Academic Integrity and Restorative Practices

ICAI Webinar

Paul Sopcak, Ph.D.

sopcakp@macewan.ca

sopcakp@macewan.ca

MacEwan UNIVERSITY

Outline

<u>Theory</u>

- Academic Integrity and post-secondary's civic education mandate
- What are Restorative Practices (RP)?
- Persistent myths surrounding RP and RJ
- Q&A

<u>Application</u>

- MacEwan University's application of RP to promote academic integrity and respond to academic misconduct
- Common concerns
- Q&A

Academic Integrity and Post-Secondary's Civic Education Mandate

- PSI's increasing focus on fostering civic responsibility, engaged citizenship, and ethical decision making in students (Boyte, 2015; Jorgensen & Shultz, 2012)

- Student success is defined in terms of academic *and* citizenship skills

- Restorative Practices afford experiential learning opportunities related to moral development, emotional intelligence, and engaged citizenship (e.g., Karp & Sacks, 2014).

- To compare, see student perceptions of standard quasi-legal processes (Pitt, Dullaghan, & Smith, 2020)

Defining Restorative Practices (RP)

- Umbrella term, including Restorative Justice
- "Restorative justice is a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible." (Zehr, 2003, p. 40).

RP/RJ As Community- & Integrity-Building Tool

- Four underlying principles (Karp, 2019, p. 9):
  - inclusive decision making
  - active accountability
  - repairing harm
  - rebuilding trust
- RP to promote fundamental values of academic integrity (ICAI, 2021): honesty, fairness, trust, respect, responsibility, & courage

Persistent Myths Surrounding RJ/RP

RJ/RP

- *Myth 1*: is primarily about forgiving the wrongdoer and their reintegration
- *Myth 2*: is an easy way out for offenders/allows them to shirk responsibility
- *Myth 3*: is mainly focused on reducing recidivism
- *Myth 4* : is another form of mediation (see Zehr, 2003, p. 6, for debunking)
- *Myth 5*: might be OK for less serious offenses, but not for serious ones
- *Myth 6*: is much more time and resource intensive than quasi-legal, model code procedures
- *Myth/Contentious Issue*: RJ/RP are appropriation of Indigenous legal practices (see Chartrand & Horn, 2018, for an excellent discussion)

Restorative Practices at MacEwan University

- To promote student success

- To promote faculty buy-in

- To create a community of integrity

- Restorative resolution an option for academic and non-academic misconduct, *if conditions are met*:
  - No risk for further harm
  - Student takes responsibility, is willing to explore harms and repairs for those harms (no "option shopping")
  - Voluntary participation by student and harmed parties (or proxies)
  - Signed privacy statements

Restorative Responses to Misconduct

- … characterized by:
- "A focus on HARMS and consequent NEEDS of those affected;
- Addressing OBLIGATIONS that result from those harms;
- Using inclusive, COLLABORATIVE processes;
- Involving those with a legitimate stake in the situation; and
- Seeking to REPAIR harms and put right the wrongs to the extent possible." (Zehr, 2003, p. 33)

Restorative Questions 1 – Responsible Party

- *What happened?*

- *What were you thinking of at the time?*

- *What have you thought about since?*

- *Who has been affected by what you have done?*

- *In what way have they been affected?**

- *What do you think are the obligations resulting from your action?* What are appropriate consequences?* What do you think could be put in place to ensure it doesn't happen again?**

(Questions marked with an asterisk* have been added to or slightly modified from Wachtel's (2016, p. 7))

Restorative Questions 2 – Harmed Parties

- *What did you think when you realized what had happened?*

- *What impact has this incident had on you and others?*

- *What has been the hardest thing for you?*

- *What do you think needs to happen to make things right? What are appropriate consequences?* What do you think could be put in place to ensure it doesn't happen again?**

(Questions marked with an asterisk* have been added to or slightly modified from Wachtel's (2016, p. 7))

Outcomes

- Focus on fairness and consistency
- Not identical to outcomes of quasi-legal, discplinary process, but equitable
- Can be a mix of sanctions, educational, and restorative activities (e.g., developing (anonymous) action plans, resource sheets, reflective papers, value statements, educational material, etc.)
- Binding (not appealable)

Summary

- RP are a tool for post-secondary institution to pursue the loftier, civic & ethical education goals found in mission and vision statements
- RP connect academic integrity work to the institutions strategic goals
- RP are an effective integrity- and community-building tool
- RP can assist with faculty buy-in in addressing academic misconduct
- RP cannot replace quasi-legal procedures, but should be considered as the default approach

Thoughts on Participating in RP Resolution

- Short interviews with MacEwan faculty members and Students' Association member: https://streaming.macewan.ca/channel/Restorative%2BPractices/155819242

References

Boyte, H. C. (Ed.). (2015). *Democracy's education: public work, citizenship, & the future of higher education*. Vanderbilt University Press.

Chartrand, L. N., Horn, K., Canada, & Department of Justice. (2018). *A report on the relationship between restorative justice and Indigenous legal traditions in Canada*. Department of Justice Canada. https://www.deslibris.ca/ID/10099014

International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI). (2021). The fundamental values of academic integrity (3rd ed.). https://www.academicintegrity.org/fundamental-values/

Jorgenson, S., & Shultz, L. (2012). Global citizenship education (GCE) in post-secondary institutions: What is protected and what is hidden under the umbrella of GCE? *Journal of Global Citizenship & Equity Education*, 2(1).

Karp, D. R. (2019). *The little book of restorative justice for colleges and universities: Repairing harm and rebuilding trust in response to student misconduct*, 2nd edition. Good Books.

Karp, D. R., & Sacks, C. (2014). Student conduct, restorative justice, and student development: Findings from the STARR project: a student accountability and restorative research project. Contemporary Justice Review, 17(2), 154–172. doi: 10.1080/10282580.2014.915140

Pitt, P., Dullaghan, K., & Sutherland-Smith, W. (2020). 'Mess, stress and trauma': Students' experiences of formal contract cheating processes. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2020.1787332

Wachtel, T. (2016). Defining Restorative. *International Institute for Restorative Practices*. Retrieved from https://www.iirp.edu/images/pdf/Defining-Restorative_Nov-2016.pdf

Zehr (2003). *Little book of restorative justice*. Good Books.