufficient resources barrier dictates that school leaders provide sufficient resources to all employees throughout the RP implementation process. For example, providing opportunities for professional development and ongoing training are vital for educators to acquire an understanding of RP, its tenets and proper use (Mayworm et al., 2016). The qualitative findings revealed that not enough resources were allocated for faculty and staff. Consequently, many teachers felt overwhelmed when using RP in their classroom as voiced by this person's comment: "The district level is struggling to meet the demand for training and support, we need more people. There's only so much that five people can do, right?" (Hall et al., 2021, p. 371). Furthermore, district leaders need to assess their employees' resource requirements and the associated costs prior to RP implementation (Lendrum et al., 2013).

The qualitative findings showed that stakeholder participation in restorative circles during training was helpful to promote confidence and expertise in the practice of RP throughout the implementation process. For example, Kervick et al. (2020) postulated that

> Of particular interest to participants was [the need for] individualized coaching and staff discussions about how to consistently align discipline procedures with RP philosophy as well as strategies and knowledge to move beyond tier one RP implementation strategies (p. 172).

Liberman and Katz (2017) reported similar findings, noting that teachers needed ongoing training to fully understand the RP philosophy and hone their skills for using it. The qualitative findings identified other resources that aided the RP implementation process:

1. develop building-based RP teams,
2. access to coaching support for faculty and staff,
3. identify adequate space to conduct RP circles, and
4. designate times for RP circles.

Thus, district-level and school principals need to plan and provide the requisite professional training opportunities for faculty and staff to reflect, collaborate, and develop their RP skills.

In conclusion, the qualitative findings identified strategies to facilitate RP implementation by preventing the formation of barriers. First, participation in RP circles throughout the implementation process served to shift stakeholder's beliefs about RP, develop trust that RP worked, and promote the thought that RP was the right for the students. Second, school leaders must prioritize RP by embedding it into existing systems and addressing logistical questions. Last, leadership must provide sufficient resources and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to reflect, collaborate, and develop their RP skills.

Limitations

This doctoral project identified qualitative evidence related to RP implementation barriers that improved the understanding of why they occur and strategies to prevent them. However, this project had major limitations. First, this project was a retrospective literature review about RP implementation in American K-12 public schools. Thus, the results are not generalizable for private K-12 schools, schools of higher education, nor schools in other countries. Second, some literature synthesis experts recommend analyzing four published qualitative studies, while others recommend 20 qualitative studies (Major & Savin-Baden, 2012). Consequently, the four articles analyzed for this project may not have provided enough qualitative data for generalizable conclusions regarding the barriers to RP implementation in American K-12 public schools.

Recommendations

The qualitative data results suggested recommendations for both practice and research. The following discussion describes these important recommendations for both leaders and educators in the K-12 public schools. Furthermore, the figure in Appendix D describes a coherent plan for implementing RP in K-12 public schools based on these recommendations.

Education Leaders

Education leaders must develop a thorough, systematic plan to implement and evaluate RP interventions in K-12 public schools to improve the practice of K-12 education. This plan should begin with an explicit examination of stakeholders' beliefs, values, and understanding regarding student discipline as well as the difference between RP and punitive/exclusionary methods. This stakeholder examination should be conducted in RP circles so to improve the discussion about best practices for integrating RP into current disciplinary policies. Using RP circles during the planning stages would also identify the resources needed for the school faculty

and staff such as professional training, RP experts located in the school building, and leadership support. RP circles would provide an appropriate setting to discuss embedding RP into the school system via updating the code of conduct and other school board policies. Lastly, efforts should be made to update district codes of conduct to align with RP before implementing it.

Education Researchers

An education researcher should design and conduct a prospective qualitative and/or mixed method study to determine the underlying reason(s) people resist employing RP interventions such as entrenched beliefs, misunderstanding RP and its tenets, or a mixture of both notions. More research is needed to determine the best practice(s) for implementing and maintaining RP programs without barriers. Additionally, an education researcher should conduct a phenomenological study or a program evaluation that focuses on the "individual appraisal" of stakeholders attempting to implement RP. Lastly, NPT should be investigated to determine if this theoretical framework and analysis technique is the best approach to produce RP outcomes that enlighten educators and improve school system development.

Conclusion

Traditional exclusionary discipline procedures punish students for bad behavior by isolating them from their school (Hashim et al., 2018). Rather than improving student social behaviors, however, punitive disciplinary approaches promoted low student achievement and a high rate of school dropout (United States Department of Education, 2014). This negative impact on students' social growth caused by punitive discipline prompted the need for an alternative method. RP focuses on repairing and restoring relationships between people and their communities after acts of wrongdoing (Wachtel, 2016). Research has shown that using RP in public schools reduced the number of suspensions/expulsions, increased access to education, and

improved the learning environment for students (Sandwick et al., 2019). RP has helped troubled students grow into productive adults rather than experience the school-to-prison pipeline adversely promoted by punitive disciplinary policies (Fronius et al., 2019).

RP was defined by McCold and Wachtel (2003) as a collaborative process that brought people together to repair the harm done by an offensive act via a structured discussion within a safe environment. Sandwick et al. (2019) noted that RP effectively interrupted the school-to-prison pipeline that disproportionately affected students by race, sexuality, and disability. Sandwick et al. also found that students experienced an enhanced learning environment when RP was embraced as a philosophy by educators due to its emphasis on addressing underlying issues, repairing harm, and building positive relationships. Proactively building relationships and developing an overarching sense of community are the cornerstones of RP (Wachtel, 2016).

The problem with implementing RP in K-12 public schools is a lack of understanding as to why implementation difficulties occur. No education literature was found that synthesized research findings to determine what commonalities existed with the difficulties implementing RP in American K-12 public schools. Hence, this research question guided the doctoral project: What common RP implementation issues in K-12 public schools emerged from a QRS of the literature using NPT as the conceptual lens? The objective was to acquire a better understanding of the barriers impeding the implementation and maintenance of RP programs in K-12 public schools. A systematic literature review was conducted using the QRS strategy to find appropriate RP qualitative studies for analysis with the NPT framework and analytic technique. Integrating QRS and NPT allowed common themes to emerge regarding the difficulties K-12 public schools experienced when implementing RP. These themes summarized the barriers to RP implementation and identified successful strategies to avoid them. Thus, the qualitative results

provided an understanding as to why RP implementation has been so challenging in K-12 education and research evidence for improving administrative policy in K-12 public schools.

Data collection began after IRB approval was obtained. QRS encompasses a logical strategy for searching and reviewing appropriate qualitative research literature to answer a research question. First, 861 citations were found in the Education Source database as a result of searching for English-language articles published during 2017-2023 in peer-reviewed academic journals using the key term of restorative practice qualitative research. The number of citations fell to 30 after applying the key terms: implementation and evaluation, then restorative practice in abstract. After applying the exclusion criteria, 13 citations remained describing qualitative, case study and/or mixed methods research articles. Repeating the literature search process with the ERIC database produced six additional citations and a Google search produced one more qualitative study. A total of 19 qualitative RP studies were found during this literature search. For the second step in the QRS process, the 19 articles were scrutinized to determine their relevancy to the research question. This assessment found seven qualitative research articles relevant to the research question. The third QRS step involved these seven articles undergoing the quality appraisal process to formally decide their appropriateness for NPT analysis. Only four qualitative research articles met the quality appraisal criteria.

NPT was used as both a theoretical framework and qualitative analysis technique to identify in an organized manner the characteristics describing the types of work people do when implementing a new intervention such as RP (May et al., 2022). Four NPT constructs and their 16 sub-constructs were used for this project: (a) coherence: differentiation, communal specification, individual specification, and internalization; (b) cognitive participation: initiation, enrollment, legitimation, and activation; (c) collective action: interactional workability, relational

integration, skill-set workability, and contextual integration; and (d) reflexive monitoring: systematization, communal appraisal, individual appraisal, and reconfiguration. The constructs and sub-constructs represent a mechanism of social action that corresponds with the activities people perform as they implement a new practice within their employment setting.

When each of the four qualitative research articles underwent NPT analysis per the procedure described by May et al. (2022), the qualitative data aligned with all four constructs. Most of the quotes fell under the collective action construct; the reflexive monitoring construct contained the fewest quotes. The NPT analysis of the four articles identified qualitative data within 15 out of the 16 sub-constructs. The sub-construct, individual appraisal under the reflexive monitoring construct, was the only one in which no data were found in any of the four qualitative research articles.

The qualitative findings identified themes concerning barriers to RP implementation and strategies to avoid them. The first major barrier to RP implementation was resistance to change from using punitive discipline to RP. This barrier was influenced by the educators having (a) difficulty distinguishing the time and effort requirements of RP compared to traditional punitive discipline, and (b) lifelong personal beliefs about student discipline. RP is a philosophy rather than a penal-type system. When educators did not understand RP and could make sense of it because of the incongruence with punitive discipline, they concluded RP had no value, resisted changing their ways, and continued practicing punitive methods of student discipline. The preemptive strategy identified by the qualitative findings preventing the formation of this barrier was having educators participate in restorative circles before, during, and after the RP implementation process. Restorative circles provided the context for educators to make sense of

the required time and effort for using RP, plus gave them an opportunity to shift their beliefs towards a better understanding of RP's efficacy in dealing with student wrongdoing.

The second major barrier identified by the qualitative findings was the lack of leadership to prioritize RP implementation. When school leaders failed to prioritize RP, educators were confused about how they were expected to use it. The qualitative findings showed that school leaders implemented RP without understanding the resources, support, and ongoing training required for educators to use it. Without leaders explicitly prioritizing RP, educators were left on their own to find solutions for using it with limited resources. The preemptive strategy identified by the qualitative findings preventing the formation of this barrier was the fundamental requirement that district leaders and school principals prioritize the RP implementation process. School leaders must decide how to integrate and align RP with existing school programs such as PBIS and SEL. The qualitative findings showed that aligning RP with SEL and PBI helped educators identify opportunities for applying RP. Thus, school leaders must aptly embed RP into didactic systems, resolve all logistical issues, and provide adequate resources.

The third major barrier identified by the qualitative findings was the insufficient provision of resources throughout the implementation process. School leaders frequently underestimated the required resources because they did not understand that RP was more resource-intensive compared to exclusionary disciplinary measures. The lack of supporting resources led to inconsistent application of RP and eroded educators' buy-in, which in turn promoted a return towards practices tied to punitive/exclusionary discipline. The qualitative findings identified resources that aided the RP implementation process:

1. develop building-based RP teams,
2. access to coaching support for faculty and staff,

3. identify adequate space to conduct RP circles, and
4. designate times for RP circles.

The preemptive strategy identified for preventing this barrier dictates that school leaders plan and provide these resources when implementing RP. Also, requisite professional training opportunities are essential for educators to reflect, collaborate, and develop their RP skills. Otherwise, educators may feel overwhelmed when using RP in their classroom and revert to punitive discipline when students commit acts of wrongdoing.

In conclusion, the qualitative findings successfully answered the research question and achieved the objective of this doctoral project by identifying themes describing the major barriers to RP implementation and the preemptive strategies to prevent the formation of these barriers. A prospective study is needed to determine if the preemptive strategies actually work to prevent formation of the barriers to implementation of RP in American K-12 public schools. Meanwhile, the qualitative data results obtained by integrating QRS and NPT provided a better understanding as to why RP implementation has been so challenging in K-12 education.

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Appendix A

Literature Summary Table of Seven Primary Qualitative Research Studies

Study ID #	Citation	Setting & Subjects	Research Design	Data Collection	Measurement of Reliability & Validity	Position of Researcher	Identified Themes/Concepts
1	Sandwick et al. (2019). Fostering community, sharing power: Lessons for building restorative justice school cultures. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *27*, 145.	5 public schools in New York City, NY 1 transfer high school, 2 high schools, 1 joint middle/high school, and 1 middle school	Multiple case study approach Purposeful sampling used to choose school and community participants	Individual interviews and focus group interviews 109 total participants: 32 school staff, 44 students, 23 parents, 10 school, resource officers	Interview data for each school was analyzed one case at a time by two researchers using within-case analysis.	Included information about the researcher's work and interests as well as study limitations.	Presented "lessons" to inform restorative practice and policy, e.g., community building, use of resources, develop infrastructure, interrogating power dynamics, and elevating student leadership.
2	Kervick et al. (2020). Introducing restorative practices in a diverse elementary school to build community and reduce exclusionary discipline: Year one processes, facilitators, and next steps. *School Community Journal*, *30*(2), 155–183.	Urban pre-k through 5th grade public elementary school in northeastern US 17/24 teachers/staff from all grade levels and 2 parents from separate homes	Mixed method bounded case study	Staff survey (n = 27) 17 semi-structured 1:1interviews with school personnel focus group with 2 parents using a 13-question protocol	Each transcript coded with a priori developed codebook, then a focused coding procedure, then by qualitative research software. An independent qualitative researcher coded selected transcripts for interrater reliability, achieving > 90% agreement.	Included information about the researcher's work and interests as well as study limitations.	Findings indicated staff buy-in influenced by strong leadership and ongoing professional development. Staff implemented Tier One community building of restorative practice (RP) circles and integrated RP with other behavioral support resources.

Study ID #	Citation	Setting & Subjects	Research Design	Data Collection	Measurement of Reliability & Validity	Position of Researcher	Identified Themes/Concepts
3	Joseph et al. (2021). Using restorative practices to reduce racially disproportionate school suspensions: The barriers school leaders should consider during the first year of implementation. *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education*, *20*(2), 6.	Urban public high school in Pennsylvania with 1,518 students enrolled during 2015-2016 academic year. Students were 40% African American (n = 621), 36% Caucasian white (n = 550), and 23% other racial/ethnic groups (n = 347; Latino, Asian, and multi-racial. Subjects were also teachers, administrators, and a school social worker.	Mixed methods with case study Used ecological systems and critical race theories Qualitative analysis used a hierarchical linear coding approach Used 4 rounds of coding in an iterative process between the data, literature, and memo writing	Classroom observation data collected through jottings consisting of "bits of talk and action", transcribed into contextualized fieldnotes Semi-structured interviews contained data about participant's experiences with RP training, RP support, professional learning groups, specific restorative justice practices, buy-in, barriers, facilitators, and sustainability.	Research protocol contained steps to safeguard validity for the creation of trustworthy findings such as recording interview, transcribe interview verbatim, strictly follow interview protocol, and use of open-ended questions. Each of these steps were taken in this study along with the additions of systematic coding procedures and data triangulation.	Included information about the researcher's work and interests as well as study limitations.	Identified implementation barriers that included punitive discipline dispositions, conflicting practices of punitive and restorative practices, and implementation inconsistencies that facilitated discipline inequity. School leaders interested in avoiding barriers during early stages of implementation should consider potential development of barriers in their school to evade poor fidelity and inequitable restorative practices. School leadership played a vital role in the success of implementing RP.

Study ID #	Citation	Setting & Subjects	Research Design	Data Collection	Measurement of Reliability & Validity	Position of Researcher	Identified Themes/Concepts
4	Hall et al. (2021). Confronting the traditional system: A qualitative study on the challenges to school based restorative practices policy implementation. *Contemporary Justice Review*, *24*(3), 361–383.	12 professional educators working in various pre-K through 12th grade public schools in San Diego county, CA. Participants were 50% male, mean age = 44 years, 67% had a master's degree with 42% specialists in restorative practice as a social worker or teacher, 33% school administrators, and 25% district or county administrators.	Exploratory qualitative research design with purposeful sampling Semi-structured interviews conducted from January 2020 to March 2020.	Semi-structured interviews Demographic questionnaire used for gathering participant characteristics. Recorded interviews were transcribed, then analyzed via thematic coding. Topics included school characteristics, diversity, non-majority student experiences, and discipline procedures. Implementation discussed regarding roles, drivers, plans, challenges, successful strategies, outcomes, impacts on community, sustainability, school to prison pipeline, and overall vision.	An iterative coding process ensured validity of thematic content and that extract codes best described the data. An independent researcher reviewed the preliminary organization of the data coding and categorization to provide accurate data analysis. Discrepancies solved through open conversation until consensus was reached and agreed upon.	Limitations were reported in this study. Researchers and most participants were trained in RP techniques. Disclosure statement of no potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.	This qualitative study was centered on the theme of challenges to RP implementation. Findings showed that many challenges were involved with the implementation of a school-wide RP policy. Five themes emerged that described these perceived challenges: 1. administrative buy in, 2. lack of resources, 3. resistance to change, 4. school system culture, 5. societal factors.

Study ID #	Citation	Setting & Subjects	Research Design	Data Collection	Measurement of Reliability & Validity	Position of Researcher	Identified Themes/Concepts
5	Smith et al. (2021). "Real meaningful change comes from building relationships": School counselors' experiences implementing restorative practices. *Journal of School Counseling*, *19*(48).	Public schools located in northeastern portion of the United States 8 participants All professional school counselors 7 women 3 worked in an elementary school, 1 in a middle school, 4 in a high school 6 participants work in schools where < 5% student population identified as non-white 2 participants work schools where 14% student population identified as non-white	Consensual Qualitative Research method that uses grounded theory to explain phenomenon within qualitative data	Snowball sampling used to locate school counselors Participants from schools in Year 1-3 of implementing restorative practice interventions. Individual and small research teams independently organized and coded interview data into domains and themes. .	Prior to conducting interviews, the research team discussed the constructivist assumptions of qualitative research. Researchers interrogated their biases. Research team built a consensus by regularly meeting to engage in rigorous discussions to ensure consistency of data and its analyses.	Both the researchers and interviewees were treated as study participants. The researchers displayed sensitivity to how they (themselves) and the process shaped the collected data and analysis.	Four major themes were emerged from this study: 1. the enthusiasm and optimism for a relational approach to education among the participants, 2. goodness-of-fit between school counselor identity and restorative practice way of being, 3. potential for advancing equity, 4. challenges to implementing restorative practice strategies.

Study ID #	Citation	Setting & Subjects	Research Design	Data Collection	Measurement of Reliability & Validity	Position of Researcher	Identified Themes/Concepts
6	Crowe, K. R. (2018). Perceptions of restorative justice in urban high schools. (Doctoral dissertation, Brandman University).	Public school district in San Bernadino county, CA Participants were 5 school principals and 20 teachers employed in various public high schools implementing restorative justice	qualitative phenomenon-based study	Purposeful sampling of educators 1:1 in-depth interview with participants provided the student researcher with stories and experiences otherwise not captured with quantitative methods Interview data was transcribed, then organized through the process of coding to reveal patterns and themes.	A computer software program was used for data analysis due to the complexity of coding, categorizing, classifying, and labeling patterns in the transcribed data. In this manner, the researcher determined significant findings in an organized manner. An expert panel of qualitative researchers was assembled by the researcher determined the validity of this doctoral study.	The researcher acknowledged the importance of self-disclosure during the interview process. A peer researcher coded a portion of the data for interrater reliability; achieved 90% accuracy.	Data analysis revealed that restorative justice required the commitment of the entire school community to improve the culture and climate of urban high schools. Relationship themes between students and staff emerged as the foundation for change, which were interconnected to the themes of community building, accountability, and empathy. Adult-to-adult and adult-to-student relationships were the critical elements in changing at-risk student behaviors. Circle conferences (a key practice of restorative justice) allowed for school staff, students, and parents to come together in finding solutions to changing at-risk student behaviors.

Study ID #	Citation	Setting & Subjects	Research Design	Data Collection	Measurement of Reliability & Validity	Position of Researcher	Identified Themes/Concepts
7	Motsinger, S. E. (2018). Social-emotional learning and restorative practices and its impact on perceptions of teacher and student relationships. (Doctoral dissertation, San Diego State University).	urban school district located in southwestern United States elementary school with 550 students of whom 68% are Hispanic Participants were 5th and 6th grade students, 5 teachers, and 1 administrator	Mix methods, qualitative case study	Individual interviews lasting 15-30 minutes Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Survey administered to randomly selected students.	Transcribed interview data were coded using a constant comparative method. Coded data were developed into common themes. The survey data provided evidence of students' perception of their relationships with their teachers. Descriptive statistics were used to the results of the survey instruments.	Included information about the researcher's work and interests as well as study limitations.	The findings suggested that the students at this school overwhelmingly perceived their teacher relationships as strong, due to being taught how to build empathy, being motivated by their teacher, and having emotional awareness. Teachers noticed a change in student relationships through the implementation of empathy building strategies. Strategies such as trust circles and restorative conversations helped o solve conflicts through the explicit teaching of social-emotional learning.

Appendix B

Qualitative Data of Four Research Articles per Normalisation Process Theory Constructs and Sub-constructs

Study ID	Coherence			
	Differentiation	Communal specification	Individual specification	Internalizations
1 Sandwick et al. (2019)	"Compared to traditional punitive measures, restorative practice (RP) could feel burdensome; there was no guarantee that the underlying issue would be resolved by the end of a given RP response."	"As the principal explained: Most staff preferred things to happen organically so [new] suggestions to formalize more practices and standards were getting pushback."	"Interviewees described how participating in circles or other RP processes enhanced understanding of the intensive labor involved and strengthened trust that RP could improve relationships and reduce conflict."	"Multiple interviewees described their schools as families and suggested that this bond directly informed the school's commitment to RP. [A parent said:] You don't suspend your child, right? Some of them [kids] are going to drive us up the frikking wall, but they're ours." "Across schools, interviewees reported some resistance to using RP for addressing conflict between students and staff. In asking adults to reflect upon their role in a given conflict—and perhaps their mistakes—RP could be seen as a threat to the traditional authority of educators."
2 Kervick et al. (2020)	No information or data given.	"People really don't understand what [RP] fully is or where it could go. I mean we're already doing PBIS, right? So, there's already an emphasis on incentivizing positive behaviors rather than crazy punishing infractions. So, I think many people just feel like [PR] is a natural extension of PBIS."	"Multiple participants framed the retreat event as the starting point for the staff to learn about RP and consider how it might be utilized within their school setting. One participant recalled: We talked about it at our in-service at the beginning of the school year, and it was introduced then. Circle practice was introduced, and we had some nice professional development with a guest teacher,	"A teacher recalled: One of the really wonderful things about this community is that they utilize certain times like retreats to introduce us to this practice. And then they don't just do it. We don't just as adults, we do it with children, and then we do it as adults again during our faculty meetings, and then we do it as adults again during the PTO."

			and we took part in circles. So that was when it got a little bit more focused."	"One of the parents described the benefit of using RP circles within this context: Well, I think they're great community builders. I love hearing what other people have to say about the school and learning about their answers. [RP circles] helps learn about those people."
Study ID	Differentiation	Communal specification	Individual specification	Internalizations
3 Joseph et al. (2021)	"This process was in-line with the district's goal of reducing school suspensions and disproportionality. One of the school leaders described the difficulty in doing this: I just want more ideas, especially for our alternative consequences. I believe that when a child does something they deserve a consequence, but what are some alternative ones? It doesn't always have to be suspension, but what are things we can do that are more purposeful?"	"A school leader described the process of negotiating between RP and punitive discipline: I believe that not all students should be given a suspension. It should be more differentiated, just like with instruction. She identified the need for student centered practices: Students being able to have a voice and being heard is what's most important here."	No information or data given.	No information or data given.
4 Hall et al. (2021)	"Many are resistant to change their ways. A social worker stated: Overall, some of the teachers have a very punitive approach. It's hard for them to shift between the former ways of being more punitive and going into more of the restorative approaches."	"Many participants indicated a lack of accurate knowledge to be a significant barrier to implementation. As higher-level administrator stated: We did not foresee all the problems there would be as people learned about it [PR] and then they went back. We didn't foresee the misunderstanding that people would have about it. It's hard to push back on something when it's done correctly. But it's easy to push	"A lack of time was recognized by most participants as a challenge to the implementation of a RP policy. A teacher said: One of the challenges I've faced is getting that time to do it. And I think there's other teachers that would be totally open. They love the idea of it. They're just thinking: How do I fit this in?" "It can be daunting to embrace RP implementation efforts when facing a large class size, a short	No information or data given.

		back on it when it's done incorrectly."	class period in a high school setting, and/or an already packed school day. Ideal implementation would include all facets. A school-level administrator said: It really does take a tremendous amount of time since we're really trying to use RP as it's designed."	
Study ID	Cognitive Participation			
	Initiation	Enrollment	Legitimation	Activation
1 Sandwick et al. (2019)	"It was seen as especially critical to have a principal who explicitly supported RP in words and deeds. In addition to adequately resourcing RP, multiple study principals were directly engaged, coaching staff in RP approaches, and running circles or mediations themselves."	No information or data given.	"Concerns expressed by skeptics of RP included some of the other staff and parent interviewees, who said that RP is too soft (make light), results in no consequences (nothing was done), does not change behavior, and does not prepare students for the harsh reality beyond the school building (shielding them)." "Across schools, participants emphasized that firsthand experience of RP was pivotal in building understanding and endorsement of RP in the school community. One staff person described this transformative experience: I remember our first circle [in a staff meeting]. That was actually really intense. Really emotional. I think by that point everybody was on board with it. We felt this is actually a useful way even adult to adult. Even to engage each other in a way that's more constructive. "	"A few interviewees suggested that even people who were deeply invested in RP might find that the emotional strain of an acute incident could spark a struggle with a knee-jerk reaction, tempting them to revert to ingrained habits of power and punishment."

Study ID	Initiation	Enrollment	Legitimation	Activation
2 Kervick et al. (2020)	"One teacher felt that the school principal was really passionate about RP and that helped when the leader was really on board. Additionally, they felt the principal's willingness to partner with them and provide modeling nurtured their ability to lead circles. " "This [notion] was echoed by another participant who identified the principal as an important resource: You're not just sort of adrift. Like, we're doing this new thing and sometimes we get directives from the district that are like you are kind of on your own once you get it, and it's nice to feel like, oh, we have somebody who's learning to be an expert in the building, and we're able to rely on them and learn together and be on the same page."	No information or data given.	No information or data given.	"On the one hand, teachers embraced RP as a framework that fit naturally with SWPBIS, social/emotional curriculum, and Responsive Classroom within the elementary setting. On the other hand, they identified a need to develop an intentional, clear vision for how those different mechanisms align and to communicate that vision to all stakeholders."
3 Joseph et al. (2021)	"An educator described his commitment to RP: "I welcome it, anything that keeps the kids out of suspensions, anything that doesn't feed the pipeline. When asked for an example of not feeding the pipeline, he stated: Not give out detention. If I do give detention, it's just between the student and myself. If the student doesn't go to the school detention, they are automatically	No information or data given.	No information or data given.	No information or data given.

	suspended. We work it out if they serve detention with me”.”			
Study ID	Initiation	Enrollment	Legitimation	Activation
4 Hall et al. (2021)	“A lack of support from administrative leaders was reported to be problematic in effectively implementing restorative practices on the school level by the majority of participants. As an RP specialist said: When you have support from top administration, the whole school will come. If you don’t, it’s going to be an uphill battle to create a climate and culture as a restorative school.” “Participants mentioned that without strong leadership, it could be challenging to secure a place for it in the daily school structure or get adequate training.”	“Principals have to be on board completely. They have to be hands-on, cannot just be like, ‘Oh, yes I give you permission to come onto our campus’. No, they [must] be in it. Like . . . advocating for us, letting their teachers know that this is going to be a decision made by them to change the mindset, or the culture, or the atmosphere of the campus to become more restorative.”	“A majority of participants reported difficulty in dealing with pushback from teachers.” “A higher-level administrator explained: “We have some veteran teachers who are like that’s not going to work, we need to be a little bit more tough on kids.” So that’s challenging.” “The other thing that makes implementation challenging is that you have people’s biases, like “well these kids just need harsh consequences. These kids need to learn the hard way.” It’s like, “what do you mean when you say that? What kids are you talking about?” I’m sometimes idealistic like we’re going to rise above that and not deal with that, but we deal with it” “Most participants agreed that parents eventually embrace the change and become receptive to restorative practices but that it just takes some assimilation. A school level administrator noted: “It was hard at the beginning because they all grew up in a school that was very disciplined. So it took a lot of educating and putting the research behind it in	“Teaching restoratively takes practice. Teachers need to develop and fine-tune their skills so the implementation in the classroom becomes easier. A social worker said: Because they’re fearful, burnt out, overwhelmed, and don’t have the skills, teachers don’t know what to do and they don’t understand. If a teacher is directed to discipline differently, it may feel disempowering if they have not learned and mastered the skills to run a classroom restoratively.”

			our handbook and on our website and making sure that they understood why this was important”.”	
Study ID	Collective Action			
	Interactional workability	Relational integration	Skill-set workability	Contextual integration
1 Sandwick et al. (2019)	“Another widespread strategy was to incorporate RP into the official schedule. For instance, all schools had one or more of the following: weekly staff meetings for RP preparation and processes, internal and external professional development on related topics, and RP student leadership built into classes and clubs. Relatedly, most of the schools had designated spaces for circles, mediation, restorative conversations, and/or relationship building”	“Another issue that arose at the nexus of values and logistics was the contested place of SSAs in schools. Some interviewees described an underlying institutional conflict between NYPD employed SSAs and school personnel, citing divergent mandates, training, and authority.” “An SSA reflected on an experience with a student: I’m like, “Listen, this [student’s physical behavior directed at me] is a serious offense. This can’t be done.” It’s like let’s make light of the situation. Nothing was done with the student. It was the excuse of “Well, you know restorative justice.” I said, “Restorative justice is not used in that way. He needs to know what [he] did was wrong.” Sometimes we do them a disservice and shielding them from the real world…not letting him know when he goes outside and he does that to a police officer, it might not be the same outcome”.”	No information or data given.	“Most staff interviewees described feeling broad support from leadership and colleagues in their efforts to develop RP. They reported formal aid (staffing, scheduling, professional development) alongside informal guidance and moral support from principals and coworkers.” “By providing continuous support, data, and modeling, administrators can create a common language and a restorative culture. A school-level administrator said: An ideal implementation would incorporate all components from the district level to the school site level, to all of the stakeholders understanding what RP is. We need to demystify what RP is and give space to implement RP in a way that’s going to impact the community – all facets of the community.” “Often initiatives are mandated from an administrative entity, and then with a switch in trend or superintendent, a new policy quickly takes precedence. Several participants mentioned that the fickle nature of education policy

				posed a challenge with effective RP implementation. A higher-level administrator said: "If we don't decide to commit to RP as an approach in the county, we'll do what we always do in education which is start something and stop as soon as it doesn't work. Because [if] you don't see results right away, you're think, well, research says it doesn't work and so does our experience"."
Study ID	Interactional workability	Relational integration	Skill-set workability	Contextual integration
2 Kervick et al. (2020)	"To facilitate RP adoption, the school did not replace existing initiatives with RP but worked diligently to consider how RP aligned with other efforts. RP became an additional tool that teachers utilized to create a positive classroom culture, build community, promote social and emotional learning, and address behavioral challenges." "If a particular social skill was introduced teachers used a circle process to facilitate exploration of that particular concept. Problem-solving circles were used to address issues that occurred in the classroom related to schoolwide behavioral expectations. If schoolwide behavioral expectations established through SWPBIS needed to be revisited, teachers used RP circles to engage in a class wide discussion."	"Several participants also acknowledged that there are drawbacks of teachers jumping in without having a systematic and consistent vision and approach to understanding how different tools work together. They said with emphasis: But it would be nice if in some areas, there were a little bit more consistency, because it can be confusing for kids."	"Of particular interest to participants was individualized coaching and staff discussions about how to consistently align discipline procedures with RP philosophy as well as strategies and knowledge to move beyond tier one RP implementation strategies."	"This idea of deeply engaging with the content was supported by a participant: We sat with this book in a faculty meeting two months ago [November], just to continue that point that it wasn't just in August, it isn't just repeated in this, going through the motions, kind of way where we're just doing a circle. We actually delved deeply into this by breaking up into groups and recognizing what is said in certain sections of this book and then sharing that with our community, our staff here."

	"Teachers described ways they integrated RP as a tool compatible with the other schoolwide learning initiatives. For example, "Well, I felt like it was a great fit because I felt like it wasn't necessarily something so different from the best practices we'd already been using from other programs. Whether it was Responsive Classroom or PBIS that emphasized a positive inclusion, it just gave additional protocols and information to use to make our circles and practices fairer and more inclusive, I thought."			
Study ID	Interactional workability	Relational integration	Skill-set workability	Contextual integration
3 Joseph et al. (2021)	"Similarly, throughout Year One of the intervention, several school leaders and educators displayed buy-in and attempted to include non-punitive alternatives. A teacher described student centered alternatives: "We always like to ask students what they think they need to do to fix things or to be successful in a sense after they messed up. There are different things available. We have dialogue(s), conferences, but I also have sort of like an essay. If I think they were sincere, I go over that with them. If they break their commitment, then they would return to be on our Chronic Hall Walker List"."	No information or data given.	No information or data given.	"The presence of chaos in discipline unfolded as a product of competing punitive and RP discipline practices. The persistence of punitive practices not only competed with RP but caused: 1. inconsistencies and therefore inequity in discipline protocol, 2. led students to respond to restorative practices with antagonism, and 3. left teachers and students to institute their own measures of social justice in discipline."

4 Hall et al. (2021)	No information or data given.	No information or data given.	"RP can be a difficult transition for staff if they were already feeling overwhelmed with managing their responsibilities. There is no one available to help lighten the load. A RP specialist mentioned how the district level is struggling to meet the demand for training and support. She said: We need more people. There's only so much that five people can do, right?" "Over half of the participants mentioned the need for an internal RP team, particularly social workers, as they are trained to provide social-emotional and behavioral support to students. The values of RP align with the work they are already doing." "Most participants reported a challenge due to shortcomings. Even with administrative support, incompetency can pose a challenge. One social worker stated: No one above me has any expertise in RP. But they believe in what I believe. They believe that I know what I'm talking about. RP was already in our Local Control and Accountability Plan. There's been a lot of talk, but not a lot of real work."	"The majority of participants stated a lack of prioritization made it more difficult to implement RP school-wide effectively. One higher-level administrator highlighted the challenge that teachers face without the prioritization by the school administration: Because otherwise [teachers] feel like they might get caught and they don't want to like they're doing the wrong thing; they're supposed to be doing academics. It can be difficult for teachers to go against the status quo and prioritize social, emotional support in their classrooms." "Others hoped that the County Office of Education would place as much importance on restorative practices as some of its other educational initiatives. A higher-level administrator said: If you're going to do it really well, you have to be serious about it, and you have to put the resources into it." "Most participants reported that existing and past education policy could also act as barriers to RP implementation. Participants mentioned that the transition from the No Child Left Behind era had presented challenges. A higher-level administrator commented: To actually see that zero tolerance was our board policy, we have to change that. It can't be the way in

				which we do things. In California, teachers have the right to suspend the student for the day. They can suspend a student out of their class for the remainder of the day and the next day. They have the power to do that. A teacher can say that they don't want the student in their class for a day. And so that's a challenge as well."
Study ID	Reflexive Monitoring			
	Systematization	Communal appraisal	Individual appraisal	Reconfiguration
1 Sandwick et al. (2019)	"A staff person illuminated the need to generally report on RP work: When teachers know what's happening, they feel better. When specifically impacted by a given incident, teachers don't know what's happening, so they become upset. Following up with impacted community members should be central to the RP accountability processes as a basic act of care and respect for those harmed." "One practical barrier to such follow-up raised by multiple staff, however, was that school data systems were designed to record punitive disciplinary events and required updating to better document multi-faceted RP responses."	"Interviewees reported frequent communication among key RP staff, but a need to enhance communication between RP staff and the broader school community. This [lack of communication] was seen as a key barrier to building trust in RP. If there was insufficient follow-up about RP responses with students who witnessed an incident or a referring staff member, it could diminish confidence that a situation was being addressed in good faith." "People want to know that something's going to be addressed. When the teachers know what's happening, they feel better. I had an issue with a physical altercation in my class. I had no idea what they were doing to handle it. I was getting furious and then [once I learned what the RP staff had been	No information or data given.	"A school-level administrator stated: The follow through of continuously training our staff and continuously providing more strategies and more in-depth knowledge for RP. Not just say, here it is and go do it, but give them more research. Participants mentioned that when teachers are directed to do something new without being provided the proper assistance or modeling, optimum results are not produced."

		doing] I told them, I was like, "You did so much. I wish I had known this"."		
Study ID	Systematization	Communal appraisal	Individual appraisal	Reconfiguration
2 Kervick et al. (2020)	"While efforts were made by the principal to broadly disseminate information about the school's adoption of RP during that first year across the school community, the parents we interviewed also raised concerns that the initiative moved forward primarily due to the principal's agency and wondered how more information about the rationale for implementing RP could be communicated to the broader school community, including families who, despite these efforts to ensure communication and accessibility, may not be fully aware of the RP initiatives."	"Several participants felt that this spirit of collaboration reinforced the desire among school staff to implement what they learned in the professional development sessions. One participant said: I feel like in this school everyone feels like a team, like we're a big team, and we go full force ahead into a new thing. Okay, we're all gonna do this, and we believe it's the best thing." "Participants also articulated a need for shared goals and an action plan related to implementation. One person said: I think it's time now to share. These are the things that are working. These are the things that aren't working." "Another person said: I can sit there every day and do RP and feel like I'm doing it right or feel like I'm doing it wrong, but without the opportunity to reflect with someone, a third person, about what they are seeing or noticing by what I'm doing or what the class is doing, then I really don't see any room for growth."	No information or data given.	"Participants noted that the first year of implementation was exploratory and that one of the things they learned was that they needed more conversations around how to consistently integrate use of RP across all settings and incorporate it into schoolwide systems for tracking and responding to behavior." "Although the school staff and leadership believed that integrating RP into existing school initiatives was essential to holistically address student behavioral needs, participants universally expressed a desire for more training and professional development."

Study ID	Systematization	Communal appraisal	Individual appraisal	Reconfiguration
3 Joseph et al. (2021)	No information or data given.	No information or data given.	No information or data given.	No information or data given.
4 Hall et al. (2021)	No information or data given.	No information or data given.	No information or data given.	No information or data given.

Appendix C

Normalisation Process Theory Coding Manual Part B: Secondary Constructs

NPT construct	Sub-construct	Description and example
Coherence: How do people work together to understand and plan the activities that need to be accomplished to put an intervention and its components into practice?	Differentiation	Description: How do people distinguish interventions and their components from their current ways of working? Example: "To invest in ERAS individuals needed to be able to differentiate its practices favorably with those enacted pre-implementation. This required *coherence* work in understanding the potential patient benefits allied to its introduction. Participants provided divergent accounts when they compared ERAS to previous practice. A number of participants asserted that the introduction of ERAS had brought about considerable changes to their day-to-day practice. These changes included positive adjustments in the management of patients and required patients to play a more active role in their own recovery."
	Communal specification	Description: How do people collectively agree about the purpose of interventions and their components? Example: "Another barrier to coherence was lack of communal specification, since not everyone considered they had been informed about the study or understood its aims and processes. This caused implementation problems for the homes and the research team. For the homes, the researchers' reasons for examining potential benefits from the intervention to have a positive impact on the culture of care had not been strongly reflected."
	Individual specification	Description: How do people individually understand what interventions and their components require of them? Example: "One respondent felt discussing the new way to view the patients with the staff was a delicate issue. In the old care model, patients were usually only informed about the treatment. Now in the care model, patients were to be seen as partners. This was regarded as a shift in power for some physicians, it would be difficult to get used to."
	Internalization	Description: How do people construct potential value of interventions and their components for their work? Example: "At this stage (initial introductory meetings), the value of the intervention was purely based on individuals' interpretation of the information given by the research team and the fit with their own interests. The doctors in General Practice provided their views at the end of the introductory meeting, saying that they liked the structure and more systematic approach to caring for people with OA. They concluded that "it is nice to be able to try something that may make a difference"."

NPT construct	Sub-construct	Description and example
Cognitive participation: How do people work together to create networks of participation and communities of practice around interventions and their components?	Initiation	Description: How do key individuals drive interventions and their components forward? Example: “Participants described the new SDM work as requiring leaders to define the work, and then enrolling others to contribute collectively to the process. Identifying leadership support for SDM was challenging. Clinical teams are not simple hierarchical units, and substantial autonomy exists, especially for experienced clinicians.”
	Enrolment	Description: How do people join in with interventions and their components? Example: “Clinic participants also re-ported that the intervention provided a model for improved interprofessional team collaboration, resulting in a greater understanding of clinicians’ roles and skill sets. Huddles were viewed as worth creating and maintaining, both for interprofessional team and patient benefits. Participants identified that the majority of patients were satisfied with the interprofessional approach to primary care.”
	Legitimation	Description: How do people agree that interventions and their components are the right thing to do and should be part of their work? Example: “‘The respondents offered several explanations for resistance or lack of engagement: some staff felt that health promotion activities overstretched users’ resources and thus had a negative impact on their quality of life; others argued that health promotion activities did not respect personal preferences of users and staff (…) One of the important implementation ideas (…) was the concept of staff being role models for health promotion. As a role model, staff were expected to participate in different health promotion activities (like joining users for walks and meals) and to display a healthy lifestyle at work. In the four providers, such expectations were formulated and formalized by management or by key implementation staff to different extents. However, in all cases some staff did not buy into this idea; they felt that the elements of smoking cessation and healthier meals interfered with their usual lifestyle and personal preferences.”
	Activation	Description: How do people continue to support interventions and their components? Example: “While overall this system has worked well, many participants referenced instances of long wait times and rerouting of calls to reach the neonatologist. Based on the care teams' appraisal and experience with this process, they suggested modeling the tele-neonatology service activation after the emergency department's response system, for immediate and direct connection. Other suggestions include making the technology simple enough for ease of use, and to mount a camera (which can be controlled by the remote neonatologist) to the baby warmer.”

NPT construct	Sub-construct	Description and example
Collective action: How do people work together to enact interventions and their components?	Interactional workability	Description: How do people do the work required by interventions and their components? Example: “The rural allied health team indicated that telehealth technology provided ‘a whole range of other capabilities’ and considered it ‘safe and it’s appropriate and it’s an equivalent, if not better, sort of service that you can provide’. They were committed to the notion that telehealth could balance the unequal access to services across geographical locations and were keen to pursue innovative ways of using telehealth technologies to allow them to provide complex distant therapy. In contrast to rural and experienced telehealth clinicians who were keen to utilize technology as part of their role and to deal with distance and isolation, urban clinicians with no exposure to telehealth reported more reservations about the safety and suitability of providing rehabilitation through telehealth. They generally felt that telehealth should be reserved for ‘people who are more autonomous and more capable and … straightforward’, rather than ‘real’ rehabilitation patients with complex issues. They felt that people who required rehabilitation often require a ‘hands on’ approach.”
	Relational integration	Description: How does using interventions and their components affect the confidence that people have in each other? Example: “Enhanced collegial discussion about FV and adherence to the safety measures, such as the home visiting policy and procedures introduced in (…) model, were important for nurses to feel safe and undertake the FV work. As implementation progressed, intervention nurses felt safer than comparison nurses when attending home visits (…). Relationships within teams and with FV services varied across the MCH intervention teams. High workloads, time constraints and a lack of nursing staff or relievers in some centers impacted on the organization of the FV work at times. The nurse mentor role to provide secondary consultation, linkage to FV services and support for other MCH nurses had varied success. Due to time constraints and the often-solo nature of MCH practice, most nurses preferred to discuss clinical issues with a nurse friend or co-worker at the time rather than try to contact the designated MOVE nurse mentor, with only 38% of nurses using the nurse mentor role early in the trial. This increased to 52% as time went on. If the nurse was not comfortable speaking and had insufficient time or access to the nurse mentor, then this aspect of the model was lost.”
	Skill-set workability	Description: How is the work of interventions and their components appropriately allocated to people? Example: “A key theme identified in the literature and through this study is the need for more training for practitioners. This includes training both in professional education and continuing educational opportunities for all practitioners. Medical, nursing, and allied health education programs need to improve LGBT curriculum content (…). Providing education on general terminology, healthcare needs specific to the transgender population, and practitioners’ role in providing healthcare for this

NPT construct	Sub-construct	Description and example
		population will better prepare new practitioners for serving this community. Increased access to continuing education with LGBT content will help to increase the knowledge and skill of current practitioners. Embedding LGBT content within current programs of continuing education may increase awareness more than having specific LGBT courses (…). Embedding it in current programs may bring awareness to the concepts and highlight the need for practitioners to seek out more specific training to address their learning gaps."
	Contextual integration	Description: How is the work of interventions and their components supported by host organizations? Example: "Since POs were able to self-select into the pilot, the alignment of PO priorities with participation in a pilot on care management was a good fit. The leadership in all POs voiced interest in providing care management to patients within their PO as a means of improving patient outcomes, easing burden on providers of handling complex patients, and to meet health care standards and reimbursement policies such as patient-centered medical home recognition, accountable care, and meaningful use. Therefore, in this study overall organizational support was not found to be variant. Where organizational support emerged as an issue related more to resources and support for the care management program relative to the needs and goals of the program. The most common issue here was not having either enough care managers or enough care manager protected time to do care management for the number of patients needing it. So, in well-normalized programs, there was a sense of "rationing" of the care manager. Because the program was being used so much more and there was a capacity constraint at the practice level with the practice-based care manager structure, the practices in these POs voiced more concern about lack of care manager capacity. Lack of resources was evident in other ways such as lack of space for patient visits or access to phone lines to make longer calls."
Reflexive monitoring: How do people work together to appraise interventions and their components?	Systematization	Description: How do people access information about the effects of interventions and their components? Example: "Feedback was never provided to staff on the effect of the AKI e-alert "I haven't had any feedback since the new version (of the AKI e-alert) went in actually(...) I don't know whether there is a formal mechanism for that getting to anyone"."
	Communal appraisal	Description: How do people collectively assess interventions and their components as worthwhile? Example: "The e-alert was rarely (if ever) discussed among clinicians, but participants often stated they felt that others would find it worthwhile. "The e-alert was rarely (if ever) discussed among clinicians, but participants often stated they felt that others would find it worthwhile. "Most people I'm sure would know it's a good idea having them. That's what I'd say to someone about these alerts"."

NPT construct	Sub-construct	Description and example
	Individual appraisal	Description: How do people individually assess interventions and their components as worthwhile? Example: “A key barrier which has not previously been identified concerned the ability of case managers to identify, and act on, emerging patient and carer needs; we identified examples of missed and unmet needs for all three case managers. One case manager explicitly attributed this to the timing of the intervention; a study of case management for people with early symptoms of dementia and their carers similarly found that case managers did not feel the intervention was needed at this point.”
	Reconfiguration	Description: How do people modify their work in response to their appraisal of interventions and their components? Example: “Aligning IPC guidelines with local clinical context is an essential means to reduce the sense of *dissonance* and represents a critical step forward towards successful implementation. Some strategies described in the literature to promote alignment include integration of IPC recommendations within other established programmes; and education and audit interventions acknowledging the positive and negative beliefs of staff on IPC practices.”

Note. Adapted from May et al. (2022). Translational framework for implementation evaluation and research: A Normalisation Process Theory coding manual for qualitative research and instrument development. *Implementation Science*, *17*, 19. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13012-022-01191-x NPT = Normalisation Process Theory

Appendix D

Restorative Practice Implementation Plan