A Paradigm Shift Using Circle Dialogue: A Narrative Study to Investigate the

Impact of

Restorative Justice Education on Graduate Students

By

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of restorative justice education (RJE) on students after completing a graduate course in ED 6936 (Restorative Justice in Education-Promises and Challenges) at Memorial University of Newfoundland. As a graduate student in this course, I experienced a paradigm shift in my worldview after completing the 3-credit course. This shift encouraged me to investigate whether my classmates experienced the same impact. Out of eleven students in the course, I selected 5 for the study. The investigation was conducted using narrative and autoethnographic methods. I collected data through narrative and semi-structured interviews. Findings from the thematic analysis revealed a change in the worldview of all the participants. Further findings revealed that the circle dialogue pedagogy, the leadership quality of the facilitator and the philosophical foundation of the course contributed to the shift experienced.

Keywords: Paradigm Shift, Restorative Justice, Circle Dialogue.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to:

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And

My mom: The look on your face prompted me to work hard, and your prayers are the source of my strength.

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Chapter 1- Introduction

1.1 Statement of the Problem – Research Rationale

I come from a country where social and economic life is difficult, and education is reduced to schooling that is devoid of virtue and character. Thus, there has been a rallying cry for change in the hearts of the people who desire transformation (Enu & Esu, 2011). In Nigeria, the social, political, and economic structures are in discord with the lofty goals of its constitution and professed national values. As a secondary and postsecondary school student in Nigeria, I questioned what we were not doing right as a country.

Over time, it became clear to me as a Nigerian that one of the reasons for where we are today as a country is the failed educational system, which is rooted in standardized education. Nigerian education is lacking in curriculum and pedagogy that gives attention to values such as respect for people and humanity. The overall impact of this absence culminates in social problems resulting in broken communities and relationships as well as a fragile sense of national unity. In my Canadian education, I learned that education that is not built on the virtues of respect, honour and the dignity of all people produces broken societies (George, & Ukpong 2013).

As a prospective international student in my home country, the thought of what is different between the western world and African nations, particularly Nigeria, triggered my curiosity to search for the root cause of the myriad of problems in our social, political and institutional structures. This search left me with many doubts until I arrived in Canada as a graduate student of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Graduate

education at Memorial University is rooted in reflective and critical thinking; this gave me the platform I needed to address my 'cognitive dissonance' (Leon, 1957).

John Dewey (2010) in '*How We Think*,' distills the role of education in transforming us from being ruled by our natural impulses to thinking humans guided by the inner values of nurturance and reflection. He articulates that education plays a crucial role in equipping us with the sort of critical thinking necessary for deconditioning our impulses and dispelling the false beliefs and illusory ideas bequeathed to us by society.

> Thought [Education] affords the sole method of escape from purely impulsive or purely routine action. A being without the capacity for thought is moved only by instincts and appetites, as these are called forth by outward conditions and by the inner state of the organism. A being thus moved is, as it were, pushed from behind. This is what we mean by the blind nature of brute actions. The agent does not see or foresee the end for which he is acting, nor the results produced by his behaving in one way rather than in another. He does not "know what he is about." Where there is thought, things present act as signs or tokens of things not yet experienced. A thinking being can, accordingly, act based on the absent and the future. Instead of being pushed into a mode of action by the sheer urgency of forces, whether instincts or habits, of which he is not aware, a reflective agent is drawn (to some extent at least) to action by some remoter object of which he is indirectly aware. (p. 14-15)

Through critical relational thinking in education, we are invited to a pedagogical framework that takes humanity away from the 'state of nature' (Rousseau, 1968) to a 'state of nurture' where relationships and connectedness prevail over the impulses of self and greed. Education can fulfill this important role through RJE (Restorative Justice in Education). This is because, RJE, as defined in this study "nurtures the capacity of people to engage with one another and their environment in a manner that supports and respects the inherent dignity and worth of all" (Evans & Vaandering, 2016 p.8).

Does education play this role presently in Nigeria? The Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE, 1981) sets out to generate social capacity for national development through quality learning and instruction based on the following values:

- Faith in man's ability to make rational decisions

- Respect for the worth and dignity of the individual

- Moral and spiritual principles in interpersonal and human relations

- Shared responsibility for the common good of society

- Promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development of all children

- The acquisition of competencies necessary for self-reliance

Despite these laudable values, there are growing discontents by most Nigerians and scholars for the failure of education in Nigeria (Fagbulu, 2017; Diana-Abasi, 2015; Umo, 2014; Enu & Esu, 2011). Based on my experiences as a teacher in Nigeria, and as a student in Canada, I can evaluate that the products of the Nigerian educational system display the

direct opposite of these values. In the context of RJE, most graduates of the Nigerian education system appear to be facing an extreme deficit in their understanding of what it means to be educated with the social capacity to function in a complex world (Diana-Abasi, 2015). The Guardian Editorial Board states that in Nigeria

> knowledge is hardly translated to utility and productivity is near zero. Every year, because of a bastardized educational system, Nigerian universities turn out millions of half-baked and ill-prepared graduates who know little or nothing about how to improve themselves or their society. (02 June 2016)

To overcome this problem, Oyekan (2000) suggests the need for a progressive nation that adopts efficient and dynamic curriculum development as a means of allowing children, youth, and adults to acquire fundamental knowledge, practical skills and good habits for developing survival strategies in the modern world (p. 399). There is no doubt that Nigerian youth flourish in cognitive endeavours, as they constitute a sizeable number of the intellectual and professional diaspora population (Amagoh, & Rahman 2016). Much more, however, is needed beyond academic and professional achievements to live life. It is the goal of RJE to unpack what is required to be truly educated, live life, and be human in the world. My greatest learning outcome after taking the course Restorative Justice in Education-Promises and Challenges (ED 6936) at Memorial University of Newfoundland in Canada was knowing that to be truly educated is to be human.

The highlight of my studies in Canada was taking this course in RJE. ED6936 was a course that had a positive impact on me and revealed a pathway to walk through life in a

way I had never perceived before. After my RJE experience, I understood that we could do so much to change the 'bad habit' (Dewey, 1922) of Nigerian youth through education that is based on the RJ ethos. Dewey refers to a 'bad habit' as:

> An urgent impulse……. an inherent tendency to act and a hold, command over us. It makes us do things we are ashamed of, things we tell ourselves we prefer not to do. It overrides our formal resolution, our conscious decisions. When we are honest with ourselves, we acknowledge that a habit has this power because it is so intimately a part of ourselves. It has a hold upon us because we are the habit (p.25).

In Nigeria, we derogatorily refer to this bad habit as 'our mentality' or 'our mindset'. These mindsets are demonstrated in behaviours that violate individual and inter-ethnic relationships in our national life. As Dewey desired, I seek to use the outcome of this study to demonstrate that

> the best we can accomplish for posterity is to transmit unimpaired and with some increment of meaning, the environment that makes it possible to maintain the habits of decent and refined life as our habits are linked in forming the endless chain of humanity (p. 22).

RJE provides a framework for how this desire can be achieved. RJE provides a lens, through which I see the need for a change in the 'mentality' of most Nigerian youth who graduate from school with little or no capacity to live a life worthy of mutual respect, empathy, harmony and honouring the other. Although these qualities appear value-laden, they are essential in fostering the social capacity for creativity, productivity, social and

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national cohesion.

The goals listed in NPE (1981) are far from being achieved (Umo, 2014). The problem that needs to be addressed is how to transform the school system so that more attention is given to the social capital development of our young people and the deconstruction of 'mental bad habits'. In Nigeria, mental bad habits have seen demonstrated through greed, Epicureanism, corruption, violence, hate and anger, inter-tribal acrimony and conflict, touting and bribery, cultism, robbery, crude social media wars, low- and high-class prostitution among college and university undergraduates and graduates, trafficking in young women for sex work abroad, and kidnapping foreign expats for ransom, which has also become a regular practice in some parts of Nigeria (George, & Ukpong 2013). Some scholars have blamed 'mental bad habits' that culminate in social problems on colonial creation (Enemo, 1948), the incompetence and corruption of government, as well as bad parenting (George & Ukpong, 2013). However, research regarding relational culture theory by Vaandering (2013) and McCauley (2013) suggests that RJE can foster healthy coexistence through a relational lens. In transforming the self, which Llewellyn (2012) refers to as making and remaking the self, the importance of connections and relationships with others is emphasized (p.90). This underscores the hope that RJE will present an opportunity for a paradigm shift away from the way we currently do things. This change can be achieved through a culture of growth-fostering relationships in our educational institutions where we can move toward an increased capacity for respect and affect others positively (Jordan, 2013; Jordan et al; 2004). I believe that education, as an agent of social change, has a responsibility to promote this relationship culture based on

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respect and dignity of the human person in Nigeria. This is my objective for this study.

Before my experience with ED 6936, I saw the world from the perspective of rule and policy; this informed my adversarial approach to student discipline in schools as a teacher. Beyond the classroom, my life was focused on myself and others. However, contact with RJ[1] created a paradigm shift which has changed the lens through which I see the world; this lens is now framed by relationship, connectedness and the need to belong. Presently, I see education from the perspective of a philosophy that honours self and the worth of all regardless of whom they are or what they do and recognizes the importance of community in individual lives through connectedness (Vaandering, 2016). Through my new lens, I embrace a philosophical worldview that calls for a paradigm shift in the way we live life based on the ethos of RJ. RJ as a way of life guides all our interactions (Wachtel, 1999). This philosophy may be relevant to addressing the brokenness in Nigeria communities if it is introduced to Nigerian classrooms.

Why is RJE important in Nigerian schools? McCauley (2013) suggests that the prospect of developing empathy later in life is crucial for relational culture. This need underscores the urgency for Nigerian schools to embed in their curriculum a culture of

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1. Refer to page 11 for clarification on the distinction between RJ and RJE

empathy and respect for humanity, as mutual empathy is required for the existence of 'growth-fostering relationships' (Jordan, 2013). Establishing a culture of empathy through relationship building in Nigerian schools will develop the mental capacity for healthy emotional responses to citizens and communities' needs. Among other benefits, Gerdes & Segal (2009) suggest that empathy could help develop the mental capacity to take the perspective of the other, the ability to regulate emotions and increase the level of awareness of self and others. Respect, empathy, honour, dignity, and humanity are virtues that Nigerian classrooms must pay attention to if a change is to occur in our national life. I hope that the outcome of this study will give credence to this hypothesis.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

There has been growing support for the implementation of RJ in schools across the world due to its capacity to improve a relational "whole school culture" (Clark, 2014). Vaandering (2014) indicates that schools are answering this call due to the capacity of RJE to develop safe and caring school cultures that effectively support the purpose of schooling (64). Meyers and Evans (2012) support this in identifying that RJE creates a "school culture that permeates all aspects of school organization and relationships within the school as well as relationships between the school and its community" (p.5). The ability of RJ to transform school culture and promote school discipline has been demonstrated in a number of studies (McCluskey et al., 2008; Meyer & Evans, 2012; Howard, 2009). Therefore, there is a benefit to preparing teachers and educators for implementing the principles and ethos of restorative justice in the classroom. To incorporate the beliefs and values of RJE, educators

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interested in implementing its practices are invited to experience a paradigm shift in the way they view the world, especially in education settings (Zehr, 2005; Evans & Vaandering, 2016). The dominant term in this study is 'paradigm shift,' a radical change in one's conceptual worldview (Thomas Kuhn 1922–96).

Because of the central role of the relational mindset, the purpose of this study is to investigate whether a paradigm shift occurred in students who completed an introductory course in RJE (ED6936) at Memorial University's Faculty of Education. The study explores how the classroom experience in engaging with RJE impacted the participants' worldview. Where a paradigm shift is revealed, this research explores what happened that led this change to occur.

Because of growing concerns about the quality of education in Nigeria, my aim is that this study will inform the understanding of how RJE could be implemented in Nigerian classrooms for improved learning. It will also inform policy directions for educational authorities on the need to encourage relational school culture across Nigeria.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This investigation was carried out to satisfy my curiosity as a researcher. However, its relevance and significance go far beyond this:

1. This study will help curriculum developers and university policymakers evaluate the need for RJE in teacher education programs.

2. My searches in literature reveal a focus of post-secondary RJE courses on theory, philosophy, and process. There are few studies on how post-secondary RJE courses impact students and practitioners in real-life. This study will, therefore, contribute to this literature gap.

3. From the narrative experiences of the participants, the research study contributes to knowledge that helps in understanding the real-life challenges in implementing RJ, whether in schools or in daily life.

4. The study enables scholars in the field of restorative justice to evaluate the best approaches to restorative justice education either as a theory, method or philosophy.

5. This study has the potential to drive policy change in Nigerian schools, as I intend to use the findings to advise government and educational authorities on the need for the implementation of RJE in teacher education in Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

This study focuses on issues and areas of concern for researchers, scholars, policymakers, educators, and students. The questions this study seeks to answer are:

1. Did the restorative justice program in education change the worldview of students who participated in this program?

2. What part the program enabled the paradigm shift of students who participated in the program?

3. What aspects of the teaching method facilitated this paradigm shift to take place?

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4. What challenges were there outside the context of the course for implementing

RJ, either in personal or professional life?

1.5 Definition of Key Concepts

As RJE is relatively new, the terminology used in this study will be explained to help readers understand and connect with the key concepts. The following terms are used throughout this thesis:

1.5.1 Restorative justice. There is no one definition of RJ. It is often defined based on the setting in which it is applied. In the field, some practitioners choose to refer to RJ as a practice (RJ practice) and others as an approach or framework (RJ approach/framework). At this stage of defining the key concepts, I will clarify the plethora of definitions: RJ represents a set of principles and values that inform a philosophical approach designed to repair harm and restore relationships including restoration for the offenders themselves. RJ also provides the opportunity to repair harm and integrate the harmed and offender back into the flow of life. It is based on the principle that because crime hurts, justice should heal (Zehr, 2005).

1.5.2 Restorative justice education (RJE). RJE is used to describe a vision of education that facilitates learning communities that nurture the capacity of people to engage with one another and their environment in a manner that supports and respects the inherent dignity and worth of all. RJE acknowledges that our individual and collective well-being is enhanced through collective engagement and support. It encompasses three components: creating a just and equitable learning

environment, nurturing and maintaining healthy relationships, and transforming harm and conflict (Evans & Vaandering, 2016, p.8).

1.5.3 Clarification on the use of RJ and RJE.   In this study, the acronyms RJ and RJE are used almost interchangeably. I use the acronym RJ in this study to refer to the general principle and philosophy upon which the concept is based. It may also connote the practice of RJ in our everyday life. On the other hand, when RJE is used, it refers to the practice of RJ in an education setting. It is often used when I refer to creating awareness or some forms of orientation or professional development programs. However, the driving principles of respect, dignity, and mutual concern, whether in the school setting or otherwise, remain the same.

1.5.4 Talking circle. The talking circle is the oldest form of communication. It is the way people in many cultures have traditionally come together to talk about important issues; it is a safe place to come together for quality conversations about community issues, to repair harms that have affected member(s) of the community and to resolve individual or collective conflicts. As Evans & Vaandering (2016) explain, "the circle process is a storytelling process. Everyone has a story, and every story has a lesson to offer. In a circle, people touch one another's lives by sharing stories that have meaning to them" (p.6). In a circle, each of us brings unique strengths and gifts to our community, and the circle is about coming together to honour our differences and celebrate our common ground. The philosophy of circles acknowledges that we are all in need of help and that helping others helps

us at the same time (Evans & Vaandering, 2016). A Circle is also a place where we come together in silence, and where our inner beauty and sublimity is externalized for the good of humanity. Participating in circles is inherently transformative because we experience the world from perspectives other than our own. Drawing on diverse knowledge and experiences, circles generate options and solutions that are often outside the box of conventional thinking and that often go beyond what one person could generate on their own (Boyes-Watson, & Pranis 2015).

1.5.5 Paradigm shift. A paradigm shift represents a radical change in one's conceptual worldview (Thomas Kuhn, 1922-1996). It is a shift from one previously held perspective to another. This shift usually occurs through critical interrogation of our constitution. In this study, I refer to paradigm shifts in terms of wearing a new lens as popularized by Zehr (1990) in his book Changing Lenses. RJE is an invitation to change our lenses based on the principles and ethos of RJ.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This study will be approached using the theoretical frameworks of feminism (black and native feminism) and social constructivism. Both frameworks are relevant in RJE because they focus on differences that are inherent in communities and the need to understand and respect these differences based on equality, acceptance, and tolerance. This section will explain these theories briefly and offer justification for using them in the study.

1.6.1 Black and native feminism

"The future of our earth may depend upon the ability of all women to

identify and develop new definitions of power and new patterns of

relating across difference. The old definitions have not served us, or

the earth that supports us. The old patterns, no matter how cleverly

rearranged to imitate progress, still condemn us to cosmetically

altered repetitions of the same old exchanges, the same old guilt,

hatred, recrimination, lamentation, and suspicion".

Audre Lorde, (1980. p 123)

Aptheker (1989) defines feminism as "The collective empowerment of women as autonomous, independent human beings, who shall have at least as much to say as men about everything in the arrangement of human affairs" (p. 92). Feminism, as Aptheker stated, evolves along with personal and collective consciousness. Feminism is embedded in many layers which include but are not limited to liberal, radical, cultural, Marxist, separatist, black and native feminism. I chose the feminist methodologies of critical thinking grounded in black and native feminisms for the ideological freedom, fluidity, and complexities they allow through intersectionality.

Feminism is a broad perspective that offers a set of values, beliefs, and consciousness that guide the way we look at the world. In contemporary times, as Braswell et al. (2015) stated, it has gone beyond the

Prescription for granting rights and freedom to women, but in its

broader vision, feminism seeks to promote the belief that all people

have values as human beings, that harmony and felicity are more

important than power and possession. Feminism argues for a new way

of knowing based on cooperation instead of conflict (p. 83).

Black and native feminism are rooted in an intersectionality framework; it is a framework that unpacks a critical and analytical way of understanding our collective wholeness through individual, social, historical and cultural identity marks and experiences. Richie (2012) defines intersectionality as "relational, structural, political, and ideological… complex and multidimensional parts of one's identities which inform how the world is understood and experienced" (p 129). Black and native feminists use intersectionality to create the capacity for a more productive analysis of how we live and foster community healing through inclusion. Black feminists, for example, believe that racism and gender discrimination are two sides of the same coin. Liberation and freedom from the oppression of black women would ensure equality for everyone; there is a significant benefit for humanity if the problems of the most marginalized and oppressed are addressed. This is based on the belief that the liberation of black women is the liberation of all women facing racial discrimination as well as discrimination based on economic classes.

RJ responds to the black and native feminist framework in that it acknowledges the full person-hood of others who experience marginalization, indignity and are experiencing conflict and violence. The black and native feminist framework guides this study because its values and principles intersect with the core values of RJ. Such values and principles include community, interconnectedness, relationship, care, respect and the equality of all

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peoples. RJ also connects with the intersectional framework of feminism; RJ, like the intersectional framework, examines the whole from the wellbeing of its separate parts. This can be understood from a critical relational theory, from which RJ is interrogated. For example, RJ recognizes the social and cultural identity of the various settings in which RJ is practiced. Simply put, black and native feminism, like RJ, call for inclusiveness. This underscores the reason why RJ involves the victim, offender and the community in resolving conflicts, be it in a school setting, community, or the criminal justice system.

1.6.2 Social constructivism.

This study is also guided by social constructivism, as I assume that the participants are guided by the reality upon which their knowledge is constructed. Vygotsky, (as cited in DeBoer, 2013), defines social constructivism as "a sociological theory of knowledge that applies the general philosophical constructivism into social settings, wherein groups construct knowledge for one another, collaboratively creating a small culture of shared artefacts with shared meanings". DeBoer (2013) also contrasts constructivism with positivist theory, which asserts an objective reality. Instead, "social constructivism contends that our reality is constructed both from experiences and reflections upon them, as well as other social constructs such as cultural ideas, symbols, myths and any knowledge embedded within socio-cultural and historical contexts" (p.9).

Zehr (2005) defines crime as an 'artificial construct' and recognizes that "both victim and offender are forced to speak the language of the system, to define their reality in its terms instead of their own" (p.183). Our definition and construction of reality,

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therefore, reflects our culture. Zehr explained how these constructs which are developed from our realities are susceptible to change (p.89). Interestingly, RJ can be said to be socially constructed. This is perhaps most evident in how it has been defined over the last decade through definitions of different degrees and scopes as well as by competing branches of thought within the restorative justice debate (DeBoer, 2013). A constructivist framework guided the data collection and analysis stage of this study.

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Chapter 2 - literature review

This literature review provides an analytical overview of the significant literature published on RJE with an emphasis on RJ theories and their transformative value to life and society. It explores the role of the circle as a space for creating positive change, healing and restoring hope to the harmed. I am exploring this investigation in the context of education. Thus, RJE will often be used as an acronym when the context is education-related (see p. 10 for a detailed explanation). This review examines the role and potential of RJE to enable a paradigm shift in the worldview of RJE students.

2.1 Understanding Restorative Justice

Despite its growing popularity, it remains difficult to establish a single definition of RJ due to the plethora of contexts in which it is used. Some view RJ as a practice or program, while others see it as a process. For example, Marshall (1999) defined RJ as a process in which all the parties with a stake in an offence come together to collectively resolve how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future (p.5). This study must give credit to Zehr's (2003) definition, which is consistently used in the RJ literature. He defines RJ as "a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense to identify and address harms collectively, needs and obligations to heal and put things as right as possible" (p. 40). As a burgeoning scholar in RJ, I chose to view RJ from the two perspectives of philosophy and education. From the perspective of philosophy, I see RJ as a philosophical framework for understanding the world. In addition to my definition on p. 10, I prefer to define RJ as a framework for

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understanding a way of being in the world through the lens of relationship in a web of common humanity. However, because education is the major context of this study, Evans & Vaandering's (2016) definition of RJE is used in this study. According to their definition: "facilitating learning communities that nurture the capacity of people to engage with one another and their environment in a manner that supports and respects the inherent dignity and worth of all" (p.8). As an international student who experienced a shift in my worldview due to my engagement with restorative justice, I have a personal connection to looking at the relational aspect of RJ from an educational and philosophical stance.

2.2 Between Ethics and Philosophy

In my view, there is an intersection between ethics philosophy and restorative justice philosophy despite some normative differences. Firstly, what is ethics philosophy? As defined by Singer (2018) "Ethics philosophy as a discipline, is concerned with what is morally good and bad, right and wrong. The term is applied to any system or theory of moral values or principles". Morality is often used as a synonym for ethics; however, Singer (2018) clarifies that ethics is understood in terms of theory, while morality is applied in practice. Ethics was taken beyond a traditional branch of philosophy by Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) a French ethics philosopher. Crellin (1995) criticized traditional philosophy for being coldly analytical, for inappropriately imitating science and for not engaging the passions and problems of real people, which RJ, on the other hand, does address. On the contrary, Levinas (1961) believes that "ethics delineates the structure of exteriority as such, it is not a branch of philosophy; it is First Philosophy" (p.313).

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From this understanding it can be interpreted that ethics predates science and ontology (Petrosino, 2006); it is a way of 'being' which is not premised on our rational thoughts. As clarified by Dahnke (2001):

It is the idea, put simply, that what has been traditionally looked to as the first philosophy, usually epistemology or metaphysics, is not first in any sense at all. Rather, all such positions are dependent on a precedent ethics. (p.101)

I refer to Levinas' ethics as a philosophy that brings humanity from and to its 'origin': the beginning and the process of life that is anchored in the unity of humanity. In this unity, we are all connected and invited to become part of a relationship. This is the beginning of living life. This idea grounds my definition of RJ philosophy as a philosophical framework for embracing life-based connectedness and relationship in a common web of humanity. Humanity is central to my understanding of RJ philosophy, as it is the basis for which we live. Desmond Tutu (2012) succinctly clarifies this below:

Ubuntu is very difficult to render into a Western language. It speaks of the very essence of being human... It is to say, 'My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours.' We belong in a bundle of life. We say, 'a Person is a person through other persons.' It is not, I think therefore I am.' It says rather, 'I am human because I belong. I participate, I share....' Harmony, friendliness, and community are great goods. Social harmony is for us the highest good. To forgive is not just to be altruistic. It is the best form of self-interest; what dehumanizes you inexorably dehumanizes me. It gives people resilience, enabling them to survive and emerge

still human despite all efforts to dehumanize them. (p.31)

Levinas refers to this human connectedness and relationship as metaphysical because it is divine. It is the root and benchmark of our social interaction in the world. As Dahnke (2001) said: "the logic of a first philosophy suggests a starting point, a definite beginning, a 'getting to the bottom of things, seeing things whole and clear'' (p.200).

Like ethics philosophy, RJ philosophy raises deep philosophical, sociological, and empirical questions (Menkel-Meadow, 2007). For example, the issues of crime, punishment, restitution, reconciliation, and community interests are interrogated and addressed in RJ.

Ethics and RJ share the same values of respect, honesty, compassion, forgiveness, sharing, courage, inclusivity, empathy, trust, responsibility, and accountability. Mackay, (2000) while emphasizing the place of ethics, suggests that ethics should undergird and shape institutions and practices (in all spheres of life). He advised that practitioners should root restorative justice in ethical values and principles. In doing this, the ethical values and principles of restorative justice can shape and maintain restorative practices (p.31).

Levinas preferred to consider philosophy as the "wisdom of love" rather than the love of wisdom (Crosby, 2009). RJ as a philosophy provides this wisdom of love and moral virtues, which have the capacity to build peace and mutual coexistence among all peoples through relationship and connectedness.

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Although ethics philosophy may be judgmental and prescribe rules of behaviour, RJ in its principles does not measure people. Instead, it is rooted in accepting people the way they are. Where change is required, people are invited for collaborative and dialogic engagement towards the values and principles of RJ. RJ, like Levinas' ethics, brings us to a 'totality' that responds to the essence of life and how to live life. It enables a paradigm shift from a 'state of nature' (Hobbes, 1968) to a 'state of nurture' where life is lived in line with the ethos and principles of RJ. An RJ space or RJ circle is a perfect medium where ethics education could be taught in schools. RJ principles, when applied in our day-to-day life, could be key to resolving social, cultural and emerging issues in morality, education, economy, and politics and in addressing many security problems such as violent extremism and terrorism. The similarities and differences between ethics and RJ philosophy notwithstanding, they both serve the purpose of bringing humanity from a state of nature, where our actions are dominated by impulses, to a state of nurture, where we are invited to a relationship as a philosophy for living life. Vanier's (2008) perspective grounds RJ philosophy in a way that reflects how I am impacted by ED 6936 when he states that

> to be human means to remain connected to our humanness and to reality. It means to abandon the loneliness of being closed in illusions, dream, and ideologies, frightened of reality and to choose to move towards connectedness. To be human is to accept ourselves just as we are, with our history and to accept others as they are. (p.15)

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2.3 The Root of Restorative Justice

There is evidence that the roots of restorative justice can be traced back to the customs and religions of traditional societies (Artinopoulou, & Gavrielides 2013). Some have claimed that restorative justice values are grounded in traditions of justice as old as the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations (Braithwaite, 2002; Gavrielides, 2012). Gavrielides & Artinopoulou (2013), found that the actual term, restorative justice, did not appear in the literature (at least in its English translated version) until the 1970s. Before this, restorative justice philosophy had been subsumed in the life and thinking of spiritual societies such as Africa and Aboriginal communities of Canada, Australia and New Zealand. From an Indigenous perspective, Wonshe (2004) identifies that RJ is not a label or program used in First Nations cultures, but rather a "thread woven into the fabric of their lives" (p. 257). In South Africa, it has existed as Ubuntu, a fundamental philosophy that guides relationships. Nussbaum (2003) stated that Ubuntu is a relational worldview which expresses "our interconnectedness, our common humanity, and the responsibility to each other that deeply flows from our deeply felt connection" (p. 2). It is an invitation to treat others as we would like to be treated. Ubuntu is a call to care for each other and to embrace the principles of reciprocity and mutual support.

Van Wormer, (as cited in Alexander, 2006), explains that while the ancient origins of restorative justice are not in doubt, its beginning in contemporary times is also accepted globally. According to Van Wormer, it started in Canada in 1974 when juvenile justice workers convinced a judge to allow them to take two young people who had vandalized

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property to meet the homeowners to apologize and make restitution (p. 69). In the early

stages of RJ, it was conceptualized and skewed towards a 'care' (or feminine) response to

crime in comparison to a 'justice' (or masculine) response (Daly, 2002). These have

developed into debates in the literature about whether restorative justice is a soft option for

dealing with crime and if it is tough enough to deter or prevent re-offending. According to

Halstead (2009), while some go as far as to call it "new age" liberalism, it was noted that

"the experience of taking responsibility for one's actions in the presence of those they have

harmed is 'harrowing', far more challenging than going to court where one can avoid the

need to face an angry, frightened, or hurt human being" (p.6). More recently, RJ has been

practiced in many settings; it has progressed beyond the legal system and, "has become a

way of transforming our family lives, our conduct in schools and work place, our practice

of politic; it's become a vision of a holistic change in the way we do justice in the world"

(Braithwaite, 2003 p. 87).

2.4 Restorative Justice Theory

RJ is grounded in various theories, which inform how practitioners understand it.

This section discusses critical relational theory with an emphasis on context as a basis for

how we can implement RJ in different settings. The social discipline window as a theory

will be explained regarding how it provides a management tool of support based on the

authority control equation. Finally, relationship theory, which grounds this study, will be

explored. This section will also highlight the drawbacks of the social discipline window in

the implementation of RJ and the contributions the relationship window has made towards

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improving the social discipline window.

    2.4.1 Critical theory. Critical theory is a theoretical tradition developed most notably by Horkeimer, Adorno, and Marcuse at the Frankfort School. Their work is a vital response to the works of Marx, Kant, Hegel, and Weber. Critical theory is connected to the struggles for a just and fair society, and it provides a thinking framework from which the world can be viewed. Fuchs (2016) identifies critical theory as having three broad levels: epistemology, ontology, and praxeology. He clarified that

    epistemology is a theory of knowledge, and it deals with how the very concepts that constitute a theory are constituted and organized. Ontology is a theory of being, it deals with the question how reality is organized and develops while Praxeology is the study of human action, especially political action and ethics. (p. 2)

These three levels of critical theory undergird a framework for analyzing and interrogating the world. The complexities inherent in grounding RJ in a variety of settings requires RJ to be interrogated using a critical theory approach. This led to the development of critical relational theory, which forms the basis through which the goals of relationship, connectedness, belongingness, and respect can be achieved. Critical relational theory, therefore, is as a framework for implementing RJ in various settings and it is founded on the critical theory model. The theory is further explained in the subheading below.

2.4.2 Critical relational theory. Critical relational theory is a holistic thinking process that taps into the wisdom of ancient and contemporary Indigenous and spiritual traditions. It seeks to demystify complex human nature to a profound simplicity which considers all people as worthy and relational (Vaandering, 2013). Although critical relational theory is not a checklist for understanding RJ, it sets out, holistically, a need to "allow for interrogation and examination of RJ so that those involved in the field, practitioners, and researchers are more explicitly aware of how RJ has come to be, whose interests are served by the implementation of RJ, and where our frames of reference come from" (Vaandering, 2010). In critical relational theory, therefore, a thinking paradigm is created which interrogates the organizational and relational structure of the school to prevent it from controlling and manipulating students. Critical relational theory suggests a whole culture change or paradigm shift in the relationship and power structure of any organization be it in a community, government or school setting.

2.4.3 Social discipline window. The social discipline window was developed by McCold and Wachtel (2003). They aimed to provide a conceptual, theoretical framework that could comprehensively address the how, what, and who of the restorative justice paradigm. According to the social discipline window, a restorative approach requires a balance of high levels of control/limit settings with high levels of support, encouragement, and nurturing. In this case: High control and Low support = Punitive/Authoritarian; Low control and Low support = Neglectful; High support and Low control = Permissive; while High support and High control

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= RESTORATIVE (Wachtel & Costello, 2009 p.50). McCold & Wachtel (2003) define "control" as discipline or limit-setting and "support" as encouragement or nurturing. "With these two variables, we can combine a high or low level of control with a high or low level of support to identify four general approaches to social discipline: neglectful, permissive, punitive (or retributive) and restorative" (p.95). Although the matrix presents a good foundation for a theoretical framework for understanding restorative practice, much needs to be explained regarding how this authority and control equation will help to foster equality in a relationship between, for example, a teacher and student, management and employees, or between those who govern and the governed. The social discipline window matrix calls for a critical theory paradigm to interrogate its limitations and deepen the understanding of relationships in restorative justice. The social discipline window remains a power-holding matrix that supports the hierarchical structure of systems; its focus is on individual powers and authorities who wield control for behavioural management. Freire (1970) contests that, "focusing on individuals without considering contextual factors results in objectification that reinforces the wishes of hierarchical power relations stripping both the individuals and the institutional community of their humanity" (p.44). This illustrates how the social discipline window negates the fundamental principle of RJ that seeks to build unfettered relationships through the demystification of structural control and authority. In this matrix, RJE is merely a management tool and not a philosophy or a relational framework. The relationship window therefore, was developed to address the

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weakness of social discipline window. The matrixes below differentiate between the social discipline window and the window of relationship.
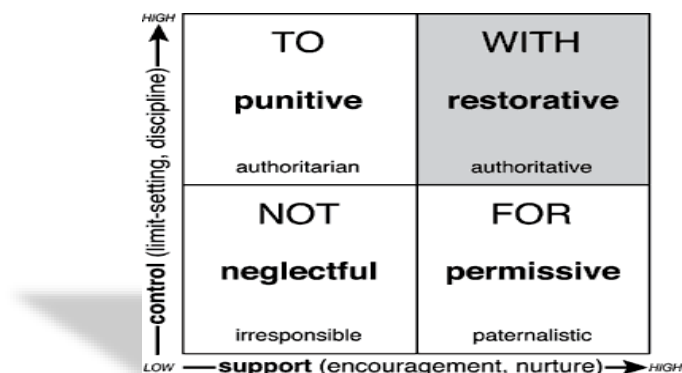
Fig. 1: Social Discipline Window (Vaandering, D. 2013)

2.4.4 The window of relationship.

The social discipline window theory of Wachtel and McCold provides restorative justice with a groundbreaking foundational approach. How is a social discipline window enlarged? What further contribution was made to expand this theory? Through the lens of critical theory, (Vaandering, 2013) developed a relationship paradigm that seeks to remove the barriers and doubts of the social discipline window and incorporates a change in appellation and language. The window of relationship focuses generously on relationships and connectedness, removing the restrictions and tendencies of top-down relationships typical of the social discipline window. RJ philosophy represents a model that creates a space for a relational culture that thrives in the spirit of care and nurturing one another. It is an approach that allows stakeholders to work together as equal partners for the happiness of all. For unadulterated understanding, Vaandering (2013) theorizes that

the Relationship Window informs and illuminates the relational essence of restorative justice. Focusing on a relationship among people and their environments invites users of the Relationship Window to reflect on interpersonal interactions first and foremost, which can include individual relationships that harm others. The basic design of a matrix has two axes or continuums that intersect. The vertical indicating low to high levels of 'expectations' one gives another for being human (where expectation includes accountability); the horizontal indicating low to high levels of 'support' one gives another for being human. The four resulting quadrants identify the varied responses given by people in the relationship for which the terms TO (punitive), FOR (permissive), NOT (neglectful) and WITH (restorative) serve as apt descriptions. (p. 18)

It is worth noting that while the social discipline window focuses on the control and interaction between a person and an authority figure, the relationship window emphasizes how relationships between people can either be diminished or nurtured (Bridging the gap). The focus of the relationship window is on humanity, respecting and honouring the inherent worth of human beings. This worth and honour given to human beings can be achieved when people provide high support, expectations and accountability for each other, and when they treat and relate with each other as human beings instead of objects (Vaandering, 2013).

The practice of RJ through the relationship approach digs down to address the cause of anti-social, unacceptable behaviour in or outside of school; it provides proactive

measures for preventing such behaviour before it occurs. Where harm has occurred, RJ under the relationship framework allows individuals who may have committed harm to take full responsibility for their behaviour. Taking responsibility requires understanding how the behaviour has affected others, acknowledging that the behaviour was harmful to others, acting to repair the harm, and making the changes necessary to avoid such behaviour in the future.
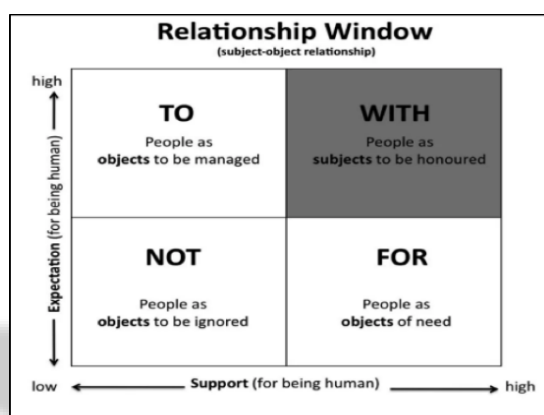
Fig.2: Relationship Window (Vaandering, D. 2013)

2.5 A Call for a Paradigm Shift

What's fundamental about restorative justice (practices) is its shift away from thinking about laws being broken, who broke the law, and how to punish the people who broke the laws. Instead, it shifts towards recognizing that there was harm caused, or there's disagreement or dispute, there's conflict, and how to repair the harm, address the conflict, meet the needs, so that relationships and community can be repaired and restored. It's a different orientation. It is a shift.   (Cheryl Graves- Community Justice for Youth Institute, 2016)

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Thomas Kuhn (1922-1996) popularized the term "paradigm shift" when he argued that "scientific advancement is not evolutionary, but rather a series of peaceful interludes punctuated by intellectually violent revolutions, and in those revolutions, one's conceptual worldview is replaced" (1970; p. 10). Kuhn's definition suggests the replacement of previously held views or perspectives due to the occurrence of a radical event or idea. Kuhn's view of a revolution occurred in the ED 6936 classroom, where relationship and restorative thinking overthrew previously held social constructs and bureaucratic and institutional norms. The outcome of the revolution or radical change that occurred due to the critical RJ pedagogy is evident in my new understanding that 'relationship is the way to live life' (Vaandering, 2015) and that respect, honour and dignity are the rights of every human being The paradigm shift that occurred for me in ED6936 was enabled through the philosophical foundation and the critical relational pedagogy which the course was based. As a member of the class, the critical theory approach to the course delivery inspired me to challenge my posited cultural dominations which violate people and relationships. This impact encouraged me to recommend the RJE approach from the critical theory framework to be implemented in immigrant-refugee resettlement and orientation programs (see p.131). Zehr, (1990) invites us to a life changing 'revolution' by a change in the lens through which we view our world.

Zehr's *Changing Lenses* calls us to reach a foundational understanding that, "Our understandings of what is possible and impossible are based on our constructions of reality" (p. 236). In other words, the easy thing to do is to assume that the way we construct concepts about justice in the modern world is the way it must be in all settings and

circumstances; this, however, should not be the case. Zehr (1990) therefore, calls us to takes up the challenge of confronting this assumption by deconstructing a perspective called "retributive justice" and wear the lens of relationship and connectedness.

Levinas (1979) while annotating the 'Face of the other' in *Totality and Infinity* expresses the power of the face of the 'Other' in the building of relationships and serving humanity. He believes that the face of the 'Other' draws him into a relationship with the 'Other'. According to him, "the face speaks to me and thereby invites me to a relation . . ." (p.198). In *Ethics and Infinity*, Levinas (1985) further echoes the divine responsibility of the Otherness philosophy;

> the first word of the face is "Thou shalt not harm." It is an order. There is a
> commandment in the appearance of the face as if a master spoke to me. However,
> at the same time, the face of the other is destitute; it is the poor for whom I can do
> all and to whom I owe all" (p.89).

Although Emmanuel Levinas is often not mentioned in the RJ literature, my search for a deeper understanding of the fundamentals of RJ philosophy, its ethos and essence led me to a more in-depth study of ethical philosophy. In my search, I discovered that Ubuntu and the ethics philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas constitute the ideatum of restorative justice principles. I would like to use Eze's (2016) summary of the core of 'Ubuntu' to explain the fundamental tenet of Levinas' ethics philosophy. As Eze explained,

> A person is a person through other people' strikes an affirmation of one's humanity
> through recognition of an 'other' in his or her uniqueness and difference. It is a

demand for a creative intersubjective formation in which the 'other' becomes a mirror (but only a mirror) for my subjectivity. This idealism suggests to us that humanity is in my person solely as an individual; my humanity knitted upon the other and me. Humanity is a quality we owe to each other. We create each other and need to sustain this otherness creation. If we belong to each other, we participate in our creations: we are because you are, and since you are, I am. The 'I am' is not an individual rigid subject, but a dynamic self-constitution dependent on this otherness creation of relation and distance. (p. 190-191)

Levinas' ethics invites us to treat and honour people because they are worthy and human, that life is not 'me' but 'us' and does not consist of René Descartes' (1596–1650) epistemology, which says 'I think therefore I am'. Rather, it should be 'I am human because I belong. I participate, I share....' because harmony, friendliness, and community provide the greatest good to humanity. In the context of this study, Zehr (1990) and Levinas (1979) require us to change the way we relate with people as citizens, students and teachers. It is a call against zero tolerance policies in our schools, a call for a shift from the self to 'Otherness' in our schools as teachers and students, in social and civic engagements, as leaders and the led. RJ holds out promises of transforming hearts through a paradigm shift away from previously held beliefs in the way we interact with the world. This transformation of perspectives, structures, and persons according to Van Ness & Strong (2006) is the hallmark of restorative justice systems. Van Ness and Strong identified four elements in the transformation of perspectives through restorative justice processes: "creativity, openness to learning, looking for familiar problems in new ways, and

considering new alternatives" (p. 176). For the transformation of perspectives and structures to be effective, this process must begin with the transformation of ourselves, such as "our values, behaviour, mindset, and character" (p. 181). They further posit that "a hallmark of restorative justice must be ongoing transformation. It begins with the transformation of ourselves, for we too have payment to pay, reconciliation to seek, forgiveness to ask, and healing to receive" (p.175). Furthermore, Woolford (2009) clearly expresses his preference for a transformative notion of restorative justice that aims to create social change. Woolford explained further that, restorative justice should be concerned with more than just the event that triggers the restorative encounter; it should be about fostering opportunities for individuals and collectives to change their worlds, and ultimately that, RJ should be used to address injustices and improve people's lives. We must be bold to understand that restorative justice practices challenge deeply held beliefs around notions of justice, discipline, and authority (Blood & Thorsborne, 2005). Taking up restorative practice then can challenge us in ways that may cause professional and personal discomfort (p.3). However, there is a need to embrace the ethos of RJ beyond the classroom. Braithwaite & Strang (2000) agree also that 'there is nothing as practical as a good philosophy and the best philosophy is informed by practice' (p.203).

2.6 Restorative Talking Circle (Circle Dialogue)

Restorative justice as a philosophy is neither practiced in a vacuum nor does it exist solely in the 'mind'. The goal of RJ is to change the way we live life through relationship, connectedness, and belongingness. To achieve this goal, practitioners of restorative justice have advocated for a space that creates an atmosphere of genuine conversation and respect

to resolve conflict and cultivate the ethos and principles of restorative justice as a philosophy. This space is usually created in talking circles or conferencing. Circles provides a relational space for positive dialogue to discuss and resolve conflicts based on the ethos of restorative justice and guided by respect, equality, and consensus-based decision-making. Circles are "places of listening—of hearing what it's like to be someone else. They're also places for being heard—for expressing what's on our minds and hearts and having others receive it deeply. The life stories are naturally transforming" (Pranis, Stuart, & Wedge, 2003, p. 3). The use of a circle for dialogue and as a means for sharing values and living the ethos of restorative justice provides space for a sustainable paradigm shift, which is the focus of this study. As defined in Boyes-Watson & Pranis, (2015), "the circle is a carefully constructed space for intentional dialogue. It is a process rooted in a distinct philosophy, which manifests through structural elements that organize interaction for maximum understanding, empowerment, and connection among the participants" (P.27). In restorative circles, Freirean dialogue is an essential component for meaningful engagement. Dialogue, according to Freire (1970),

> is an encounter between people who understand their common vocation to be that of naming the world and changing it, so all can become more fully human. Such naming consists of 'true words' spoken to transform the world, not 'false words' spoken to diminish or destroy the world (p.88).

The traditions observed in restorative circles are rooted in the critical theory framework, which allows for the demystification of structural and institutional hegemony; circles provide a space for challenging previously held beliefs, and existing authority/power structures give way to equality among the participants and facilitators. Although it may be hard for those who wield power and authority, breaking power dynamics is necessary to achieve the goal of changing lives in a positive direction. In a circle, we are not just building relationships or solving conflicts; we are practicing basic ways of being that are fundamental to being successful together (Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2015 p.23). Overall, Boyes-Watson and Pranis stated that the virtues of respect, equality, empathy and emotional literacy, problem-solving, responsibility, self-regulation and self-awareness and shared leadership are practiced in circles. In multicultural societies, which are becoming a norm in the era of globalization, talking circles can be used to foster nation-building and national cohesion and integration. Integration and harmony are a possibility because the restorative circle tradition is sensitive to difference and diversity, and its major goal is to reach out to all as humans deserving of respect and love without involving naming or stereotypes. Thus, the talking circle process becomes a "unique instructional approach that can be used to stimulate multicultural awareness while fostering respect for individual differences and facilitating group cohesion" (Wolf & Rickard as cited in Mehl-Madrona, & Mainguy 2014 p.4).

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2.7 Restorative Justice Practice and School Discipline

Throughout the 21st century, the world has begun to witness an escalation of indiscipline and violence in our public schools. Some have blamed this indiscipline on family disruption arising from the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution to be the cause of a progressive rise in violence in our schools today (Chant, 1994). Adam Smith (as cited in Kandel, 1933) foresaw good reasons at the outset of the Industrial Revolution for nations to educate their populations, believing that "the more people are instructed, the less liable they are to the delusions of enthusiasm and superstition." He further argued, "An instructed and intelligent people, besides, are always more decent and orderly than an ignorant and stupid one" (p. 51). He did not, however, envisage the consequences the interaction between man and the factory would have on family relationships, social order and school discipline.

The context described above underlines how the world of the factory impacts our family values and the forms of cultural capital that integrate to bring about social cohesion and a strong family life based on values, ethics and discipline. As a child growing up in Africa in the 1970s, the school system and family members worked together to raise children, with the role of teachers in disciplining children extending beyond the school to the homes of students. Teachers' duty of in-loco-parentis was an everyday experience in our lives as young adults.

Our mothers and sometimes fathers would stay at home after farm work to nurture their children and the children of other families. Today, the life of working in factories and

industries has overstressed and disconnected relationships. Children and young adults thus have been left on their own with a scarcity of space to be nurtured in a restoratively just manner. The lack of space for a relationship with parents or caregivers due to their often being absent has impacted school discipline and the classroom behaviour of young adults. The traditional antidote of corporal punishment known to the government and school authorities in Nigeria has not in any way addressed the growing scale of indiscipline and school violence among youths in our public schools.

2.8 A Reflection on RJ Practice vs. Management-Style Approach to School Discipline

Most governments globally have expressed concerns over the rising scale of violence and indiscipline in our schools and some have mapped out action plans to intervene by implementing RJ in schools. Vaandering, (2014) corroborates that "Schools across the globe are turning to restorative justice (RJ) practices in hopes of developing safe and caring school cultures that will effectively support the academic purpose of schooling" (p.64). Supporting the success achieved in the implementation of restorative justice in schools, Ashley & Burk (2010) assert that "RJ has been implemented in schools since the early 1990s in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States" (p.11). Also, in a national evaluation report on the use of restorative justice in a UK school program by the Youth Justice Board in 2004, it was revealed that "19 schools in the United Kingdom found that restorative practices improved the school environment and enhanced the learning and development of young

people"(p.65). These evidences give hope to schools across the world that are facing challenges with school discipline and considering the implementation of RJ programs. A case in point is Scotland (McCuskey et al., 2008) where actions have been taken by the government to foster interconnectedness and break all barriers to learning, whether they are pedagogical, institutional or social. A needs-based approach was used for addressing indiscipline and poor behaviour among students in Scotland; this approach was used in the hopes that the way students responded to phenomena that triggered bad behaviour would change. It focused on meeting needs for addressing barriers to students' learning and behaviour difficulties. The needs approach to managing behaviour, however, was only a stopgap initiative and did not facilitate a total change in students by way of their experiencing a paradigm shift in the way they view the totality of SELF and the WORLD as well as their relationships with others and how they honour themselves. A focus on behaviour management techniques renders opaque the deep-rooted and far-reaching self and cultural reflection which RJ space provides. In my life, as a young adult, I saw students given special attention based on their needs; I also saw students given scholarships and all the support tools they needed after they lost their parents. Such needy students are well provided for so that their circumstances do not impact their learning, school discipline, and behaviour. Does this change their worldview? Although this may impact learning positively, it does not necessarily result in instilling a culture of respect and dignity for humanity, which is fundamental to RJ philosophy. The goal of RJ philosophy is much more than success in subject matters, and it requires more than meeting material and emotional needs to achieve this paradigm shift. RJ philosophy is not a tool or program for managing

behaviour, but a "first philosophy" that brings us closer to our 'origin' and essence that is rooted in relationship, connectedness, and humanity. This is the exterior ideatum in which RJ philosophy is grounded.

While a behaviour management approach may serve some purposes, it cannot act as an alternative to restorative practice. Vaandering (2014) expressed the challenge of using RJ in the behaviour management context over one of the engaged and inclusive pedagogies. Using RJ solely for behaviour management falls short of the overarching goal of RJ philosophy. Restorative justice practice is proactive and responsive, while behaviour management tends to be reactive.

Many studies show that restorative justice is a promising and effective practice (Braithwaite 2002; Rodriguez, 2005; Umbriet et al., 1992 2002, 2004), especially within juvenile justice and education. For example, restorative justice practice strategies can help schools prevent or deal with conflict before it escalates. It might also provide ways to address behaviour and other complex school issues adequately, offer a supportive environment that can improve learning, provide safety by preventing future harm, and provide alternatives to suspension and expulsion. Behavioural change in students requires more than an expedient intervention. RJ philosophy goes deeper to offer a sustainable strategy that influences students throughout their entire life.

In contrast to a behaviour-based approach with a focus on needs and adversarial modes of discipline, Meyer & Evans (2012) explain that "restorative school discipline calls for a school culture that permeates all aspects of school organization and relationships

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within the school as well as relationships between the school and its community" (p.5).

Realizing the futility of a management-style approach, which prescribes providing support for students based on their specific needs to elicit behavioral change, the Scottish Restorative Practice project was set up in 2004 with funding provided by the Scottish Executive for a two-year pilot project on restorative practice in three Scottish Local Authorities (later extended for a further two years). The overall aim of the national pilot project in restorative practice was to learn more about the restorative practice in school settings and to look at whether there could be a distinctive Scottish approach; an approach that both complements and offers something additional to current good practices (McCluskey et al. 2008). In the pilot project, the underpinning principles were:

1. Fostering social relationships in a school community of mutual engagement

2. Responsibility and accountability for one's actions and their impact on others and respect for other people, their views, and feelings

3. Empathy with the feelings of others and how they are affected by one's actions

4. Fairness

5. Commitment to the equitable process

6. Active involvement of everyone in school with decisions about their own lives

7. Issues of conflict and difficulty were resolved by participants, rather than behaviour being pathologized or micromanaged

8. A willingness to create opportunities for reflective change in pupils and staff (Kane et al. 2007).

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Evidence from the pilot project across all school types revealed a significant improvement in school culture, such as the use of restorative language by staff and pupils, although there remained a minority of resistant staff. The findings also reveal that the atmosphere in most of the schools became identifiably calmer, and pupils generally became more positive about their whole school experience. They described the staff as fair and willing to listen to "both sides of the story" (McCluskey et al. 2008).

2.9 Restorative Justice Practice and Change

"If you change the stories, you will change the culture."

(Hansberry, 2010, p.3)

Although the findings in the Scotland project reveal that a minority of the staff in schools chosen for the pilot project were resistant to change, Kelly & Thorsborne (2014) advised that it is important to realize that restorative initiatives deal with human beings and the range of human emotions triggered by change. Change is an emotional process that requires patience and time, and continuous practice with the right environment conducive to change will bring about the anticipated change. Roger (2003) explains that innovation (introducing RJ) creates uncertainty, and because it is such an uncomfortable state, the individual seeks information about the new idea and its capacity to solve the problem from their peers. As Kelly & Thorsborne (2014) put it, innovation takes time to implement, and its rate of adoption is dependent on a range of factors which she referred to as the decision-making process, where those considering adoption either accept or reject the idea. In this process, they must go through knowledge, persuasion, and decision-making and

implementation stages.

I was introduced to restorative justice at the beginning of the winter semester in 2016. During the introductory lecture, I received RJ principles with trepidation and doubts, mainly due to my long-term internalization of the zero-tolerance policy being a dominant practice in Nigerian schools. One's cultural and social context most often, influences our behaviour and reality (Baez, Garcia & Ibanez, 2018). Before my contact with RJ philosophy, my social and cultural context was adversarial. I believed corporal punishment was an appropriate vehicle for driving discipline. I must admit that I vacillated on the idea of RJE for some time before the conviction came upon me. Today, not only do I believe in RJ as a means of solving behavioural problems and instilling school discipline but see it as a way of life; I see RJ as a 'spirit' that brings out the humanity in me and has the capacity to change my worldview. The point being emphasized here is that time is required to investigate, internalize and process new thinking before it becomes the 'way' or lens through which we see the world.

2.10 Do Relationships Matter?

Interestingly, it was revealing to me that some teachers and administrators are in a compromising position regarding implementing RJ in schools. Some educators believe the peculiar behaviour of some students requires that restorative practice and zero tolerance go side by side. However, practitioners in the field of RJE think differently. Marshall & Freeman (cited in Hansberry, 2010) advised that restorative practices require teachers to redefine their role in behaviour management to focus on building a culture of relationship

with students. They further stated that teachers need time and support to grapple with questions about the impact of punishment and potential alternatives based on a restorative philosophy. Marshal and Freeman remind us that teachers require understanding and time to practice, refine new skills and reflect upon their style. The onus is on school systems to ensure that teachers have access to strong professional development that allows for progressive skill development with the aim that teachers will be able to confidently apply and model effective relationship skills. Restorative practice represents an uncompromising paradigm shift which mirrors relationship as a window for interaction in dealing with others in all areas of life. This window of relationship (Vaandering, 2013) is devoid of all forms of adult authoritarian control, and relationships are fostered when we work with children in a relational manner to make life better and more wholesome. Vaandering (2014) argued that there is potential for success in RJE because of its philosophical foundation and its reliance on a relationship-based, dialogic framework that contrasts with the more common hierarchical, power-based structure. Blood & Thorsbom (2006) invite us as practitioners, students, parents and the wider community to a change of heart and mind as we move from a punitive, rule-based discipline system to a system underpinned by relational values (p.2)

The task of building a school culture that responds to change from a zero tolerance and management-style approach is a herculean task which requires a collaborative commitment by all stakeholders in the school including the community. Without understanding the enormity of this task, only a handful of good people in each school will be working very hard to make a difference, with limited impact (Hansberry, 2010). Restorative justice as a philosophy does not prescribe a specific model or approach but

relies on the context of the environment and the situation under which it is to be practiced or implemented. Focusing on individuals without considering contextual factors results in "objectification that reinforces the wishes of hierarchical power relations, stripping both the individuals and the institutional community of their humanity" (Freire, 1970 p.44). Therefore, a "critical inquiry approach is important for extending and deepening the knowledge base of restorative justice" (Vaandering, 2010 p.7). Vaandering premised further that for RJ practice to be effective and sustainable, it must be understood first and foremost through a critical lens that recognizes the systemic, institutional and structural dimensions of power relations in school communities. Through a critical relational lens, therefore, "it is possible to understand restorative justice in a broader sense, where all participants in a school—adults and youth—are respected for their humanity, and effective communities develop where the well-being of all is sought" (p.8). Irrespective of context, Hansberry (2010) advised that

> schools, therefore, should stay true to the restorative values of creating, valuing and protecting relationships above all else. Schools must empower those affected by harmful behaviour to be key stakeholders in the process of healing, addressing misbehaviour in ways that are supportive of relationships and not damaging to them; putting people and relationships first and ensuring that responses to wrongdoing aim to do no further harm to those involved (those harmed and those responsible for the harm (p.2).

Hansberry's prescription can only be achieved by erecting an institutionalized cultural

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identity that is based on relationship and connectedness among school staff and students.

2.11 Conclusion

This literature review sought to provide a broad conceptualization of RJ and the various contexts in which it is practiced. Its origin, principles and philosophy have also been explored. As a philosophy, attempts were made to connect the ethos of RJ with spiritual traditions envisioned in mutual care and relationships. In this review, I sought for a profound and appealing justification to view RJ as a philosophy. In this perspective, there is a connection between ethics and RJ philosophy. While the difference is a strikingly wide gap in practice, I have argued that RJ provides a space where ethics education can be taught in schools; our daily conversation and interaction among students and teachers can be influenced through RJ culture and experiences in the classroom. Lickona (as cited in Hansberry, 2010) agrees that "In every school, there is a hidden curriculum, which is about the way people treat each other, how teachers treat kids, how kids treat kids" (p.4). A culture of RJ, therefore, can have positive influence on the daily experiences of students. This literature review supports the implementation of RJ in schools to improve school culture and discipline. Evidence of success from the literature on the implementation of RJ supports the need to further investigate another setting where graduate students respond after being introduced to RJ education. This investigation will explore the experiences of the graduate students after completing the introductory course ED 6936. As a participant in this investigation, I have deemed it suitable to approach this study using narrative and autoethnography as my research methods. These methods are explained in chapter 3.

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Chapter Three - Methods and Methodology

I enrolled in a restorative justice course in 2016 with ten other students. One of the goals of the course was to invite a shift in the worldview of students within the context of building a culture of relationship in the school setting and in our personal lives. This shift was expected to impact the way the students engage with issues in education and influence how they view the world in line with restorative justice ethos. This course objective informed the purpose of my study, which is to investigate whether a paradigm shift occurred in the students after completing the ED 6936 course. In this chapter, I describe how this investigation was conducted using the following headings: Methods, Participants, Recruitment, Participant recruitment, Methodology, My role as a researcher, Ethical considerations, Data instruments, Data collection, Method of data collection, Data analysis and Trustworthiness.

3.1 Methods

In the investigation, I used both narrative and autoethnographic designs to undertake this study. According to Clandinin & Connelly (as cited in Etherington, 2013) "narrative inquiry constitutes an umbrella term that captures personal and human dimensions of experience over time, and takes account of the relationship between individual experience and cultural context" (p.3). Clandinin and Connelly further explained that, in narrative design, experiences are storied and are systematically gathered and analyzed to meet the purpose of inquiry or investigation. In the narrative study, participants were invited to share the experiences/perspectives of their lives that relate to what led them

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to take ED 6936 and how they have impacted their understanding of RJE. Their individual stories detailing their perspectives before and after their encounter with RJ gave me a deep understanding of the change taking place in the lives of the participants. I used auto-ethnography to detail my perspective within the context of my life and culture as well as my journey in RJ before, during and after the course. Auto-ethnography, in the words of Patton, (2002) "is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural" (p.85). I used auto-ethnography to bring out my voice in my inward and outward journey through various cultural layers of my life. It was also used to provide insight into the experiences that informed my understanding of RJ.

3.1.1 Participants. This study recruited participants from a population of 11 members who were course mates in the course ED 6936 (Promises and Challenges in Restorative Justice Education). The class demographics consisted of 3 Nigerian, 1 Chinese, 1 Brazilian, 1 American and 5 Canadian students. Out of this population, 2 Nigerians, 1 American and 2 Canadians were selected as participants for the study. They were comprised of 2 mature males and 3 mature females who had experience in various education settings. Participants were selected through the purposive sampling technique. As suggested by Crossman (2018), I used purposive sampling because my participants fit into the specific purpose and group targeted to conduct the research. According to Patton (2002) "purposive sampling focuses on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study" (p.230).

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I intentionally invited members of my ED 6936 class as participants because I hoped they would provide rich and illuminating insights into how RJE impacted their lives after completing a course of study in RJ and because we passed through similar pedagogical experience as classmates. I believe this information richness will help to justify the call for RJE training for teachers and further strengthen the desirability of RJ paradigms in our institutions.

3.1.2 Participants recruitment. After receiving full ethics clearance by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) indicating that my study had met the requirements set out by the Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), I proceeded to recruit participants. I sent an online message to the population of my study, who were my classmates in the course ED 6936, through their Facebook inboxes. The selection was made possible because of the relationships I shared with them during the class session. At the end of the class session, we shared phone numbers and email and Facebook addresses among ourselves to enable future communication. I still maintain contact with my course mates today. I selected those who responded to my invitation. To meet research requirements, I sent a letter of consent and recruitment to explain the details of the study and the process involved in the interview. In these letters, ethical considerations and their freedom to make choices were highlighted. I received a signed letter of consent from all the participants. (See Appendix)

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3.1.3 Data instruments. I used audiotaped narrative and semi-structured interviews as instruments to collect data from my participants. The interviews took place in one meeting in a study room of the Queen Elizabeth Library at Memorial University. The semi-structured interviews and oral narratives were both tape-recorded. The participants were given a choice to set the meeting date and place to allow for their convenience. Some participants preferred a discussion on the details of the narrative and interview on the first meeting date and then submitted their response via email. In keeping with my theoretical framework, I respected the choices of the participants.

3.1.4 Data collection. For this study, I used four-step approach formulated by Clandinin & Connelly (as cited in Creswell, 2007) as a guide for my data collection process. These four steps are:

1. Determine if the research problem or question best fits narrative research,

2. Selecting participants who have stories or life experiences to tell and who the researcher will spend considerable time with gathering their stories through multiples types of information,

3. Collect information about the context of these stories, analyze the participants' stories, and then "re-story" them into a framework that makes sense, and

4. Collaborate with participants by actively involving them in the research (p.55). For further clarification, the methods and procedures used in collecting these data are

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explained next:

      3.1.4.1 Method and procedure of data collection. The data collection for the story occurred in two phases. In the first phase, the individual participant was given the opportunity to orally tell their own story within the specific contextual focus as advised in Ollerenshaw & Creswell (2002); for example, their life experiences within the context of RJ after completing ED 6936 at Memorial University. The second phase was a semi-structured, open-ended interview. "Interview" here refers to conversations between two or more people where the interviewer asks questions to the interviewee to obtain information (McNamara, 1999). According to Patton, (2002) "the purpose of this interview was to allow me to enter into the participants' perspective" (p.241). Patton further clarifies that open-ended interviews are used to capture how those interviewed view their world, to learn their terminology and to understand their perspectives and experiences (p.348). In the context of my study, open-ended interviews gave me the opportunity to explore in depth the surface and underlying meanings of the themes narrated by the participants. I was involved in the narration only by guiding the story/interview in line with the purpose of the study, which was guided by my theoretical framework chosen for the study. In keeping with the feminist framework, the content of participants' stories was not influenced by me as a researcher. As Cornell (1998) puts it, at the heart of feminism are: "the freedom of every member of society as a human being, equality of each with all the others as a subject, the independence of each member of a commonwealth as a citizen and the freedom to make choices" (p.12). In line with

this framework, I involved the participant in choosing the site or location of the interview but with considerable regard for safety. The participants were asked to share the story of their lives and experiences that relate to what led them to take ED 6936 and how this course impacted their understanding of RJE. The oral narrative was followed by three (3) interview questions. Participants were asked the following questions:

1. How did the RJ experience go with you into your life after graduation?

2. What lens did you come to the program with, and what lens do you have now?

3. Account for specific challenging RJ experience(s) in your life after graduation and how you are responding.

Although I was mindful of the role of participant observation in qualitative research, it was not a significant focus in this study; however, salient observations were never ignored but rather recorded in field notes when they bore relevance to the purpose of study/research questions and theories. For the ease of data analysis and as a young researcher, I have chosen to focus on storytelling and interviews. Stories and interviews were tape-recorded, and both the audio-tapes and interview transcripts were duplicated and kept in a safe location. Tape recording the narratives allowed me to give full attention to the participants rather than needing to pause to take notes. The interviews and the stories were regarded as a site to produce meaning and tape-recording thus captured the details of the interaction between participants and me; these details include surprises, interjections, passions and emotions shared during the interview and storytelling. As part of data collection, relevant

documents such as artifacts, pictures, letters and even social media posts and messages that bear evidence of participants' life experiences with restorative justice practice were obtained and documented for analysis. At this stage of data collection, I was concerned about the quality of the relationships that would develop between the other participants and me. I agree with Paul Hart (2002) who contends that the "way in which we know" is connected to our relationships with our research participants (p. 150). I want to have a relationship where participants "feel cared for and have a voice with which to tell their stories" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, p.4). The data collection was facilitated by the relationship I already had with the participants as course mates in ED 6936 in the winter semester of 2015/2016.

3.2 Methodology

"Story is central to human understanding – it makes life livable

because, without a story, there is no identity, no self, no other"

(Lewis, 2011, p. 505).

Following Clough & Nutbrown's (2012) operational description of methodology as a justification for using a research method or design, it is my aim in this sub-heading to substantiate the rationale for selecting the research tools used in this study. Profoundly, narrative inquiry captures the essence of RJ. Storytelling through narrative and auto-ethnography brings to the surface the 'truth' buried in our mute daily experiences (Young, 2000). It is a bridge between the seen and the unseen. Narratives are part of meaning-making and give meaning to personal identities (Braithwaite, 2006). Experience from my

auto-ethnographic narrative taught me that when we tell our stories, we create and construct a new 'we' by bringing to the surface truths buried in our experiences before they are told. RJ tradition is rooted in listening to and sharing the stories of stakeholders, connecting with these stories and making meaning and personal or collective reflections out of the stories to solve problems facing humanity. It is through storytelling that "transformation" in restorative justice is possible, although whether a transformation happens is a point of contention in the literature (see Daly, 2002: 66-67). However, as a young researcher in RJ, I am excited to draw on my experience in the RJ classroom; storytelling was the fundamental driving force that enabled my re-thinking about how I see myself and others. The consequence of this was a transformation in my worldview; this also has dovetailed into the behaviour and practices of my daily life. Through this experience, I realized that storytelling is an important nexus for meaningful RJ practice. My experience in the RJ classroom revealed to me that sharing our stories enables us to meet each other for the benefit of each other. The relevance of storytelling in RJ practice was captured by Larsson, B. (2014) in his Ph.D. dissertation as follows:

> Walter Benjamin (1999), in a powerful essay on the "death" of the storyteller, mourned the passing of oral literature in favour of written texts which separate the writer from the reader. Benjamin suggested that the movement towards writing threatened the immediacy and the power (hinted at by Bruner, 1990) that came from having a storyteller and a listener in the same room, or better yet in front of a collective audience (Benjamin, 1999, Bruner, 1990). For Benjamin, novels and newspapers signaled the end of a crucial tradition of community brought together

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because of and through storytelling. (Larsson, 2014).

The choice of narrative was made to deepen my understanding of my participants' lives because as Young (2000) explains, our stories have a unique way of unearthing the hidden truths about our experience. Storytelling is significant for this study, as RJ tradition is rooted in listening to and sharing the stories of stakeholders, connecting with these stories and making meanings and personal or collective reflections out of the stories to solve problems and conflicts in our own life and the lives of all people (Zehr, 2002a; Pranis, 2002).

Autoethnography was also used in this investigation to enable me to reflect on who I am and understand my life journey within the context of the dynamics of cultural experiences in my native home and home away from home. Auto-ethnography was apt in this investigation because it allowed me to engage in reflective self-examination of myself within the cultural spaces of my life journey (Creswell, 2002), which also deepened understanding of my participants' experience(s). The choice of autoethnography and narrative design is considered appropriate in this study due to its unique ability to explore my lived experience and that of my participants, since we all completed a course of study in ED 6936. I, as a participant in this study, was a member of the population. My autoethnography in the context of other participants helped to triangulate and offer credibility to this study. The narrative approach was preferred over other genres of qualitative research because narrative studies tend to focus on a single individual, whereas case studies often involve more than one case with a cultural boundary. In auto-

ethnography, the focus is on setting the individual's stories within the context of their culture and culture-sharing group. As this study explores the lives of separate participants and does not generate theory as it is in grounded theory methodology, or explores the in-depth study of a bounded system, I considered it scholarly to use narrative and auto-ethnography as methods of investigation.

3.3. My Role as a Researcher

As a researcher, I understand the important role my perceptions, formal and informal theory, values, behaviour, and hunches can play in directing my study towards the objective-subjective continuum. To minimize the impact of subjectively-skewed research, I adopted reflexivity in directing the path of my research to meet the purpose of the study. According to Cutcliffe & McKenna (as cited in Lambert & McSherry, 2015) "Reflexivity is commonly used in qualitative research and is accepted as a method where qualitative researchers can validate their research practices" (p. 322). Reflexivity is an integral process in qualitative research whereby the researcher reflects continuously on how their actions, values and perceptions impact upon the research setting and affect data collection and analysis (Gerrish and Lacey, as cited in Lambert et al., 2010).

Furthermore, in this study, I was aware of the limitations and criticisms of narrative research; for example, one of the key considerations is the validity and legitimacy of the story. In responding to this key consideration, I ensured that the gathering and presentation of data were based on 'communicative action' (Habermas, as cited in Bignold, 2011). Habermas explained 'communicative action' to mean "an interaction aimed at a mutual

understanding between two or more people as opposed to 'strategic action,' where one party is trying to influence the other and win them over to his or her position" (p.18).

I was a member of the population under study. Five other selected students (participants) and I completed the course in restorative justice education together. Over the period of the program, I developed good relationships with the participants that likely had a positive impact on recruitment and the ease of data collection; it is not unexpected that it may also contribute to research bias, but I developed strong research ethics to minimize this bias through process consent, reflexivity, and member checking (See the next section). My classroom experience with the participants positioned me to understand and analyze the thick description that arose in the narration of the participants.

Due to the concept of change and worldview construction inherent in this study, I utilized the theoretical frameworks of constructivism and feminism (with bias in black and native feminism) to approach this study, especially in data collection. The constructivist approach in this study served as a substantive theory which I used to establish the trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, and confirmability of the narratives.

Using feminism as a framework, I was encouraged to view research relationships as involving consultancy and collaboration (Etherington, 2013). Etherington explained that feminism through consultancy and collaboration enables us to "examine power issues within research relationships to ensure greater equality, help create a sense of power and autonomy by providing a platform from which participant's voices can be heard" (p.14). I ensured that I did not put myself in a position of power over my participants but worked

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together with them through consultancy and collaboration. Throughout the research study, particularly during the interview stage, my theoretical frameworks guided my interactions with participants.

As a research participant, I played a role in ensuring rationality and validity in the story. I achieved this by analysing the participants' stories, and then, "re-storying" them into a framework that makes sense. Re-storying is the process of reorganizing stories into a general type of framework. During the process of re-storying, I provided a causal link between ideas. Cortazzi (1993) suggests that there should be chronology in narrative research with an emphasis on the sequence. I ensured this sequence through reflexivity and member checking.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

I ensured that in the entire research procedure, ethical issues were addressed to secure the privacy and confidentiality of participants. I avoided using the names of the participants in my data. Instead, participants were anonymously named as participant A, B, C, D, and E. A letter of consent was sent to the participants to register their choice to participate in the study, and I clearly explained in the letter that they had an option not to participate or to withdraw from participation during the study. I also explained the process of withdrawal in the letter of consent (See appendix A). Data were carefully protected by making sure they were kept in a safe location.

In addition to protecting the confidentiality and privacy of participants, I considered the ethical issues involved in the narrative study as a qualitative research design; for

example, the issue of ownership and intellectual property rights. In Yardley's self-interrogation (as cited in Trahar, (2009), the following questions were asked: "who owns the story? Can one give away one's own story especially when it is so heavily invested in one's meaning and sense of identity? If the story is constructed collaboratively, then who "owns" the story?" ….. (p. 17). To address these questions, I ensured that the right of ownership was negotiated and resolved with the participants. Although I obtained signed informed consent from participants outlining all the ethical issues, I was not oblivious of the limitations of signed informed consent. Chase (1996) for example, strongly cautioned when he said: "I think we need to remind ourselves as well as prospective participants that narrative research is a contingent and unfolding process, the results of which we cannot anticipate or guarantee. An informed consent form cannot possibly capture the dynamic processes of interpretation and authorship" (p. 57). According to Sheehy (2005) in process consent, informed consent is a mutually negotiated process that is ongoing throughout the study rather than something obtained just at the outset, and this will include the option for participants to withdraw their data following participation (p.177). This option was highlighted in my informed consent.

Therefore, I relied on process consent, which accounted for any unfolding ethical issues within the timeline of the research. This was explained to my participants and mutual agreements were reached to make allowance for any contingent ethical issues, events or ideas that may unfold as the research progressed. However, during the time frame of data collection and analysis, no issues arose to warrant a review of the originally signed informed consent.

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3.5 Data Analysis

After data collection, I used thematic analysis to analyze the data collected from participants. Boyatzis (as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2006) simply defined "thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data and that it minimally organizes and describes dataset in rich detail" (p.79). Boyatzis believes that the thematic method of analysis goes further to interpret various aspects of the research topic.

Following the recommendation by Braun & Clarke (2013), I read and re-read the data to have a central idea of how the data form patterns. Codes were generated for all ideas. Combinations of codes which have a common pattern were collated into important themes. I reviewed the themes and ascribed names to them to enable the scholarly reporting of findings.

As a researcher, I relied on triangulation to establish the credibility of this study, the use of autoethnography and narrative inquiry as well as multiple data collection strategies such as semi-structured interviews and paying close attention to relevant observations. I believe these multiple sources of data suffice to give credibility to this study. I also checked for credibility using iterative questioning. By iterative questioning, I mean that I returned to matters previously raised by the participant to extract data through rephrased questions. Where there were contradictions, I considered whether to discard the data or decide to bring up the discrepancy during the data analysis stage for clarification.

As a young researcher, biweekly debriefing meetings were held with my thesis

supervisor. These collaborative meetings provided a space to discuss alternative approaches to draw attention to flaws in the study. The sessions provided a sounding board for me to test any developing ideas and interpretations. Supervision also helped me recognize my biases and preferences. Apart from my supervisor, I also involved colleagues and academics in the field of education by discussing the progress and challenges I encountered. This enabled me as a young researcher to refine my methods, develop a more significant explanation of the research design and strengthen my arguments in the light of the comments made.

Member checking was recommended by Guber & Lincoln (1985) to ensure credibility. The checks were done during data collection through asking questions to clarify what was said. Participants were also asked to read any interview transcripts in which they participated to determine if what was read matched what was said or intended during the interview.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter is an overview of my methods and methodology with accompanying justifications. The study sets out to use autoethnography and narrative inquiry to investigate if a paradigm shift occurred among 11 students who took a course in RJE at Memorial University. This investigation was conducted using qualitative methods. My autoethnography described and narrated my life journey and transition into being an RJ advocate. This was narrated within my cultural context from where I began to where I am now. Transcripts generated from participants' narratives, interviews and my

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autoethnography formed data sets that were analyzed using thematic analysis. During data analysis, themes were generated from participants' transcripts.

In the next chapter, my autoethnography and being part of the data to be analyzed, is narrated. This is followed by findings and discussions arising from themes generated from my data analysis.

Chapter 4 - Autoethnography

My Journey There to Here: The Dynamics of a Paradigm Shift.

"Changing what we think is always a sticky process [and] when new information becomes available, we cringe under an orthodox mindset, particularly when we challenge ideas and beliefs that have been 'set in stone' for decades."

Michael Hubbard MacKay (2016)

As a child, I was slow to speak and often slow to act when action was immediately required, although I was very attentive of my environment. Seeing this, my mother feared I would not be able to stand up for myself when I became a man. In my early life, my quiet behaviour was a concern to her. I believe this behaviour was reflective of the cognitive dissonance which set upon me as I observed the contradictions between what is and what ought to be in my community. As a young man, events in my society left me to wonder why things were the way they were. My thoughts and Socratic questioning fell into a 'black hole' as answers to my reflections were not forthcoming until I arrived in Canada for my graduate studies.

In my community, most people seem to conform to the social norms of greed, corruption, and anger perpetuated by years of post-colonial experience, poverty, and deprivations as well as political corruption. There is a local saying in my country that "if you cannot beat them, you join them." This is how my society systematized indiscipline in all facets of public life, particularly in social behaviour—behaviour that is often devoid of

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empathy and full of crude inhumanity.

Although I did not come to Canada to seek answers to troubling issues bothering my home country, it was easy to see that solutions could be found in the daily experiences of the people who live life for each other. For example, instead of slamming the door against you, most Canadians would hold the door for others as they make their way in, followed by a "thank you" from the benefactor. This simple act of kindness and respect is not just a commonplace part of culture, it reflects the vibrant cultural capital of the country. It is bewildering to me as an international student that efforts continue to be made by Canadian leaders and educators to improve a society that is already one of the best in the world. Canada is a society where people are considered individual humans who deserve to be treated humanely irrespective of your origin, colour, race or nationality. While I wished that my country could be as organized and humane, thoughts of the contradictions in my two worlds continued to resonate in my head and heart. My desire to transform this new experience into a paradigm or a framework for living life became the reason I needed a mentor.

At the university, an opportunity arose for me to take a course in Restorative Justice in Education (RJE)-ED 6936. Studying RJE was recommended to me after a conversation with my faculty adviser. My introductory lectures in RJE pointed to the glaring fact that there were 'broken windows' to be fixed in my life and the society I came from. The soft and subtle way this message came to me revealed a genuine space for truth and openness. ED 6936 was laden with RJ theories, principles, values and ethos which form the building

blocks of RJE. These values and principles have become a compass that guide how I live my life. After completing the introductory course in RJE, I am proud to say that I was once a man who saw life from the perspective of self, control, and competition. Now, however, I see life from the perspective of humanity, healing for self and others, connectedness, relationship, empathy and love for all irrespective of class, race, colour, or sexual orientation. Relationship as a way of life has become my 'Big Bang' that explains human essence and a superscript for living life in an interconnected world of humanity. As a student in RJE, I had a great opportunity to interrogate the baggage I carried in my heart from my home country and reflect on possible solutions. RJ as a field of study and way of understanding the world was strange to me until my first day of class in ED 6936. In my literal understanding, I thought RJ was another legal method for arguing about what is right. I had no inkling that the 'concept' would dovetail with keywords such as relationship, connectedness, empathy, circle, healing, community, and even love, care and sharing.

My experience in the classroom was revealing. The RJ classroom culture defined what RJE teaches through exemplifying the ethos of RJ. It was a self-revealing space for self-interrogation and healing. For the duration of the course, RJ culture was a way of life in the class. Aside from the instructional materials, which significantly impacted me, the class was an instructor-driven space for knowledge and knowing.

Notwithstanding that the message of RJ belongs to all, for a significant shift to take place, I believe that ideologues of RJE must be knowledgeable in the theories and principles of RJ philosophy, which was precisely the opportunity I had at Memorial

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University of Newfoundland (MUN). The instructor who led ED 6936 at Memorial University is one of the most renowned and leading researchers in restorative justice in education; a researcher with vast knowledge and a great passion for RJ education.

Apart from shifting my thinking about life, this one-semester course shared knowledge and passion that now direct my thinking towards being a researcher in the field of RJE. The impact of the instructor's leadership gave me the conviction that leadership is essential in driving change, whether in politics, government, institutions or business. Through her leadership, every member of the RJE class exhibited qualities that reflect the ethos of RJ. In every class, students and the instructor collectively participated in living the shift that was the focus of the course. The classroom was a community that reached out and broke barriers; it was a community where care and relationships were fostered amongst the students. On one occasion, for example, at the end of a class lecture, a white female student walked up to me to have a lengthy discussion about my life in Canada and asked what she could do to help me with the challenges I faced. We had a chat while walking to the parking lot where we separated. Her language during the discussion was reassuring and hopeful. This discussion gave us the opportunity to share our experiences in the light of how we wanted to live our lives. As an international student from Africa, this reaching out was essential to me. The space she shared for frank and hearty discussion reassured me that I belong. Another student from China had a chat with me during a short break in class, and among all the beautiful things she said, one gave me hope, confidence, and belief in myself. She said to me, "Omo, you are so knowledgeable." Her observation may have come from class contributions made through circle dialogue. While I felt humbled by this comment, I

also drew positive energy from it. To this day, her comment reminds me that I have great abilities and opportunities. This space-sharing environment is not a common feature in a typical mixed-race classroom. In my other classes, every other person looks the other way and walks away without even a smile for each other after the end of a class lecture. In my RJE classroom, students from all cultures bring food to the class to share with other students. The idea was not to satiate anyone's hunger but to send a message of caring and to share with each other. Again, I boldly ask, if a knowledgeable instructor had not lived this example in her leadership in the course, would the ethos and values have been replicated in our class interaction? Therefore, I have reason to believe that a leader deserves the followership he/she gets. For a significant paradigm shift to take place, the adult 'in charge' must live up to what he/she teaches. This is true for all RJE leaders and ideologues.

RJ gave me the opportunity to see my true self and to audit my life against the values which RJ espouses. It was also a lens through which I see how to fix the broken windows in my life and society. As a young adult in Nigeria, life was a daily struggle that caused much trauma, which limited my capacity to think restoratively. My stock-in-trade was to look for opportunities for myself in every relationship. A relationship in my world was benefit-driven. This is the way my society is structured. The pursuit of wealth and material gains is the cultural driving force in Nigeria. This hedonistic structure creates a "crab mentality" that browbeats my society into extreme sadism and inhumanity. The average Nigerian is in a continuous struggle to eke a living without any social support from the government. Thus, contact with the 'Other' is an opportunity to take and extort from the 'Other' instead of sharing with the 'Other.' In the 'face of the Other,' we do not see

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'us' in the 'Other' or the Other in 'us' (Levinas 1985). This lack of empathy and genuine relationships among some of the citizenry finds expression in the way we live life and conduct our daily business in Nigeria. Government is no exception; most people in government see power and authority as a means for self-service and aggrandizement. This is a major reason why society is broken and divested of humanity in my part of the world. This was the 'broken window' in my society before my experience with RJ. It is a tall order to saddle myself with the responsibility of shifting the thinking of my people towards RJ philosophy. However, my experience with RJ at Memorial University in Canada points to the fact that RJ, when adopted as a movement, can go far in fixing broken societies. For this reason, I intend to bring RJ thinking to Nigerian classrooms, where I now know social and moral transformation can occur.

As a child, the home was an 'institution' of punishment. At home, my parents used spanking, seclusion and restraint to enforce good behaviour, and there was no space for a heart-to-heart dialogue. The most potent energy in the house was CONTROL and FEAR. In the genuine belief of my parents, this form of discipline represents care. Nigerian parents consider this form of discipline as training that prepares children for independent living in the future. The situation was not different at school; in my elementary and secondary education, the only mode of discipline understood by my teachers was corporal punishment, suspension, and expulsion. Corporal punishment is a conventional policy by the education authorities and is still not abolished in Nigeria. This adversarial and control culture contributed to the trauma and loss of confidence in my early life. My experience with RJE at Memorial University, however, taught me otherwise. In addition to the

paradigm shift I experienced, RJE provided me with healing from many years of physical and psychological abuse, even though this abuse was understood to be tough love or 'training' by Nigerian parents. In my experience with RJE, the classroom became a space for the re-creation of a new self in my mode of thinking about life and relating with others. This space gave me the opportunity to re-direct my policy approach to how the business of education can be engaged and to re-think what it truly means to be educated.

Introducing RJE is vital for higher education in Nigeria, given that polytechnic and university campuses have become a theatre of violence by cultists. In most Nigerian universities, cultism and violence have become a practice and are taking preponderance over academic activities. Members of cult groups carry arms and often engage in violent clashes against rival cult groups with fatal consequences, and these violent clashes have led to the untimely deaths of students and lecturers in Nigerian universities. During my undergraduate studies, one student cultist approached me to join their cult group on campus. Although I rebuffed his invitation due to my religious beliefs, I missed an opportunity to engage and persuade the soliciting cultist away from mundane false protection to a new way of thinking that is informed by RJ principles. A cultist once gave me an 'order' to give up my seat for him, as he could not secure a seat after coming late for a lecture. Out of a fear of being confronted and maybe killed by his gang, I obeyed 'he who must be obeyed.' My cowardice, and maybe wisdom, was the reason I graduated from the university. What a culture of fear! I feel there is a misplaced priority in our education policies. The greatest undoing of our educational system is the curriculum. When we have a curriculum with a policy directed towards grades and careers, humanity continues to be

in lack of character, empathy, and care for each other. Therefore, policy reversal to a curriculum driven by the core requirement of humanity such as respect, empathy, forgiveness and human dignity could help to bring us to our common goal of 'being human'.

Although there is growing advocacy for the implementation of RJ in the Nigerian criminal justice system, the education sector has not yet looked in that direction because of the institutionalization of punishment in schools and homes in Nigeria. Also, religious leaders in Africa, particularly in Nigeria, support the punishment approach to children's upbringing. This is encouraged by the biblical axiom that "if you spare the rod, you spoil the child." I understand this perspective, as I understand that Africa is closely connected to spiritual traditions. Nigeria, I believe, can greatly benefit from social reconstruction and nation-building by implementing RJE.

From my experience, I see RJ as having a boundless capacity for creating newness in our social and cultural constructs; it is a torchlight that brightens our paths towards relationship, respect, care and empathy, which are fundamental in living life. On my journey to graduate school, I never envisaged that my perspective on how to provide antidotes to social problems would rest on relational epistemology based on bringing humanity back to its origin: the origin of care, empathy and relationship. As a budding scholar, I fell in love with Marxism as an economic ideology for taking Africa out of poverty and as a paradigm for social and community re-ordering. After the demise of communism in 1989, I began to re-think what system could address the web of social and

economic problems in my world. Although my search led me to economic and political philosophies to try to find a paradigm for political and economic change, I soon realized after my RJ education that human factors preponderate economic/political models and theories in the search for change. RJ, situated in its ethos, is a genuine philosophy for addressing the plethora of social and economic issues plaguing the world. From this new understanding, I hold that education in Nigeria must pay attention to RJE to address our peculiar problems that hinge on political corruption, cultism, youth radicalization, religious extremism, advance fee fraud, trafficking in women, prostitution, campus violence and many others. Due to the shift that occurred in me after taking this course, I believe that to implement RJ in Nigeria schools, teacher education must be RJE driven so that pedagogy brings humanity into the classroom. Teachers as leaders are expected to be role models to our children. RJE adequately prepares student teachers for this role. In my journey, I experienced a shift due to the exemplary role of the RJE facilitator. I dream of seeing teachers who inspire their students to challenge the way they live life and to add happiness and love to their community.

Relationship culture was 'the way of doing things' in the ED 6936 class. It was a rule of thumb in our interaction inside and outside the classroom. This culture was exemplified in the use of positive language, assuring and caring for each other; no one in need was left alone. For example, a student from Nigeria had his computer crash, and his worries about replacing it due to his financial difficulties were allayed by a student who gave him another laptop computer. Conversations after class were centered on the wellbeing of everyone, especially the international students. Relationships were taken

beyond the school, and we lived like family outside the school environment. Most of the students attended my wife's first birthday in Canada, and her cake was bought by one of the students. It was a beautiful experience.

Creating RJ culture under the leadership of the facilitator allowed us RJ students to fully emerge into the ethos of RJ, which constitutes the 'life and spirit' of RJ practice. Although this was made easy due to the small size of the class, it is questionable how this culture can extend beyond the classroom, where daily experiences are sometimes harsh. After completing the program, I still see myself experiencing challenges and sometimes am in denial about living the ethos of RJ, mainly when working with children. RJ is not a program for managing behaviour, neither is it a method for solving problems; it is a way to live life. The challenge of RJ is that time and patience are required to shift and change from the old to the new. RJ has so much leeway for social and cultural dynamics, as it allows us to interrogate the context and apply RJ principles that appropriately address peculiar differences. Thus, there is hope that from culture to culture there is a place for RJ's application. In a world that is troubled by crime, the de-valorization of character and morality, the practice of RJ hold promises for humanity. To be human and build relationships is the duty we all owe our world.

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Chapter 5 - Findings

This study examined whether a change in worldview, otherwise known as a paradigm shift, occurred among students who took a 3-credit course in Restorative Justice Education (ED 6936) at the Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador. The RJE course was taken in 2016 with 11 students, and 5 of these students became participants of this study (2 males and 3 females). This study is significant because RJ as a practice is rooted in philosophy, ethos and principles; the expectations are that practitioners should live life according to the ethos and principles of RJ. As a researcher, it became interesting to me to use my graduate class in RJE as a litmus test to investigate whether this change occurred among my classmates after completing the graduate course, like it had for me.

In this study, the first three chapters focused on the problem purpose statement with highlights on the study significance, the research questions and the definition of terms. The theoretical framework for the study was offered followed by the research methodology used. How participants were recruited and data were collected and analyzed for this study were also explained.

The research was a qualitative study which used narrative and autoethnographic designs to undertake the study. Data were collected from oral and written interviews from 5 participants. Like Lewis (2011) I believe that storytelling is central to human understanding; it allows us to unearth truths and perspectives which are buried in the untold lives of individuals. Thus, truth was conceived from the perspective of the participants

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without compromising the trustworthiness of their stories (Guba 1981; Habermas in Bignold, 2011). See chapter 3(6) for details. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. I was guided by the recommendation of Braun & Clarke (2013) and following their suggestions, my data were read multiple times with a view to having a clear and in-depth understanding of patterns espoused by participants. Patterns were coded and collated to form themes for discussion. In this chapter, these themes are presented in response to this study's research questions:

1. Did the restorative justice program in education change the worldview of students who participated in this program?

2. What part the program enabled the paradigm shift of students who participated in the program?

3. What aspects of the teaching method facilitated this paradigm shift to take place?

4. What challenges were there outside the context of the course for implementing RJ, either in personal or professional life?

The themes generated include:

Theme #1: Changed Lives. A Paradigm Shift Experienced

Theme #2: Beyond the Classroom: Change Takes Time

Theme #3: Making the Broth: Course Highlights that Inspired Change

Theme #4: My Root: RJ Bounded in Critical Theory and Philosophy

5.1 theme #1: Changed Lives. A Paradigm Shift Experienced

It is safe to say that the RJ experience has had a significant impact on all facets of my life up until now. It wasn't until I participated and learned more about RJ that day that I realized how transformative such an experience was and could be. I left that day a "believer" and wanting to learn as much as I could.   Participant D

Change was a primary focus of the study. Participant C clearly expressed the objective of the facilitator when she said, "When I started doing the course the instructor said things like this is going to be life changing, that you're not going to be the same after this course, and I didn't necessarily believe what she was saying". Did the worldview of participants change? The findings revealed that there was a shift in the perspective of the participants after completing the course. It is evident in the view of participant A that his cultural background impacted the way he viewed the world before his encounter with RJ.

Before I enrolled in the RJ course, I perceived justice to have been ascertained when the offender has been alienated and subjected to some inhuman treatment which include incarceration, rejection, and isolation from the victim and community. I have never thought about the victim as someone who have needs other than punishing the offender. However, after the RJ course I understood that the needs of the victim are far beyond the incarceration of the offender. It became obvious to me that the act of incarcerating the offender does not

> *assure justice. Instead, it neglects the needs of everyone involved and as well denied the victim, offender, and community the chance to understand what cause the breach of relationship and how to reconnect for proper healing and restitution.*

However, his encounter with ED6936 changed his cultural fixation. As he stated, "*my perspective right from Africa has shifted to restorative approach*". This cultural demystification, the study revealed, was due to the self-interrogation enabled by the philosophical foundation of the course.

> *Base on the way we are trained in Africa, I believe in corporal punishment. As time went on, I began to understand what RJ is about. Before my experience, I believe in give and take- that is if someone does something bad to you, the person should be ready to face the consequence and pay for it dearly. Coming from Africa, we don't believe in running away in a fight, if you want to fight me, I fight you man to man. That was my own belief; I believe in defending myself if you throw any form of attack at me. That was my perspective before the class.*

One significant approach RJ espouses for fixing broken lives and addressing most social problems, be it in a school setting or in our daily lives, is connectedness. This is usually achieved through the building of relationships. Relationship with self and others was a worldview in which the course ED6936 was anchored. Students were engaged to see the

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world through the window of relationship. Participant B was impacted by this relational worldview encouraged by the course. He vehemently stated how his life changed from being directed by a socially and culturally imposed worldview to a worldview governed by a paradigm of relationship.

> *The experience I gained after taking RJ course opened a new phase of life and living which was different from whom I was before I enrolled in the course. It triggered prompt and retrospective reflection of my life sojourn on the things I have done, and impacted my life and decisions henceforth. It gives me the opportunity to see life from a relational view which is far beyond the constructive system the society imposed on me. RJ experience helped me to become self-relational oriented person throughout my academic endeavor.*

Participant B went further to avow passionately that after completing the course, his personal life was now within the compass of relationship; it became an approach through which he addressed all his life challenges.

> *It made me to see daily challenges from a relational lens instead of leveling or apportioning blame to others over my mistakes. It also prompted the spirit of being responsible and accountable of my day-to-day decisions and my engagement with people both at work and home.*

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Before participant B's encounter with RJ, he had seen justice in terms of punishment. After completing ED 6936, his perspective shifted from an adversarial to a restorative approach to crime. Now, participant B believes that the need(s) of the offender should be considered when dispensing justice. This is contrary to the perspective he held before taking the course.

> *At this point I was obliged to change my lens over what justice ought to be in a situation where crime has been committed. I started seeing justice from a relational perspective in which the needs of the victim, community, and offender are paramount for quick restitution and healing of the wound caused.*

It is important to note that participant A and B are from the same country, which is one that is culturally attached to corporal punishment; this approach is a social norm in their country. It would be expected that both participants would find it difficult to change their paradigms or at least phlegmatically accept RJ with trepidation. This was admitted by one participant:

> *I went to the class, even though it was an introductory class, I still have doubts about the course due to the influence of my background in Africa and another mode of instruction……. I began to have another mentality. As part of the class, I began to experience a shift, changing lens in the way I see things. I began to see things from*

another angle. I began to see possibilities from another angle.

However, the reflections and self-interrogations enabled through critical relational theory, which was a component of the course, incited a disruption of old paradigms. I have also mentioned in my autoethnography that RJ enabled me to audit my life. I stated that "*RJ gave me the opportunity to see my true self and audit my life against the values which RJ espouses*". This singular attribute underpins the role of RJ in breaking down cultural barriers, especially among immigrant populations. As an immigrant to Canada, I have also expressed in my autoethnography how RJE changed and offloaded the baggage of bias and stereotypes I carried before migrating to Canada as a student. RJ opened a new window through which I now see the world. A whole cultural change was enabled as a result of this course:

> *I am proud to say that once upon a time I was a man who saw life*
>
> *from the perspective of self, control, and competition but now I see*
>
> *life from the perspective of humanity, healing for self and others,*
>
> *connectedness, relationship, empathy and love for all irrespective of*
>
> *class, race, colour, and sexual orientation. Relationship has become*
>
> *my 'big bang theory' that explains human essence and a superscript*
>
> *for living life in an interconnected world of humanity.*

The course ED 6936, in the light of the ethos of RJ, laid much emphasis on the relationships we share with each other as human beings. The respect and dignity of human persons was a major focus of the course. For a significant shift to occur, we must begin to respect and

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value people the way they are. Participant C described the shift this way:

> *Something that came from this course that I really think about is that everybody has value. That every person has value in some way, and that we must remember that, remember that they are people, and as people they have value.*

This is a shift that is needed to live life fully and synthesize relational dialectics. After completing the course, participant C began to experience a shift in the way she manages relational dynamics, sees value in people, and respects individuals as humans, irrespective of differences in opinion.

> *During this course, I started to realize, ideas that I held about people who may be (pause) totally different from me, people who may be trans-gender or people who may have different religious beliefs or people who may have different political beliefs. Just because I don't agree with what they do or what they say doesn't make them less of a person, doesn't make them have less value. It just means that I must respect their own opinions and share my own as well, and hope that they can show the same respect. That if we could just learn to listen to each other, (pause), and then we could solve the things in the world. We just need to make sure we listen.*

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Participant C's new perspective in relating with individuals as being human proved helpful in her career as a teacher. Instead of seeing her students as members of a class, she began to see them as individual humans with needs and whose opinion needed to be respected and valued.

> *I started to realize that I didn't always respect my students in this way. I don't think I was always honouring them for who they were as a person, for what they did, what they liked to do. And I realized that I wanted to change that. So, I started looking at them more as individuals, not just my class, but individual students, ones that have value, that have likes and have dislikes that do things that I would agree with, and things that I wish they wouldn't do. And I started to realize that I need to focus more on that, so that I can respect their differences and respect and understand them for who they are.*

In participant D's narrative, it was mentioned how participation in a circle deeply changed her worldview about teaching. She expressed that her involvement in a circle impacted the way she interacted with others. When participant D saw the circle for the first time, she never believed it could have such transformative value in her life. It later became a paradigm from which she approached teaching. Participant D maintained that the safe space, respect and connection which the circle provided without judgment inspired change in her life.

> *But after taking the course, being exposed to talking circles, and*

working with Relationships First - Restorative Justice in Education, I am unable to view teaching the way that I viewed it before. When I think about how I want to move forward in this world, in my interactions with others, and in my teaching, all I see is the circle.

Participant D had progressed to using her shift to shift the perspective of others in their professional development. This was made possible through her passion and enthusiasm derived from her participation in a circle.

As soon as my perspective changed, I started wondering about how this could be applied towards my future life and career. How could one move forward and teach students to view the world using a more socially-just lens when they come with their own set of beliefs and values that might differ from our own.

The transfer of RJ experience to the classroom was also mentioned in my autoethnography; I emphasized the need for a re-creation of who we are in the world. The best place to begin this process is the restorative classroom, where young minds can be engaged to experience a shift from their old paradigms. Prior to my experience in RJ, I believed the classroom was a space for high-stakes tests and learning, where students are taught and prepared for exams to enable them to become lawyers, doctors, teachers, engineers, etc., and to become competitive in the job market. This old paradigm has been replaced by a higher-order thinking that emphasizes the school classroom as a space where relationships are built using RJ ethos and principles for the greater benefit of humanity.

> *Due to the shift that occurred to me after taken this course, I believe that, in the run to implement RJ in Nigerian schools, teacher education must have a fusion of RJE so that pedagogy brings humanity to the classroom. Teachers as leaders are expected to be role models to our kids. RJE properly prepares student teachers for this role.*

Lastly on this theme, participant E, who is a teacher, expressed how ED 6936 helped her overcome the stereotypes she held about students. Her framework for understanding her students was based on judgment, which categorized and labeled students as good or bad.

> *Before taking this course, I thought of behaviour in black and white terms. Admittedly, I distinguished students as good and bad based on their behaviours. I thought that those students who showed negative behaviours were doing so because they wanted to somehow "get back at me", as their teacher. In other words, I believed that they already knew the proper behaviour that was expected and how they should conduct themselves in a school and social setting……… Furthermore, before taking this course I would look at students' behavior in isolation. I failed to understand or recognize that every person is inherently good and that bad choices are the result of unmet needs.*

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ED 6936 reshaped this framework to a worldview that positioned relationship, interaction and communication over behavioral management. In her new paradigm, behavior has become a signal that indicates bigger issues within her students. Through the circle and relationship building, she could understand and help them solve behavioural issues.

> *After graduation, I took a new job at a different school. I began to use talking circles within my classroom regularly. I tried to create a strong classroom community by allowing them to share their thoughts and opinions. Students loved it. They began to ask when they could have another circle. I began to invite other teachers to join our circle, to show them the power it had to change classroom dynamics and resolve conflicts*

Like participant E, other participants expressed their desire to bring circle dialogue into the classroom. They were, however, more enthusiastic about expressing the impact RJ had on their personal life and their way of being outside the classroom. This will be discussed in the next theme below.

5.2 Theme #2: Beyond the Classroom: Change Takes Time

This theme is divided into two subsections:

1. Personal challenge for patience
2. Patience for others to change

5.2.1 Personal challenge to patience - change is slow to self. I completed the RJE

course with a burning desire to implement change in my personal life and in my relationship with others. This change is usually expressed in our family and work life and in our day-to-day living. This desire, notwithstanding, has not been an easy one. My participants also voiced the difficulties and challenges they experienced as they passionately committed to applying RJ ethos and principles in their daily lives. This theme addresses some of these challenging experiences faced by participants after completing ED 6936.

First, I want to address this theme using my personal experience at my workplace as part of my ongoing autoethnography. In my personal and work life, there have been many challenging experiences that have caused me to re-think the nuances of RJ and how it can be applied in different contexts. I worked as a Child and Youth Care Worker (CYCW) in a group home in Newfoundland. As a CYCW, I was responsible for improving the physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of troubled children and adolescents. On one Monday morning, I arrived at work early, hoping to show love and make life meaningful for the youth in my care, who was 16 years old. He received me without saying a word after I greeted him with 'good morning'. He came back and said to me: "Your skin colour looks like the poo that comes out of my asshole when I use the toilet". He further asked: "Has anybody tried to flush you through the toilet like a piece of poo because that is what you look like?" I tried to be RJ-compliant in my communication, but I was mute and transfixed, unable to say a word to him, although my colleague who was a white Canadian responded quickly to tell him how inappropriate his statements were. I learnt after the incident that this youth in care made the same racial attack towards a

young Jamaican lady who was posted to the 'home' but later requested to be moved to another house. This incident got me thinking about the context of RJ and how a response may work in one context but not in a different context. While I tried to resolve the tensions and understand the various nuances, my contemplations began to validate the highest good of RJ as working towards humanity being knit together by love, forgiveness, and empathy through selfless relationships. Drawing from this philosophical underpinning, I began to see my verbal attacker as a young man in need of help rather than deserving of a reprimand. When I was offered the option to be removed from the home to another home, I simply refused, replying that "he must get used to diversity" and that, "separating him from 'black people' will not help him grow and become a tolerant global citizen". After the incident, I continued to work in the house and his relationship with me has improved. My response to the incident validates a significant submission in my autoethnography when I stated that patience and time are required for change to take place.

After completing the program, I still see myself being challenged and sometimes in denial of living the ethos of RJ especially when working with children. RJ is not a program for managing behaviour neither is it a method for solving problems. The challenge of RJ remains that time and patience is required to shift and change from the old to the new. RJ has so much leeway for social and cultural dynamics. It allows us to interrogate the context and apply RJ principles that appropriately address peculiar differences. Thus, there is hope that from culture to culture there is a place for RJ application.

Apart from personal challenges at work, it was also challenging when I tried to use

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RJ principles to solve family problems. In my desire to have a peaceful home as a husband, occasions often arose where this peace was disrupted due to misunderstandings between my wife and me. I think these issues were due to a gap in our worldviews. This gap caused so much stress and strain in the home and was further compounded by the way I respond in addressing the conflict. For example, before my encounter with RJ, I would always keep mute and ignore the pains expressed by my wife; in my culture, it is believed that the manly thing to do when a woman talks angrily to you is to ignore her attacks, and it is best if you leave the house until she de-escalates. It is our saying that 'when a man says a word to a woman during escalation, you give her the opportunity to say a hundred words'. In my case, even if I took time out, I never came back to address the issue. The pain would be ignored. Now, instead of ignoring her, I find opportunities to engage her in restorative dialogue using restorative questions such as: What happened, and what are you thinking now? Who has been affected by what happened and how? What about this has been the hardest for you? What do you think needs to be done to make things as right as possible? In addition to preventing escalation, these questions helped my wife and me to get to the root of the issue and resolve it mutually. This approach did not always work out as expected, but every challenge comes with its own lessons and strategies. In my own case, I learnt from the challenges that there is power in repetition and association. By repetition and association, I meant that I must remain persistent and continue to repeat behaviours that are RJ appropriate and associate myself with RJ philosophy and ideologies.

Embracing RJ as a philosophy has helped me to remain focused and definable in the face of life's daily challenges. This is also true for how I follow social and political

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debates on social media in my country. I have observed myself making significant contributions to such debates, and this is because I embrace RJ as a philosophical framework for addressing life. If this is the only education I receive in Canada, I am of all men the most successful. As participant D said below, I will continue to respond to RJ challenges by immersing myself in the RJ philosophy.

My way of responding to these challenges has been to immerse myself in RJ to seek out ways to participate in dialogue surrounding it. According to participant D:

> *My challenges from the application of RJ have taught me that RJ is*
> *not a teachers' strategy for eliciting expected behaviour from students*
> *but a framework for life. Success is achieved when it is considered a*
> *cultural practice over time. A portion of my autoethnography offers*
> *more clarity.*

Relationship culture was nurtured in the RJ program; it was a rule of thumb in our interaction inside and outside the classroom. Creating RJ culture under the leadership of the facilitator allowed us, RJ students, to be fully immersed into the ethos of RJ which constitutes the 'life and spirit' of RJ practice. Although, this was made easy due to the small size of the class, it is questionable how this culture can be created in a bigger society.

Similarly, participant C admitted how she experienced personal struggles as a teacher when coming to terms with RJ, especially when harm is done by one student to another. She feels that tougher measures would sometimes be necessary as a response to the challenging behaviour of students.

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> *I struggle with this myself as well. There are times that I have a*
>
> *student that is hurt by someone else, either physically or emotionally,*
>
> *and I sometimes think that a punishment is required.*

In the same vein, participant C expressed how resistance to change by teachers in her school prevented her from getting children involved in a circle. In her story, she stated how some teachers do not believe in the healing circle because it does not punish offenders.

Participant D also described her struggle to implement RJ principles in her personal and family life as a daily struggle. She found it difficult to come to terms with RJ ethos, which requires practitioners to honour people instead of measuring them. This was due to emerging contestations and contradictions in her daily life, which she attributed to the authoritarian way she was raised by her parents. In her narration, she said:

> *I find that the idea of having a relationship with self that involves*
>
> *honoring more than measuring is a battle fought daily. This struggle*
>
> *bleeds into my other relationships, especially the ones I have with my*
>
> *children and my husband, and prevents me from fully embracing the*
>
> *RJ "way of being". Sometimes, I wonder if the things that we learned*
>
> *from our RJ course worked in the opposite ways as I often find that I*
>
> *am putting an unhealthy amount of pressure on myself to live in such*
>
> *a way. Perhaps a major factor in this struggle is the fact that I am*
>
> *working to undo all the things that I have been taught growing up.*
>
> *From my school to home life, I was raised in an authoritarian setting*

> *where behavior was managed using a reward and punishment system.*
> *Everything was provided conditionally including my parents' love.*
> *So, trying to move through this world in a way that requires a*
> *balanced relationship "with" myself and others is an incredibly*
> *foreign concept for me.*

Participant E expressed the same frustration when she confirmed that her efforts to use the circle to change the behaviour of a student proved abortive, but she continued to try other positive approaches to enable behavioural change.

> *One of my students has a lot of trouble keeping his hands and feet to*
> *himself. Thus, he is regularly hitting other students. He will never*
> *admit to something that he has done. Even if I have personally*
> *watched him do something, he denies that it was him. This child does*
> *not seem to show any remorse for his actions. This makes it very*
> *difficult to try and get through to him. The talking circles I have tried*
> *did not seem to work.*

The challenges notwithstanding, participants' responses show a continuous effort to live according to the ethos of RJ because RJ was accepted as a philosophical worldview for living life. This, again, underscores the need to embrace RJ as a philosophy.

5.2.2 Patience for others to change - change is slow to others While RJ practitioners and advocates call for a paradigm shift in the way we view the world, there is a need to understand that change does not happen without challenges. It is

true that people respond to change differently. To some, it takes time to respond to change. However, whether it takes time or not, patience is required to overcome the challenges that may appear when implementing RJ practices. This section will address the different ways participants respond to challenges.

Participant A admitted how his cultural experience led him to struggle to come to terms with RJ philosophy, especially in detaching himself from the zero-tolerance practices he had been used to in his country. He tied his resistance to cultural expectations. He believed this same cultural attachment may also be responsible for the reason that people he invited to RJ practices were reluctant to accept new paradigms. Similar challenges were also mentioned by participant C when she described how she had encountered people who chose to look through their own lens instead of accepting new paradigms or respecting the views of others. Participant C corroborates a similar challenge as a Canadian.

> *Since I have finished this course, there have been a number of challenges that I have faced both internally and externally. Because I found this course life changing, I look at people and things differently. But I still struggle with this daily. I find it easy to go back to the way I was, to judging people based on my views and experiences... I have also encountered other people who look at the world through their own lens, and are not willing or able to understand the story that someone brings with them. They don't want to, or are unwilling to, show respect to a person, to honour their value. In my teaching, I have*

> *felt and heard people disapproving of "just talking" with students to*
>
> *solve problems, that the point of a healing circle is useless, since no*
>
> *one is "punished.*

Despite encountering challenging experiences, participant A's response to these challenges remained positive. Instead of getting discouraged, he stated a commitment not to relent in living the ethos of RJ.

> *My response to this challenge is that, am not relenting in the telling*
>
> *people about this model of relationship first. Showing a good example*
>
> *among friends and families by applying what I am preaching to issues*
>
> *of concern and serving as a role model to the young ones. I believe*
>
> *with time, people will be able to see things differently and join the*
>
> *change agent in using restorative justice to solve many human issues*
>
> *and promote love, peace, unity, and to also heal any broken*
>
> *relationship through restorative circle.*

Although participant A admits he has had struggles, two personal experiences have helped him to persist. RJ principles saved his relationship with his girlfriend, and living the ethos of RJ helped him in his academics and in building relationships on campus. He states:

> *I had some issue with my girlfriend, which normally could have been*
>
> *the end of that relationship. However, I could apply restorative justice*
>
> *concept to handle the issue. She was surprised at the way I talked to*
>
> *her using restorative approach questions to unravel what led to such*

> *argument and misunderstanding. Also, finally, I could build a cordial*
>
> *relationship with other students from other parts of the world because*
>
> *of the positive friendship experience I had with my classmates during*
>
> *a restorative justice class. That relationship helped me throughout my*
>
> *program.*

While appreciating how people embrace the use of RJ in building community and connecting people through relationship, participant B worried that those who are accustomed to the criminal justice system may see it as a weak approach to justice. He also identified that some people will use RJ as a soft landing to freedom without passing through the criminal justice system. In this case, genuine repentance resulting in accountability may not necessarily be present. Thus, participant B identified this as the reason his friends have not been able to resolve issues with him.

> *RJ has its challenges especially when the approach is employed to*
>
> *resolve crime in community. Most people appreciate and embrace*
>
> *that the relational approach is tried to be accountable when needed*
>
> *for quick reconnection and restitution. However, many people who*
>
> *were well acquainted with the criminal justice system perceived RJ*
>
> *approaches as weakness and seen as an opportunity to exploit without*
>
> *genuine repentance and accountability. I see this in cases where I*
>
> *tried to reconnect and reconcile with people who disagreed with me;*
>
> *trying to let them understand that we could deal with the issue that*

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> *prompted the disagreement without shattering the relationship we*
>
> *share.*

The above challenges notwithstanding, all the participants expressed a change in perspective after completing the course. Participants began to see life from the framework of relationship and being human. All the participants expressed how the course engaged them to interrogate the status quo and reflect on issues of everyday life. From my findings, this critical interrogation of the self, structure, system, and institutions was an open window for change.

The question to be addressed in the next theme is: What in the course enabled the shifts by my participants?

5.3 Theme #3: Making the Broth: Course Highlights that Inspired Change

From the participants' interviews and narratives, three factors were identified that contributed to shifting paradigms. The third factor is elaborated in theme four.

1. Restorative circle as a teaching method
2. Leadership of the facilitator

5.3.1 RJ circle as a teaching method. The principal mode of ED 6936 instruction was the RJ circle. Findings from interviews and narratives revealed that the 5 participants were motivated and inspired by the circle, which offered them the opportunity to appreciate the perspectives of others respectfully and without being judgmental. It was a space where we met ourselves for mutual sharing and

engagement with each other under the leadership of a facilitator which was a responsibility rotated through all of us in class. The circle as suggested by Boyes-Watson & Pranis (2015) was designed to help us move in the direction of our best self. The seating arrangement was in a circle; this was to allow face-to-face interaction. At every circle, the facilitator would conduct an opening ceremony. This usually involved short inspirational readings by the facilitators, and circle participants would often take turns reading inspirational thoughts, while occasionally we were asked to reflect on and share our experience on issues of interest. While narrating our stories and experiences, we took turns using the talking stick. This helped to regulate our dialogue. A talking stick is an object of respect for the voice of others; you must have the talking stick in your hand before you can speak. We also used a center piece, which was usually placed in the center of the floor. The center piece could be a piece of cloth or a mat, which represents the values or shared principles of the group. This helped us to maintain focus and be true to the values we shared together such as speaking and listening from the heart. In the first class, we collectively agreed that when we are together, we would be at our best when we were: 1) listening from the heart, 2) speaking from the heart, 3) sharing air time, and with each person speaking one at a time, 4) having respect for the voice of others, and 5) practicing equality without hierarchy. The circle usually lasted three hours together with breaks and various activities related to the topic of the night. We ended the circle with a closing ceremony. In the closing ceremony, we shared thoughts that summarized our learning, reassured our hopes and affirmed

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the interconnectedness among the participants.

Participant A expressed how he was transformed by the circle due to its ability to enable acceptance of others irrespective of who they were. The circle inspired him to share with and accept people based on their own perspective. Participant A attributed his shift to the space the circle provided for knowing the others through respect, love, empathy and dignity of human persons, irrespective of nationality or race. Arising from the impact which the circle had on his life, participant (A) recommended the circle to be used in classrooms in Africa, where he is originally from. In his narrative, he explained that:

> *I so much like the healing circle where we all sit together to reach compromise. This transformed me a lot. It helped me to understand the importance of sharing and accepting people the way they are. When you listen to them in RJ circle, you get to know more about the student and what goes on in their life. Apart from having a knowledgeable professor that understand the course, the sitting arrangement and majorly, everybody was giving opportunity to share their experiences. It was a diversified class, everybody was given listening ear using talking stick and there was mutual respect. I really enjoy the class and if I have the opportunity of taking the course again, I will happily do so. ………………... I have recommended the course to many Africa students.*

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Participant A's belief in the capacity of the circle to change lives was supported by a story of himself and friends in high school who were suspended from school for unruly behaviour. Although he returned to school after the suspension, some of his friends did not, and they later found themselves on the street to become gangsters. Four years after this suspension, it was reported that one of them had been arrested for robbery. Due to the transformation experienced in the circle dialogue, Participant A strongly believed in the efficacy of using the circle to resolve conflict in schools. Participant A narrated this as below:

> *I was suspended from the school. My school had no knowledge about RJ, I was suspended for 6 weeks. At the end of this 6 weeks, only 2 of us returned to school. The other students did not return because they believe they were treated unfairly, they believe the school was judging them base on their action. Suspension pushed them to the street to join bad gang. I believe that if there was RJ practice in the school, the administration would have organized a circle- maybe they would have been made accountable by doing community service or be made to pay to replace the chalkboard they damage. In this way, they would have remained in school and been prevented from joining bad gang. But for lack of RJ and better approach, if the model was available at that time, we would have been able to understand better. If there was RJ circle there would have been fair hearing and they would have apologized and move on the school. About 4 years ago, I heard one*

of them was arrested for robbery, I believe this was the result of what

happened in the beginning. Therefore, RJ should be planted in school

curriculum.

At the heart of the circle is its ability to build relationships and connect people through a culture of listening, respect, dignity, and equality as espoused in RJ ethos. Participant B was inspired by the emphasis laid on relationship and connectedness at every circle meeting. This emphasis is also corroborated in my autoethnography when I said:

Relationship culture was nurtured in the RJ program, it was a rule of

the thumb in our interaction inside and outside the classroom.

Creating RJ culture under the leadership of the facilitator allowed us,

RJ students, to fully immerse into the ethos of RJ which constitutes

the 'life and spirit' of RJ practice.

The circle offered participant A new window from which he began to analyze himself and the world. It helped him to resolve contradictions in how to live in the world. In his own words:

After I started the course, I was introduced to circle system. And the

norms and goals of RJ were well analyzed by the instructor. The way

the circle was facilitated gave me the opportunity to analyze myself

and resolve contradictions in my life, at every circle, emphases was

laid on relationship and how we connect with one another. This was

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> *a great learning tool for me as a graduate student.*

In his interview, participant B also referred to the circle as an experience that triggered him to take on a relational worldview. Through the restorative circle, he could see beyond the social construction which, according to him, society imposed. This is similar to my case as expressed in my autoethnography. As an international student in Canada, I came from my home country with socially imposed paradigms such as belief in a zero-tolerance policy and corporal punishment. These discipline paradigms are institutionalized in Nigerian homes and schools. However, the sharing and caring space provided by the **circle** led me to reflect on these socially constructed epistemologies. Participating in a circle changed my way of knowing from the perspective of self and 'matter' to being human and from zero-tolerance to relationship. Emphasizing the impact the circle had on his life, participant B said:

> *It triggered prompt and retrospective reflection of my life sojourn on*
> *the things I have done and impacted my life and decisions henceforth.*
> *It gives me the opportunity to see life from a relational view which is*
> *far beyond the worldview the society imposed on me.*

The role of the circle as an enabling space for change was further corroborated by participant C when she narrated how sharing stories in the circle enabled deep thought and reflection. This study revealed that the contents of these stories triggered self-reflection and interrogation. Participant C was particularly touched by the story of the Second World War and the Holocaust. Thoughts and analyses shared during the circle by students and the

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facilitator had a life-changing impact on participant C. In her story, she said:

> *Something that came from this course that I really think about is that*
> *everybody has value. That every person has value in some way, and*
> *that we must remember that, remember that they are people, and as*
> *people they have value. And I started studying things like World War*
> *Two and the Holocaust that I was sharing with my young students. I*
> *started seeing how Jewish people during this time, were not seen as*
> *people anymore. They had lost their value. They were nothing. I*
> *believe that is the cause of problems in the world, when we stopped*
> *treating people as people, we start to forget they really do have value.*
> *And this is such an important lesson to me that I want my students to*
> *understand that everybody has value, and they need to see the value*
> *in others.*

Participant C appreciated that participating in a circle enabled her to know people from the heart; it is a space where you meet people inside their story. This further enabled mutual understanding, respect and the ability to celebrate each other for the way we are as individuals. Due to this extraordinary impact, Participant C had incorporated the circle into her teaching due to the belief that "*the more her students talk to each other and share their stories, the more they can understand each person as a person. Also, more of a chance they must believe in the person, and showing value in the person and respecting what they do.*" What she took away from the restorative circle was expressed thus:

> *The first thing that I started was Talking Circles. I wanted to give my*
>
> *students a chance to share how they were feeling, to learn things*
>
> *about their classmates, and to gain a greater respect for everyone*
>
> *simply because they are people.*

From the perspective of participant D, safety was a significant part of the circle that elicited her trust. She saw a safe space for open conversation where judgement was absent. The circle offered a space for the freedom of choice and openness, and participant D revealed how this secure environment enabled her confidence to relate and tell her own story.

> *I can remember it was the circle and how we were made to feel safe.*
>
> *We were in a space without judgment and making connections. I also*
>
> *learned a lot about RJE through the instructor's presentation that*
>
> *day. The fact that we were all worthy and interconnected being at the*
>
> *root of RJ really spoke to me.*

Impassioned from the ED 6936 circle, participant D believed that circle practice could be integrated into the school system to address students and teachers' challenges.

> *I am very passionate about RJE and I believe talking circles are the*
>
> *answer to the challenges that many teachers and students face in our*
>
> *systems. I have hope in its implementation not only here in NL, but*
>
> *also around the world.*

The impact of the circle as a powerful tool to change classroom dynamics was expressed

by participant E. The classroom is usually a space for multiple perspectives and ideas, and it is also a space for positive and negative emotions leading to contradictions that teachers often struggle to resolve. Participant E believes the circle can be a useful tool in the hands of teachers to resolve conflicts in the classroom. Despite the diversity in the ED 6936 class, we embraced our differences with the common goal of being human. Regardless of the dynamics that were present in a circle, a common philosophy brought us together to work towards one goal. This experience impacted participant E and encouraged her to try to bring the same RJ culture into her own classroom. She said:

> *After graduation, I took a new job at a different school. I began to use talking circles within my classroom regularly. I tried to create a strong classroom community by allowing them to share their thoughts and opinions. Students loved it. They began to ask when they could have another circle. I began to invite other teachers to join our circle, to show them the power it had to change classroom dynamics and resolve conflicts.*

Although the circle was seen by participants as a building block of RJ education, the ethos and principles of RJ may not be achieved without the leadership of those facilitating the program. In ED6936, leadership played this important role. Findings revealed that the life-changing impact experienced by participants was also due to the leadership presence and aura of the facilitator. The role of leadership in inspiring change among my participants will be further discussed in the next theme.

5.3.2 Leadership of the facilitator. My participants in their various interviews expressed how they were inspired by the facilitator**.** As a member of the class, I was particularly inspired by the course facilitation, which was driven by leadership. Every moment of the course radiated mentoring and the exemplification of the principles and ethos of RJ. From the course, I learnt what it means and takes to influence others; that is, living what you preach. This quality typifies the instructor who facilitated the course. My takeaway from the leadership quality of the facilitator was that exemplary leadership is contagious. This can be explained by the way participants and other classmates committed to doing what their 'leader' does; that is, living and creating a culture of RJ within and outside of class instruction, which I would like to call "class conversation". The impact of leadership in influencing a shift in my worldview was ably narrated in my autoethnography thus:

> *The impact of the instructor's leadership and classroom management gave me the conviction that leadership is important in driving change whether in politics, government, institutions or business. Here are my points; every member of the RJE class exhibited qualities that reflect the ethos of RJ. In every class, students and the instructor collectively participated in living the shift that was the focus of the course. The classroom was a community that reached out and broke barriers; it was a community where care and relationships were fostered among the students.*

The ED 6936 classroom was nurtured by care and relationship. This classroom ambience was transferred to my personal life and applied in my daily living. As I mention below, this impact gave me reason to believe that teachers should be leaders in the classroom to invite students to embrace a culture of RJ.

> *In my journey, my shift was enabled by the exemplary role of the RJE facilitator. I dream to see teachers, who inspire their students to challenge the way they live life and to add happiness and love to their community.*

Participant A was so inspired that throughout the course he did not miss a class, which he attributed to the leadership quality of the instructor. Findings revealed that this leadership by example exhibited by the instructor was also transferred to his personal life, as he stated that he was committed to *"showing good example among friends and families by applying what I am preaching to issues of concern and serving as a role model to the young ones"* in and after completing the course. This was a quality exemplified by the instructor in the classroom. On how leadership influenced him, participant A commented

> *Apart from having a sound professor that understands the course, her leadership quality inspired me so much that I did not miss a class.*

On the role leadership has in influencing students to change, participant E highlighted the need to change her personality in a way that reflects how a leader should be prepared to inspire meaningful change in students under their care. She craved a desire to resolve personal values that may conflict with her true leadership qualities. Findings reveal that

this desire and inspiration was enabled from the quality of facilitation and instruction. According to participant E:

> *Before I began ED 6936 I believed that I had to completely change my personality to manage my classroom effectively. I did not want to run a dictatorship, but I felt as though that's what needed to happen for my students to begin behaving appropriately in the classroom. Thus, I was confused, worn out and unsure if I would continue teaching as my core beliefs and values were constantly being questioned.*

Although Participant B, C and D were mostly inspired by the use of the circle as a mode of delivery in ED 6936, observations during the interviews revealed that the facilitator of the course was highly regarded and respected due to her ability to mentor and inspire a new way of thinking and adopting a new lens in the way we view the world. Participants were encouraged to see that this call to a paradigm shift by the facilitator was not only expressed in words but through a lifestyle that demonstrates the ethos of RJ. This quality was a great influence and inspiration to all the participants. A statement that speaks for all participants in this study can be seen in my autoethnography when I said that:

> *…………This gives me reason to believe that a leader deserves the followership it gets. For a significant paradigm shift to take place the adult in 'charge' must live up to what he/she teaches. This is true for all RJE leaders and ideologues.*

The above is quoted to support the role of leadership in enabling change. All the participants in this study experienced a shift in their paradigms, so much so that, despite encountering challenges in practicing their new worldview, they expressed a commitment to continue to live a life that demonstrates the ethos and principles of RJ. This commitment was enabled by the leadership presence of the facilitator during and after the classroom, as she continues to mentor her students.

My participants clearly drew their strength and inspiration from the care and safe space provided by the RJ circle, which was the mode of delivering ED 6936 and the leadership quality of the facilitator. Also critical was the knowledge-based pedagogy rooted in the philosophical foundation of RJ. The relevance of this philosophical foundation of ED 6936 in enabling change is discussed in the theme below.

5.4 Theme#4 My Root-Our Root: RJ Bounded in Critical Theory and Philosophy

"Human behaviour flows from three main sources: desire, emotion,

and knowledge" …. (*Plato, nd)*

As a participant in the study, I would like to begin by drawing from my experience as described in my autoethnography. I have been a lover of philosophy but never in a way that could change my life. Before now, philosophy had never gone beyond influencing my knowledge, terminology and logic. In the RJ classroom, I began to see a brand of philosophy that is beyond episteme and rooted in human essence and relationship. I also experienced a 'change philosophy' that is real and complements spirituality, if not trumps

it. As a Christian, I have never thought of humanity and relationship as seriously as I did during and after my RJ experience, even though my faith is not lacking in the spiritual message of humanity and relationship (Neighborliness). This experience, as my autoethnography reveals, was caused by the philosophical foundation upon which the course ED 6936 was built. When I said: "*It was a self-revealing space for self-interrogation and healing*", it was because the philosophy in which RJ is rooted gave us the motivation to continually examine and interrogate our socially constructed values. My highlight in the course was a conversation on critical relational theory, as it gave me the liberty to critically examine my place in global, social and moral dynamics. The course encouraged self-inquiry and a search for knowledge. "*Aside from the instructional materials that made significant impact on me, the class was also filled with so much knowledge which was instructor driven" (My autoethnography).* This led me to find related philosophies that are rooted in 'being human' and relational. In my search, I discovered Emmanuel Levinas' ethics. Levinas' (1961) philosophy is rooted in 'Otherness.' That is, seeing yourself in others and others in you. I believe this philosophy complements RJ philosophy. The philosophical foundation of the course helped to broaden and extend my knowledge. More importantly, ED 6936, which was grounded in philosophy, provided me with critical relational thinking to interrogate my existing paradigms through the lens of relationship and humanity. To corroborate how the philosophical foundation of the course impacted me as a participant and to make sense of my thoughts on its need in RJ education, I said this in my autoethnography:

> *Notwithstanding that the message of RJ belongs to all, for a*
> *meaningful shift to take place, I believe that ideologues of RJE must*
> *be knowledgeable in the theories and principle of RJ philosophy.*
> *Memorial University has one of the renowned and leading*
> *researchers in restorative justice education; a researcher with*
> *boundless knowledge and passion for RJ education.*

Because of the philosophical foundation of the course, participant A now sees RJ as "*a new brand of knowledge and concept*". He claimed that this knowledge was experientially expressed. While narrating his new passion for RJ, participant A attributed his inspiration in part to the sound [knowledge] of the professor who facilitated the course. According to him: "*Apart from having a sound professor that understands the course, her leadership quality inspired me so much that I did not miss a class.*" In the view of participant B, this knowledge "*triggered prompt and retrospective reflection*". In my autoethnography, I mentioned how class members appreciated the philosophical foundation of the course, which triggered them to self-interrogate and reflect on their social and cultural habitus.

> *Some of my classmates expressed how deeply they appreciated the*
> *space which the circle provided and most especially, the knowledge*
> *and philosophical foundation of the course which enabled them to*
> *interrogate their social and cultural experiences. This philosophical*
> *foundation helped me and other students to analyze the world through*
> *a new window. This window we loved to call; a window of*

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> *relationships.*

RJ philosophy is embodied in both theory and practice. They cannot be separated. When participants referred to their experiences, they referred to what happened in their heads and hearts, the ethos of respect, dignity, care, empathy, and forgiveness are a constitution of both episteme and praxis. When participant C emphasized the role of active listening in RJ, she meant that RJ is knowledge that speaks to the heart. According to her:

> *The more that they can listen to each other, the more they can talk to*
>
> *each other, the more they can understand each person as a person,*
>
> *they have more of a chance of believing in the person, and showing*
>
> *value in the person and respecting what they do.*

Participant D further emphasized the relevance of the philosophical foundations of ED 6936 when she narrated how experiential knowledge of RJ provided her with a road map for how to move forward in her life.

> *The RJ experience impacted my life while studying because it gave*
>
> *me hope for how I could move forward with the rest of my life*

When explaining her new lens, she said "*the same could be said for the lens I have now………*" She was referring to a new life driven by RJ philosophy and paradigms. Her philosophy, driven by experiential knowledge, was supported by what I said in my autoethnography:

> *In my **experience** of RJ at Memorial University, classroom became a*

> *space for re-creation of a new philosophy, and a new self in my mode*
>
> *of thinking about life and relating with others, this space gave me the*
>
> *opportunity to re-direct my policy approach to how the business of*
>
> *education should be conducted and re-think what it truly means to be*
>
> *educated.*

Referring to philosophy and knowledge-based pedagogy in ED 6936, participant E captured the learning process as a **revelation** which came to her in a profound way. Although she used the word "revelation", other statements revealed that her ED 6936 experience provided her with a new lens she had never before imagined. According to her: "*through my understanding of RJ, I was able to see myself, my colleagues, my students, as well as other important people in my life, through a different lens.*" She claimed that this lens gave her an extended breadth of knowledge to look at the big picture when addressing students' behavior issues.

> *Now I can see the whole picture, a picture of a child who is just trying*
>
> *his best to hold it together. This revelation has been the most profound*
>
> *for me. It has caused me to create deeper relationships with my*
>
> *students, and has allowed me to reach them in a way I could have*
>
> *never done before.*

As a participant in this study, I can say without hesitation that relationship based on "Ubuntu" is the 'truth' I discovered in this course. This was made possible by the critical and philosophical foundations of the course. Philosophy and critical pedagogy enabled me

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to examine myself in relation to my way of being in the world and humanity. I see philosophy as a substratum of RJE. For significant transformation to take place in RJ education, pedagogy must be rooted in philosophy as findings reveal in this study.

5.5 Conclusion: What Pedagogy Reveals

This study was a qualitative research carried out using interviews and storytelling to collect data from participants. Responses were rigorously analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings revealed that after completing a semester-long course in restorative justice education (RJE), participants experienced a shift in their worldview. This shift not only happened in the mind but in their profession and how they live. Although participants positively reflected on this change, they also stated that they encountered challenges in the practice of RJ in their daily lives. However, dogged commitment was revealed in their ongoing effort to continue in the way of RJ practice despite the challenges they faced.

Significant in the findings was the revelation that the shift experienced was enabled by using the circle as a means of course delivery. This questions the traditional method in which teachers stand in front of the classroom to teach students. How much engagement can come from this traditional method? Findings from the analysis revealed also that the space provided by the circle was engaging and encouraged strong knowing and relationships. There were further findings that the leadership quality of the facilitator inspired. This brought to light the need for RJ practitioners to lead their followers through an exemplary lifestyle, which is living the life of RJ principles and ethos. Most revealing to me in the findings was that, for RJ pedagogy to be life changing, it must be delivered in

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a way that pays attention to its philosophical foundations. From this finding, there exists a strong revelation that the participants were inspired and influenced by the philosophical foundation of the course ED 6936. These findings are discussed in Chapter 6.

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Chapter 6 - Discussion

This study sought to investigate whether a paradigm shift occurred within five students who completed a graduate course in restorative justice education (RJE) at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador. Using narrative and autoethnography, my own story and the stories of other participants were collected and then analyzed using thematic analysis. Three themes were identified which served as a window to address the research question raised in this study. Participants told their stories through oral narratives and semi-structured interviews. Responses arising from these interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. The rigorous thematic analysis identified three themes which served as a window to address the research questions raised. Questions developed to be answered in this study were:

1. Did the restorative justice program in education change the worldview of students who participated in this program?

2. What part the program enabled the paradigm shift of students who participated in the program?

3. What aspects of the teaching method facilitated this paradigm shift to take place?

4. What challenges were there outside the context of the course for implementing RJ, either in personal or professional life?

Findings from the themes analyzed were sufficient to address the questions. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to discuss the findings against the background of the contemporary literature review relevant to this study as presented in Chapter 2 and other

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relevant literature. In this chapter, the nature of 'being' and 'being human' will also be discussed from the perspective of early scholars such as Bertrand Russel, Edmund Husserl, Descartes and Martin Heidegger. This discussion is important because the nature of 'being' and 'being human' is central to the ethos of RJ. Also, the significance of Emmanuel Levinas' ethics as a useful philosophy for a deeper understanding of RJ will be discussed. After that, a connection shall be made between transformative education and RJE to compare the two transformative paradigms. Overall, each of the discussions and the analysis will clarify the findings of this study.

6.1 RJ and the Nexus of Being Human and Relational

The question of our way of being in the world did not begin with RJ philosophy. Early scholars like Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) brought philosophy to a level of ontological understanding, which is where RJ derives its source. This was a wide departure from Husserlian's formal ontology (a priori-centered judgment) and the thinking of Rene Descartes (1970) whose understanding of humanity was based on what we think (knowledge) when he famously said: "I think therefore I am" (cogito ergo sum) (p.140). Descartian philosophy reduced us to being a 'knower' before being 'human.' To himself, he said, "my essence consists only in my being a thinking thing [or a substance whose whole essence or nature is merely thinking]" (Descartes & Lafleur, 1960 p.41). Martin Heidegger held a contrary view when he argued that the world first appears to us as "equipment," not as an object of knowledge. In his own words:

The less we stare at the hammer thing, and the more we seize hold of it and use it,

the more primordial does our relationship to it become, and the more unveiled is it encountered as that which it is as equipment. The hammering itself uncovers the specific 'manipulability' of the hammer. The Being which equipment possesses— in which it manifests itself in its own right we call 'readiness-to-hand.' (Being and Time 15: 98)

The analogy of equipment as used by Heidegger means that what is fundamental to life is not 'what is' but 'how to'. Simply put, knowing how to use equipment is more productive than what the equipment is. Therefore, the fundamental question about life is not 'what is life?' but 'how to live life?' This is the fundamental 'equipment' of RJ. Heidegger's philosophical inquiry is unwrapped in his 'Dasein' (what it means to be human or what it means to be in the world). The fundamental ontology of Heidegger dovetailed in establishing the wholeness and connectedness that exists in 'being human' and how we exist for the sake of others. As he said: "The 'who' is not this one, not that one, not oneself, not some people, and not the sum of them all. The 'who' is the neuter, the 'anyone' (Heidegger, 1962 p.126)). Dasein (being human) is for the sake of the 'they' (the other) in an everyday manner", (Levinas 1961, 27: 164 as cited in Wheeler, 2013). Heidegger offers clarification when he explained that

In my workday life, I am a teacher, a husband, a father or a consumer because I have been 'absorbed' (aufgehen) and 'dispersed' (zerstreuen) into the public roles, habits and gestures of others. Others assign meaning to my social goals, plans, and projects. 'They' make me who I am. Thus, Dasein is 'existentially' or structurally

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‘being-with-others’, a ‘They-self (p.118)

Heidegger’s *Being and Time* (1962) represents the fundamental *summon bonum* of humanity and the principle wrapping RJ philosophy.

6.2 RJ and ‘Otherness’ Philosophy

RJ is a defining corollary to the works of Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995), a French philosopher whose work resonated with my experience in RJ philosophy. The philosophical foundation of ED 6936 inspired my curiosity to explore further the place of ‘being human’ as a worldview for living life. ED 6936 taught me how to fix the ‘broken windows’ in my life and from the course, I see a ‘take home’ matrix to address some urgent concerns in my home country of Nigeria. For example, the visceral corruption which has become a way of life, violent extremism and terrorism and the de-valorization of character in Nigeria schools need to be addressed through the lens of RJ. The works of Emmanuel Levinas gave me a deeper understanding of how to philosophize RJ from the perspective of ‘Otherness.’ In his essay, *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas (as cited in Wheeler, 2013) explained the philosophy of ‘Otherness’ using the catchphrase the ‘Face of the Other.’ The ‘face of the other’ is a simplification of Heidegger’s Dasein or ‘being human.’ It helped me to synthesize the different layers and contexts of RJ. Levinas’ ethics, like RJ philosophy, emphasized the interrelationships between separate individuals. It is the very essence of life itself. To use the words of Heidegger, Levinas sees his ‘Dasein’ from the ‘Dasein’ of the ‘Other’ - (Dasein, in this case, means existence). He believes that this face of the ‘Other’ was always an invitation to a relationship with the ‘Other’ when he said: “the

face speaks to me and thereby invites me to a relation . . ." (p.198). In another book, *Ethics and Infinity*, Levinas, (1985) expressed the necessity of empathy in the face of the other. Metaphorically, he said, "I see the 'face of the Other' as a poor destitute 'for whom I can do all and to whom I owe all" (p.89). Emmanuel Levinas' worldview represents human connectedness expressed in a relationship, compassion, empathy, and sharing. Although Heidegger's philosophy, transformative education, and Emmanuel Levinas' ethics have classroom application, they have no cultural framework for living life as RJ does.

6.3 Relationship: the 'Home Key' to RJ Philosophy

This brings me to the fundamental focus of RJ; the works of Bianchi (1994), Pranis (2007), Zehr (2005) and Vaandering (2013) offer a clear understanding that being human and relational is the essence of RJ philosophy. Using the relationship window matrix, Vaandering (2013) established that relationship and connectedness are the core values that ground RJ philosophy. The values and ethos of RJ as demonstrated through relationship is a way of being in the world. Johnstone & Van Ness (2007) offered clarity on the relationship essence of RJ and Levinas' ethics when they stated that "to live a lifestyle of restorative justice, we must abolish the self (as it is conventionally understood in contemporary society) and instead, understand ourselves as inextricably connected to and, identifiable with other beings and the 'external world' (p. 15). In discussing the importance of connectedness and relationship, Eze (2016) drew some excerpts from Ubuntu philosophy and spiritual epistemology to emphasize the oneness and interdependence existing in 'us' being in the world. According to Eze, "that a person is a person through

other people' strikes an affirmation of one's humanity through recognition of an 'Other' in his or her uniqueness and difference" (p.191). This is the philosophy that forms the core objective of ED 6936 and is the baseline of RJ education. Findings from this study reveal a manifestation of this objective. Participants not only vocalized a paradigm shift in their worldview, it was demonstrated in behaviour and in their everyday living. As a member of the class, I can objectively say that in my three years of graduate studies, I have rarely felt as respected and valued as in ED 6936. I strongly feel that teachers in training, both in secondary and higher education, could benefit from RJE.

6.4 Philosophical Foundation

The primary focus of RJ seeks to transform our lives and change the way we view the world (Van Ness and Strong, 2006). It is an invitation to change our lenses through critical reflection of our being in the world. This objective became evident in the lives of the participants involved in the study. I and the five participants involved in this study came with various worldviews to ED 6936 largely due to differences in our cultural backgrounds. It is not unexpected that our 'sense of place' as Bourdieu, (2017) put it, will heavily influence our thinking and worldview. Deconstructing our paradigms requires engagement with a new way of knowing and thinking. Thus, Zehr (1990) calls us to the fundamental challenge of confronting this assumption by deconstructing our perspective. This challenge was taken head-on in ED 6936, as it was rooted in humanity and relationship. The philosophical foundation of ED 6936 was responsible for critical relational thinking which progressively led to the change experienced by the participants. This affirms Vaandering's,

(2013) argument that "Restorative justice, with its philosophical foundation, holds potential for success as it relies on a relationship-based, dialogic framework that contrasts with the more common hierarchical, power-based structure" (64). This study is guided by a feminist theory framework, which supports "community as a means for understanding the interconnectedness of people, rather than the independence of people. Community depends on the sharing of knowledge and collaborative action" (Smith, L.T., 1999; Bell, 1984). In the RJ community, equality, consensus-based decision-making, and sharing are some of the guiding principles. Decisions are not imposed from top to bottom, as there is no hierarchy. The traditions observed in restorative circles are rooted in critical theory framework, which allows for the demystification of structural and institutional hegemony. This requires that power dynamics be broken down in the RJ community to allow safe spaces for openness and genuine critical reflection. The ED 6936 classroom was a space devoid of hierarchy or control. As expressed by participants, the philosophical foundation of the course enabled them to critically reflect on their previously held views. This is because, as Vaandering, (2010) said, "critical inquiry approach is important for extending and deepening the knowledge base of restorative justice" (p.7). In the context of ED 6936, critical relational theory was used as a thinking paradigm to examine and interrogate our way of being in the world through a relational lens. Although critical relational theory suggests a whole cultural change or paradigm shift in our way of being, the tradition of respect, openness and choice remain sacrosanct in RJ education.

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The philosophical foundation of RJ must be understood as an embodiment of theory and practice. It is required that theory and practice be equal to 'unity.' The implication is that RJ philosophy cannot stand alone without practice; they cannot be separated. This corroborates Braithwaite and Strang's position (as cited in Vaandering, 2013) that "There is nothing as practical as a good philosophy and the best philosophy is informed by practice" (p.64).

In the course, ED 6936, the RJ circle, sometimes called a healing circle and other times a talking circle, provided a safe space for RJ communication. As expressed by all the participants, it was a major reason for the change they experienced. The use of the circle as a safe and caring space for change is further discussed below.

6.5 Understanding the World from Human Experience

Over the years, philosophers have tried to explain the world and human nature from the perspective of analytical philosophy. Analytical philosophy is premised on speculations and assumptions that do not address the reality of the world. This type of philosophy is described by Russel to 'consist of speculation about a matter where exact knowledge is not yet possible' (Russel, 1960, p.11). Analytical philosophy is likened to artificial intelligence that does not interact or connect with the embodied world; so much happens in the "mind" of the embodied world that is hidden to the "mind" of thoughtful analysis where analytic philosophy belongs. As Maurice Merleau-Ponty said, the 'lived body is aware of the world that contains data to be interpreted' (as cited in Colarossi, 2013). These data are patterns and meanings drawn from experiences in our day-to-day interactions with the "Other" or

the "face of the Other." Also, in their hermeneutic phenomenology, Goble & Yin (2015) described that we are enmeshed in a world of experience through histories, cultures, events, and social norms and that, it is the purpose of research to bring to light and reflect upon the lived meaning of these fundamental experiences. It is this understanding that encouraged me to use narrative inquiry and autoethnography to undertake this study.

Despite efforts by phenomenologists to understand 'being human' through experience, little has been achieved in addressing our broken humanness both in global and domestic locales. There is little wonder, therefore, that people, even in the 21st century, continue to advance in the design of the "hate machine" to destroy the glory of humanity. For instance, the "hate machine" can be seen installed in our global and domestic politics; in religion, in the form of extremism and terrorism; in our youth, in the form of crime and radicalization; and, in our schools, in the form of school violence, bullying, and cultism. Analytical knowledge has made it difficult to simplify what it means to be human in our structures and institutions. RJ offers an alternative philosophical framework for understanding the world. RJ, in its ontological focus, offers a simplification of humanity and our way of being in the world. RJ philosophy represents a worldview that is framed by the lens of relationship. In this study, I call this lens the "window of relationship" as described in Vaandering (2013). It is also a philosophy upon which ED 6936 was based.

6.6 Circle for Change

It was elaborated in the findings that the circle provided a space in which students embraced the philosophical foundation of the course, which was based on relationship and

humanity. In other words, it was a medium through which the ethos and principles of RJ were communicated. It was in this space that students 'met and knew' each other, as they embraced the culture of value for each other, care for each other, and respecting and listening to one another. The use of the circle as a space for enabling transformation through listening and sharing our stories was supported by Pranis, Stuart, & Wedge (2003) when they defined circles as "places of listening—of hearing what it is like to be someone else. They are also places for being heard—for expressing what's on our minds and hearts and having others receive it deeply. . .. The life stories are naturally transforming" (p. 3). As experienced in ED 6936, the circle not only brought students together to talk and share stories or build relationships, it went beyond the mundane by engaging students in dialogic interactions and self-reflection, which, as Boyes-Watson & Pranis (2015) said, helped participants to "practice basic ways of being that are fundamental to being successful together" (p.23). Evidence of success in the use of RJE in shifting the perspective of students in this study gives validity to previous research which makes claims about the efficacy of RJ in changing school culture and students' behaviour. The revelation that the participants in this study experienced a paradigm shift in their worldview supports a previous project in Scotland which also showed significant improvements in school culture, such as the use of restorative language by staff and pupils (McCuskey et al.; 2008). It also supports the transformative view of RJ. According to Woolford, (as cited in Reimer 2018), RJ "fosters opportunities for individuals and collectives to evaluate their lives and their worlds, and to initiate attempts to bring change into these areas: to address injustice and to improve the lives of the many" (p.5). Similarly, in a comparative case study which

focused on the use of RJ in selected schools in both Canada and Scotland, there was evidence that pupils experienced a transformed environment in which violence had been radically diminished since the implementation of RJ in the selected schools in both countries (Reimer, 2018).

6.7 Change as a Process

As we have seen from the findings, RJ in its philosophical foundation interrogates and challenges deeply-held views and beliefs. Despite the shift in previously-held perspectives, participants in this study continued to struggle in their daily lives to live the life they see through their new lenses. In their new lens, they see a life embodied by RJ ethos and principles. In the "real" world, the participants expressed having experienced practical challenges ranging from cultural fixation, power dynamics, hierarchy, institutionalization, etc. These challenging experiences are not new in RJ studies and projects. In the Scotland School Project (McCuskey, 2008), for example, despite RJ training for teachers, findings revealed that some teachers continued to resist change. This is equally true for students. This resistance is connected to the emotional process that requires time to self-regulate (Thorsborne, 2014). As McCluskey argued, these challenges are not unexpected due to the habitus of school structures, which is laden with control and hierarchy (as cited in Vaandering, 2014, p. 65). It is evident in the study that participants are culturally attached to their cultural and social construction. Referring to how traditional and cultural attachment affects change in school culture, Morrison, Blood & Thorsborne (2005) said that "when traditional practices are deeply embedded in schools, it is difficult

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for the school community to recognize the cultural cues from within." By cultural cues they meant

> how management speaks to, and about, staff; how staff speak about the management, particularly in their absence; how management and staff speak to, and about, students and parents; the patterns of communication within staff meetings and what is said immediately after meetings; how criticism and disagreement are handled; how the school invites, promotes and supports initiatives and vision; how the school responds to identified needs amongst students or staff (p.339).

Thus, time is required for students and schools to break away from traditional attachments. In light of this struggle and challenge, findings from this study show that, in the 'real' world, participants are committed to rise each time they fall and to break fences that stand in their way in the effort to live the ethos of RJ.

6.8 Leadership: a Tool for Bringing RJ Pedagogy to the Classroom

As findings revealed in the study, among other factors, the change experienced by participants was triggered by the exemplary lifestyle and leadership of the facilitator. Leadership has been identified as the single most critical aspect of school reform, as it influences every aspect of what it takes to enhance student achievement in schools (Marzano, 2003). One way leadership was demonstrated in this study was the exemplary demeanor of the instructor who facilitated the course ED 6936.

In addition to living the ethos of respect, care, inclusion, accountability and taking

responsibility, commitment to relationships, being non-judgmental, collaboration, empowerment and emotional articulacy, the instructor was also inspiring in the use of language. The instructor's use of language was always in compliance with the values of RJ. Lee (2004) while recognizing the role of leadership in transformational change advised that a

> transformational process will change mindsets, target values and build a culture which can truly support new strategies and organizational aspirations. However, it can only be driven by passionate and persistent leadership at the top. Therefore, transformational change begins with transforming the mindsets of managers (p. 39).

The facilitator demonstrated this passionate and persistent leadership in ED 6936. As a participant in this study, each time I visited my professor in her office, her language was always a source of healing contact for me. I would leave her office feeling better than when I went in. Like I have said before in this study, living the ethos of RJ is contagious. This is evident in the way the lifestyle of the ED 6936 facilitator transformed the lives of my participants. The leadership impact not only transformed the paradigm of the participants, but it was also a catalyst for an improved learning community. Some participants revealed how RJ improved their 'academics.' This finding confirmed Morrison, et al.'s (2005) statement when they said that "at all levels of leadership and management 'walking the talk' and 'building bridges' is important, in that they enhance the development of a productive learning community" (p.341).

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Who enables the shifts taking place in a circle? Teachers of course. In my autoethnography, I have made a case for the need to train teachers in RJE, as they represent the agent of transformation in the classroom. As I said: "due to the shift that occurred to me after taken this course, I believe that, in the run to implement RJ in Nigeria schools, teacher education must have a fusion of RJE so that pedagogy brings humanity to the classroom." Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, and Pickeral (as cited in Meyer & Evans, 2012) agree that when teachers are trained and schools live according to restorative culture, they become equipped with the capacity to influence and shape a positive school climate in safety, pedagogy, relationship and environment. Given the need for teacher education, findings from the study suggest that for RJ culture to take place in students, teachers must be leaders in the use of the circle framework as a means of classroom engagement or teaching. In a master's degree thesis, Boluwade (2018) explores the use of the circle as a means for teaching science in high schools. This underscores the ongoing interest in the use of a circle for classroom instruction due to its efficacy in influencing change and promoting improved learning. Cohen, et al. (as cited in Reimer, 2018) could not agree more when they described how, when RJ pedagogy is brought to the classroom, there is a focus on the quality of instruction including discursive teaching and active learning; social, emotional, and ethical learning; professional development and professionalism for staff; and school leadership beyond the managerial to encompass curriculum and instruction. What more can parents desire for their children?

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6.9 Between RJ and Transformative Learning

The call for a learning process that transforms lives is not new to scholars. For instance, Mezirow (2009) in his transformative learning theory, suggested the need to maximize human potential and build relationships as part of an ongoing learning process. The three broad experiences of inclusion, reflective thinking and change by participants due to RJ education also form the fundamental essence of transformative education. These experiences are seen when Mezirow described transformative education as "learning that transforms problematic frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, reflective, open, and emotionally able to change" (p.58-59). Like Kincheloe and McLaren (as cited in Vaandering, 2010) in their critical theory approach to understanding and implementing RJ, Mezirow also believes that transformative teachers must incite the 'disorienting dilemma' of learners. As mentioned, this is like the critical reflection which ED 6936 inspired in my participants. Mezirow described the disorienting dilemma as an experience within which a current understanding is found to be insufficient or incorrect, and the learner struggles with the resulting conflict of views. Such experiences often are those which learners point to as the beginning of the process of questioning their understanding and views and entering the transformative learning process (King, 2009 p.3). Transformative learning as a tool for transforming and changing lives, much like RJ philosophy, is believed to have what Edmund O'Sullivan (2003) described as

> a deep structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions, it is a
>
> shift of consciousness that dramatically and irreversibly alters our way of being in

the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relationships with other humans and with the world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race and gender; our body awareness, our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy (p. 326).

Although transformative learning is centered on 'being human,' change and critical reflection, the process of achieving this change is based on the use of rational thinking and critical reflection to demystify complex systems in order to enable shifts in human thought. This process of achieving change is antithetical to RJ philosophy. RJ philosophy is not a thought process but a way of life; it is a cultural framework for living life. It is true that transformative learning creates a caring space for learning, as it is used as a strategy or a method to trigger change by inciting and facilitating Mezirow's 'disorienting dilemma' of students. Taylor (2006) advised that transformative educators should draw on a variety of methods and techniques to enable change. Transformative learning, therefore, means managing knowledge or curriculum to trigger or enable transformation in students. This is contrary to our experience as findings revealed in this study. RJ as facilitated in ED 6936 was not a strategy or method for change or transformation but an invitation to a way of being in the world and living life (Vaandering, 2014). From my understanding, it is more likely that transformative education is a strategy by teachers to manage or manipulate student towards change through critical thinking. This is not the case in RJ education. In RJE, students are not managed but invited to change, it is an invitation to dialogue a 'way of being' in the world. RJ is an invitation to all of us to live a life worthy of the ethos,

values, and principles of RJ. Such values, which I now identify with, include care, respect, tolerance and acceptance, sharing, empathy, and not being judgmental. Living this ethos and these values benefits humanity because it is a natural way of being in the world. The goals of human happiness, safety and security, and world peace are situated in a relational ecology of all peoples connected under the common good of RJ and its ethos. At the level of community, relationship is a 'place' of meaning and wellbeing for its members. Living the ethos of RJ based on a relationship paradigm is the future of humanity because of its capacity to reshape the chaotic affordances of the present world. In the words of Lockhart & Zammit (as cited in Danny Graham, 2008)

> The greatest security we can have is a healthy community. The essence of community is brought to life by relationship [or RJ ethos]. Relationship [and RJ ethos] brings meaning into our lives… when we speak about a person who has come into conflict in life, it is impossible to talk about them without referring to the absence of healthy life-affirming relationships. Conflict is about the denigration, the deterioration, and ultimately the neglect of relationships (4).

In transformative learning, life-changing stories are told to students. In these stories, students are inspired to reflect on and use these stories as a framework to transform their lives. Yes, in RJ, we tell change-enabling stories, but these are stories shared by one another and are not told to students by the teacher. Whatever the story, we must live our own stories. As Marshall said, "a paradigm shift occurs when we become the stories we tell" (as cited in Kelly, 2010 p. 12). Again, transformative educators struggle with guidelines to approach

transformative education; they often rely on instinct to engage students in the transformative classroom. As Taylor (2009) said:

> "Those who venture into [transformative learning] must trust their teaching instincts, since there are few clear signposts or guidelines, and develop an appreciation for and awareness of their assumptions and beliefs about the purpose of fostering transformative learning and the impact on practice." (p. 14).

Comparatively, RJ has some predetermined guidelines for engaging students in the RJ circle, although facilitators are not limited to these guidelines. For clarity, from the comparison made between transformative learning and restorative justice education, I can only conclude that while RJ is transformative, transformative learning cannot be said to be restorative. By restorative, I mean transforming our way of being in the world through a window of relationship and living RJ ethos as a way of life. It is a cultural change from self to humanity and 'Otherness' in our daily living. It is a call to practice and not a strategy or method to inspire people to live a good life or become good citizens.

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Chapter7- Conclusion and Recommendation

"RJ has become a way of transforming our family lives, our conduct in schools and workplace, our practice of politic; it's become a vision of a holistic change in the way we do justice in the world" (Braithwaite, 2003 p. 87).

The above quotation represents the context and drive for this study. The fundamental theme in this study is paradigm shift. Simply put, I define a paradigm shift as a holistic change in the way we view the world. As an international student from Nigeria, I experienced two shifts during my graduate studies in Canada. The first shift I will call the *welcome shift*. This was experienced upon arrival in Canada. The cultural capital gave me reason to interrogate my social construction and "the way we do things there". I have taken time to explain this in my autoethnography. The new experience caused a shift that prepared me for the second shift I experienced. I call this the *paradigm shift.* This occurred during my graduate studies at Memorial University of Newfoundland in ED 6936 (Restorative Justice in Education) in which I enrolled in 2016. This course, which was rooted in philosophy and dialogic engagement, inspired a change in my perspective and worldview. The quest to find out if this change can occur for others who may take the course or training, led me into this investigation using my ED6936 class as a study population. This study, therefore, set out to investigate if a paradigm shift occurred among students after completing a course in restorative justice education. Data from thematic analysis revealed that all the participants experienced a change in their worldview after completing the ED 6936 course.

It was evident that this shift was primarily caused by the philosophical foundation of RJ taken as part of ED6936. The circle, which is often called a talking or healing circle, was a framework or teaching method for course instruction, but I call it a form of course engagement. The use of the circle was revealed to be the most profound highlight of the course and a reason for the shift that occurred in the participants.

The leadership of the facilitator was also not left out in the findings. The facilitator/instructor showed the way by living the ethos of RJ. Participants were influenced by this leadership quality. This is a learning point for us as educators, as we owe it to our students to live what we teach as builders of nations and civilizations.

From the findings, it is evident that RJ holds promise for transforming lives and changing cultural spaces that inhibit progress, be it in educational settings, structures or institutions. In social and political fields, it transforms how we "play the game" from the interest of self to the interest of 'us' as a people bonded in humanity. Due to the ability of RJ to promote change in a school setting, it is continually used beyond formal RJ conferencing to informal responses such as corridor conferencing (Wachtel and McCold, 2001).

Despite the high hopes which RJ promises for changing lives, participants also revealed the challenges they faced in the implementation of RJ in their day-to-day affairs. Cultural attachment as well as structural and institutional control have been identified in this study as the causes of these challenges. There is copious evidence in the study that shows that challenging experiences are part of the process in the progressive continuum of

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RJ implementation. Therefore, in support of the recommendations below, it is highly advised that practitioners interrogate RJ challenging experiences with a view to map out an action plan for improvement and addressing the challenges

7.1 Limitation and Future Direction of the Study

The limitations of this study fall into three categories. The first limitation is the size of the sample. Five participants were involved in the study. Although the reason for the small sample size was to enable in-depth exploration of the experiences of participants, as is required in most qualitative studies. It is my belief that this could limit the broader generalization of the results.

The second limitation this study faced was researcher and participant bias. I was a member of the class ED 6936. I cultivated good and friendly relationships with the participants during the course. There is a possibility that this relationship may have compromised the data provided by the participants. For example, my friend (participant) may want to give favorable data to make my study easier. I recommend that the sample size be broadened and neutral participation be encouraged to reduce bias in the study.

Third, this study is also limited in context. An educational context was used in this investigation. Paradigm shift, which was the major focus of the study, goes beyond educational settings. To raise the level of confidence that RJ education has the capacity to enable change beyond the school, this investigation should be conducted in other settings such as workplace, government and political environments. A combination of investigations in different settings will help strengthen the results of the study.

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7.2 Recommendations

I was motivated to undergo this study due to the impact RJ education had on me during my graduate studies. This impact encouraged me to contemplate and conduct further studies on the impact of RJ in changing lives. Based on the findings, therefore, I have gathered evidence to make the following recommendations:

1.   Schools across the world would benefit greatly if RJ is implemented. In the school setting, implementing relational culture based on the ethos and principles of RJ will go far in transforming lives and shifting the perspectives of students. This transformation will help in community building because embedding the practice of restorative justice in schools strengthens the developmental objective of effecting responsible citizenship (Morrison, Blood, & Thorsborne, 2005).

2.   Students and society would benefit if RJ was implemented as part of Teacher Training education. In a national policy document on education in India (NPE 1986), it was stated that "no nation can rise above the level of its teachers" (p.25). This is important in the context that, teachers can only give what they have. Therefore, equipping teachers with RJ training and the practical application of RJ principles and ethos will enable teachers to initiate the shift needed to bring care, empathy and respect for humanity to the classroom.

3.   Pedagogy would improve if RJ was adopted as a teaching strategy by teachers and RJ practitioners involved in professional development. As findings in the study revealed, the RJ circle creates a space for heart-to-heart conversation. It is a space

where we share our stories, meet and know each other the way we are. Using the circle as a teaching method, teachers can engage with the student and build life-changing relationships. The relational benefit derived from circle practice translates into a view of the classroom for a socially responsible community in which individuals are connected and accountable to one another (Hopkins, 2011). This study has also proved that learning is improved when teachers bring RJ ethos to the classroom through the circle.

4.   As an immigrant, I strongly recommend that RJ education be introduced as part of immigrant-refugee resettlement orientation programs. The impact of RJ education on me as an international student confirms the relevance of RJ in reshaping our cultural paradigms. This is due to its ability to enable the interrogation of previously held views. I believe that immigrants have the onus of responsibility to integrate into or respect the cultural norms of host communities. RJ does this very well, as we are invited to its principles and ethos.

5.   RJ should be periodically reviewed by practitioners to assess RJ challenges with a view to generating action plans for improvement. Due to the challenging experiences involved in the implementation of RJ in institutions, schools, and, in our personal lives, there is a need to assess our strengths, weaknesses and failures. Doing this will enable practitioners to share and address areas of challenging experiences.

7.3 Concluding Thoughts

This thesis was conducted in the hope that the findings would provide insights into how RJE can make significant contributions in the transformation of the hearts and minds

of Nigerian youth and in driving change among young people who are force-fitted daily into a self-seeking tradition and are dominated by a culture of retribution and vengeance. Findings from this study reveal that I was not alone in the shift that occurred for me in ED 6936; participants who were my course mates experienced the same shift in their worldview. This evidence cannot be ignored in light of the call to bring RJE to the classroom as a framework to promote discipline and ensure self and collective transformation among students. The results of this study further reinforce my determination to advocate to implement RJ as a way of doing things in all facets of life.

Due to my experience in ED 6936, I have begun to advocate for the use of RJE in youth de-radicalization and in the prevention of religious extremism among youth and hope to conduct further research in this area. The promise of RJE to change our worldview extends beyond academic rationalism, which often does not address real-world problems.

The efficacy of RJ, as this study reveals, is hinged on the core of our humanity. The voice of RJ speaks to our hearts, our minds and our reason. When we embrace RJ as a way of life, we are transformed into a sound body in a sound mind for the service of humanity. Therefore, we all need RJ for a better world.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

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Informed Consent Form

Title: A Paradigm Shift through Talking Circle: A Narrative Study to Investigate the Impact of Restorative Justice Education on Students after Completing an   Introductory Graduate Course in RJE

Researcher: Omoregie Abiemwense Edokpayi, Department of Curriculum, teaching and Learning, Faculty of Education, Memorial 709-743-7364 eaoo72@mun.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Dorothy Vaandering, Faculty of Education. 709-864-3266

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You are invited to take part in a research project entitled "A Paradigm Shift through Talking Circle: A Narrative Study to Investigate the Impact of Restorative Justice Education on Students after Completing an Introductory Graduate Course in Restorative Justice Education."

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study. To decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, *Omoregie Edokpayi* if you have any questions about the study or would like more information before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

Introduction:

My name is Omoregie Edokpayi and I am a graduate student of Education at Memorial University. As part of my Master's thesis I am conducting research under the

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supervision of Dr. Dorothy Vaandering. You have received this invitation because you completed ED 6936 the Restorative Justice Course indicated in this research.

Purpose of Study

To better understand the implementation of restorative justice in educational (RJE) contexts, I am conducting research on the project: A Paradigm Shift through Talking Circle: A Narrative Study to Investigate the Impact of Restorative Justice Education on Students after Completing an Introductory Graduate Course. The aim of the research is to find out if a paradigm shift occurred in the daily lives of students who completed ED 6936, a 3- credit course in RJE during 2015-2016 winter semesters.

What You Will Do in this Study: If you agree to participate in this study I will meet with you individually so that you can orally share your individual experience of the course and its impact. I will provide some semi structured interview questions as a guide. These will include questions such as:

1. How did the RJ experience impact your life after graduation?

2. What lens did you come to the course with and what lens do you have now?

3. Describe specific challenging RJ experience(s) in your life after graduation and how are you responding.

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Length of Time:

The semi-structured interview is expected to take approximately two hours of your time

Withdrawal from the Study:

In line with Article 3.1(c) of the TCPS2 you will have the right to withdraw your consent during and after the interview. At your own request through email or verbal communication your data will be removed from my data storage within the next 12 hours of your request. They can be sent back to you or destroyed at my end. You decision in this respect will be respected.

Possible Benefits:

The benefit of this study to you as a participant will include increased awareness of the impact of the RJE experience on your personal and professional life. It will also provide opportunities for you to hear how RJE experience has impacted me, the researcher, as I intend to share my experience with you.

This research will also benefit the Restorative Justice Education community as insights will be gleaned about if and how a graduate course can be a vehicle through which a paradigm shift occurs

Possible Risks:

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There are no known risks to participating in this study

Confidentiality:

Your name or any other identifying information will not be used in any publication or presentation coming from the study results. It will also not be used in sharing or discussing data with my supervisor. Actual names will be replaced with pseudonyms in any discussion or publications that result from this study. Although pseudonyms shall be used in identifying participants, there is a possibility that my research supervisor may be able to discern the responder through the content of his/her story. This limitation shall be explained to the participant in the consent letter to enable him/her take informed decision before signing the consent letter although my supervisor will not have access to the raw data. This limitation notwithstanding, there is no known risk to relationship with the instructor as the participants have completed their program with the instructor. There is also a possibility of social risk; in that, participants might have a deeper understanding/knowledge of others experience which may impact their perceptions of each other. This, however, remains low risk. Also, my would-be participants will be left with a choice to participate or not; the decision whether to participate in the study will not impact relationships with me or future courses or evaluations with my instructor. All data collected for the study will be kept confidential and locked in a filing cabinet and/or password protected computer for a period of a minimum of 5 years as per Memorial University policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research. After that time, it will be destroyed.

Anonymity:

Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure your anonymity. You will not be identified in publications without your explicit permission.

Recording of Data: The oral narratives will be audio taped and transcribed into written format.

Use, Access, Ownership, and Storage of Data:

Data will be kept in safe custody; they shall be kept in a pass-worded file in my computer archive or kept in a file cabinet on a backup disk for safe keeping and will be destroyed after the research study. In keeping with MUN's policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research data will be kept in file cabinet for a period of 5 years and after which be destroyed. No one will have access to the data. I will ensure that questions arising from right of ownership will be negotiated and resolved with the participants before beginning. Only participant and I will have access to the data. No other participant will have access to the data of another participant

Reporting of Results:

The transcripts will be used for research purposes only. After your interviews have been transcribed, I will share the transcription with you giving you opportunity to clarify anything you have said. Data collected may be reported on in articles, conference and workshop presentations, reports, and/or book chapters. Data will be reported both in direct quotations or summarizing statements.

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Sharing of Results with Participants:

On completion of this thesis, a soft copy will be sent to you; my thesis will also be available at Memorial University's Queen Elizabeth II library, and will be accessible online at: http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/search/collection/theses.

Questions:

You are welcome to ask questions before, during, or after your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact: Omoregie Edokpayi at 709-743-7364 or my Supervisor, Dr. Dorothy Vaandering at 709-864-3266 or dvaandering@mun.ca

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861.

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.

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- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.

- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.

- You understand that you are free to withdraw participation in the study without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.

Regarding withdrawal during data collection

You understand that if you choose to end participation **during** data collection, any data collected from you up to that **point will be destroyed**.

Regarding Withdrawal <u>after</u> Data Collection

You, as a research participant, understand that you have the right to withdraw after data collection has ended. I will share your transcriptions with you when the interview has been transcribed and you will have the opportunity to withdraw your data for two weeks after the transcript has been sent to you. It is important to emphasize that data cannot be removed two weeks after you have been given the opportunity to review your interview as transcribed.

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Please check the appropriate boxes:

I agree to be audio-recorded ☐

Yes ☐

No

I agree to the use of direct quotations ☐

Yes ☐

No

By signing this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Your Signature Confirms:

☐ I have read what this study is about and understood the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.

☐ I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation.

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☐ A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

_____

_____

Signature of Participant   Date

Researcher's Signature:

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

_____

_____

Signature of Principal Investigator   Date

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Appendix B: Recruitment Form

Faculty of Education

St. John's, NL Canada A1B 3X8

Tel: 709 864 3403 Fax: 709 864 2345

www.mun.ca

An Invitation to Participants

My name is Omoregie Edokpayi and I am a student member in the Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland. I am conducting a research project called **A Paradigm Shift through Talking Circle: A Narrative Study to Investigate the Impact of Restorative Justice Education on Students after Completing an Introductory Graduate Course in RJE** for my master's degree under the supervision of Dr. Dorothy Vaandering. The purpose of the study is to investigate if a paradigm shift occurred in the daily lives of students who completed ED 6936, a 3- credit course in RJE during 2015-2016 winter semesters.

I am contacting you to invite you to participate in an interview in which you will be asked to share your individual experience of the course and its impact.

This meeting will be in two phases:

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Phase 1: You will be invited to share the story of your experiences/perspectives of your life that relate to what led you to take ED 6936 and how that may impact your understanding of RJE.

Phase 2- In this phase, there will be three semi-structured interview questions that focus in on the purpose of the research:

1. How did the RJ experience impact your life while studying and after graduation?

2. What lens did you come to the course with and what lens do you have now?

3. Describe specific challenging RJ experience(s) in your life after graduation and how are you responding.

Participation will require *about two hours* of your time and will be held at *your convenient location.*

If you are interested in participating in this study, please *contact me to arrange a meeting time and place.* If you have any questions about me or my project, please contact me by email at *eaoo72@mun.ca* or by phone at 709.743.7364

Thank-you in advance for considering my request,

Omoregie Edokpayi