UNDERSTANDING TEACHERS' APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN EDUCATION IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between future and current educators' approaches to classroom assessment and their restorative justice in education practices in Newfoundland and Labrador. A two-phase triangulation mixed method research design was used in this study to explore the educators' (both teacher candidates and classroom teachers) approaches to classroom assessment and restorative justice in education. In Phase 1, a survey was distributed to educators (*n= 83)* to explore their approaches and, in Phase 2, in-depth semi-structured interviews were used *(n=7)* to deeply explore their approaches to classroom assessment and restorative justice in education. The results of this study showed that (a) teacher candidates' and classroom teachers' approaches to classroom assessment and restorative justice in education were not statistically significantly different between groups, (b) teacher candidates' and classroom teachers' understanding of the relationship between classroom assessment restorative justice in education were quite different, and (c) both teacher candidates and classroom teachers believed they lacked sufficient knowledge about restorative justice in education, but did not hold similar beliefs regarding classroom assessment. Findings of this study serve to inform the development of teacher education programs, professional development opportunities, and educational policies in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Keywords: *Classroom Assessment, Restorative Justice in Education, Classroom Teachers, Teacher Candidates, Assessment Literacy, Inclusive Classroom*

General Summary

In this study, the relationship between future and current educators' approaches to classroom assessment and their restorative justice in education practices in Newfoundland and Labrador was examined. In order to investigate educators' beliefs and perspectives on classroom assessment and restorative justice in education, survey responses from 83 educators and interview responses from 7 educators were used. This study reveals that there were no actual differences in approaches to both between future and current educators. However, their understanding of the connection between classroom assessment and restorative justice differed. Both groups expressed a lack of knowledge about restorative justice but had differing beliefs about classroom assessment. This study provides valuable insights that can guide the improvement of teacher education programs, professional development opportunities, and educational policies in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

How do educators recognize the socio-cultural connection between classroom assessment (ca) and restorative justice in education (rje)? Do they know that it exists? Do they recognize the role of relationship and interconnectedness in both restorative justice and classroom assessment? At what point in their career does this awareness emerge? This study explores the relationship between future and current educators' approaches to ca and their rje practices in Newfoundland and Labrador. Findings of this study show that ca and rje inform each other and their relationship is significant for development of holistic education within classrooms and schools.

Classroom assessment practices are a central component of standards-based, accountability models of education throughout Canada (DeLuca et al., 2021). Standards-based models include the standards that indicate students' knowledge and skills, measures of student attainment of the standards, the targets of the measures, and a set of results for students, parents, and teachers based on performance. With the development of high-quality assessment practices, which expect students to have problem-solving and reasoning skills as well as present how well they have learned to improve further instructions, the outcomes associated with the standards-based accountability models are paramount (Hamilton, Stecher, & Yuan, 2012).

Teachers' use of high-quality assessment practices has continually shown they enhance student learning (Hattie, 2012). Due to the central role of assessment practices in all standards-based systems, developing teachers' assessment literacy has become significant (DeLuca, 2012; Stiggins, 2002; Wyatt-Smith, Klenowski, & Gunn, 2010). Assessment literacy can be conceptualized as teachers' understanding of basic assessment concepts (i.e., assessment purposes, assessment processes, communication of assessment results, assessment fairness,

assessment ethics, and assessment for learning) and how they are used for educational decision-making (Coombs, 2017; DeLuca, LaPointe-McEwan, & Luhanga, 2015; Popham, 2011). A hallmark of teachers' use of high-quality assessment practices is a recognition that assessment is a "dynamic context-dependent social practice that involves teachers articulating and negotiating classroom and cultural knowledge with one another and with learners" (Willis, Adie, & Klenowski, 2013, p. 2).

Socio-cultural values have a significant role in teachers' assessment literacy because they interact with other elements (e.g., task performance, collaboration, awareness of personal beliefs/attitudes, pedagogy, and decision-making) in teaching and learning (Baker & Riches, 2018). Further, understanding and responding to students' needs for learning enhances student learning and achievement (Pastore & Andrade, 2019). Hence, accepting the interconnectedness among teachers and students by knowing their cultural backgrounds, families, and values and accepting relational well-being as a part of the community is significant in creating equitable classroom practices (Vaandering, 2012). Strengthening cultural competence within the school also enables open communication for discussions about trauma and family backgrounds that impact students (Brown, 2018). Rje is defined as "facilitating learning communities that nurture the capacity of people to engage with one another and their environment in a manner that supports and respects their inherent dignity and worth of all, which improve the school atmosphere and improve inclusive environments in schools." (Evans & Vaandering, 2016, p. 8). Socio-cultural perspective implies that teachers' values, beliefs, and assumptions about teaching and learning are related to their assessment practices and grading decisions (Cheng, DeLuca, Braund, Yan, & Rasooli, 2020). Similarly, rje supports that one's conscious and unconscious beliefs and values have an impact on all their relationships (Evans & Vaandering, 2022) so, it

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helps teachers recognize the connection between their values, beliefs, and assumptions about teaching and learning, and their assessment practices. Therefore, it is important to understand how rje helps teachers articulate their values and beliefs so that they recognize how these perspectives are related to their assessment practices in classrooms.

Rje emphasizes the interconnectedness and mutual relationships among students and teachers, respecting the dignity and worth of all and the importance of inclusive environments in the classroom (Evans & Vaandering, 2016). Educators' beliefs, cultural backgrounds, personal experiences, and perspectives play an important role in everything they do including their understanding and implications of rje in their classrooms; hence, it is crucial to examine current and future educators' understandings of rje. Furthermore, rje does not take place sufficiently in Canadian teacher education programs (Hollweck, Reimer, & Bouchard, 2019). Rje is generally offered as a course during the teacher education program and mentioned at a surface level (Reimer, 2018). A restorative professional learning program has been developed by Vaandering (2015). The content of this program includes engaging actively with the philosophical foundation of rje, the principles and practices, as well as the implementation process; it is a two-week short-term program designed for teachers in the midst of their teaching careers. From this experience, through Relationships First Newfoundland and Labrador (RFNL), Vaandering developed and now offers a professional learning program for NL educators, which includes four full days of training and six mentoring sessions as they implement rje. After completing the training part, teachers and administrators are matched with mentors who are more experienced educators in rje. This provides an opportunity for educators to understand and apply the theoretical and philosophical foundations and practices of rje by building connections with other educators who are interested in rje in the province.

Recent research shows that educators' classroom experiences influence their beliefs and shape approaches to assessment practice (Coombs, DeLuca, & MacGregor, 2020; DeLuca, LaPointe-McEwan, & Luhanga, 2016). Therefore, to understand teacher-level factors which are related to classroom assessment practices, current and future educators' approaches to ca need to be examined. There is plenty of research indicating that teacher candidates lack preparedness in ca despite intensive assessment education and professional development efforts (DeLuca et al., 2019; Graham, 2005; Volante & Fazio, 2007). It is essential to understand the development of teacher candidates' approaches to ca during the teacher education program since teacher candidates will be implementing ca based on their K-12 experience and learning during this program (Willis et al., 2013; Coombs, 2017; DeLuca, Chavez, Bellara, & Cao, 2013). Previous research underscores the importance of including both classroom teachers and teacher candidates to understand their assessment approaches (Harris & Brown, 2009; Mertler, 2003; Plake, 1993; Brown, 2004; Siegel & Wissehr, 2011; Volante & Fazio, 2007). In sum, learning from teacher candidates' perspectives is important for two reasons. First, teacher candidates are future classroom teachers, so having an understanding of what they think prior to entering the classroom matters for professional development plans. Second, Memorial University (MUN) has a significant role as the main source for preparing teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). Therefore, exploring teacher candidates' understandings enables us to anticipate future educators' understandings.

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between future and current educators' approaches to ca and their rje practices in NL. Three research questions guide this study:

1. How do educators in NL approach ca?

2. How do educators in NL approach rje?

3. What is the relationship between educators' approaches to ca and rje?

    a. Does this differ between teacher candidates and classroom teachers?

Significance of the Study

This study is of significance to the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD), the Department of Education, and the Newfoundland and Labrador general public. A recent scoping review of assessment constructs did not include any studies in NL or Atlantic Canada (Coombs & DeLuca, 2022). This study sheds light on the assessment practices of educators in this area. For rje, like assessment practices, a limited number of publications and studies have taken place in NL to date. Since this study provides both quantitative and qualitative data on assessment and rje from classroom teachers and teacher candidates, NLESD, the Department of Education, and Memorial University's Faculty of Education could utilize these findings to hear educators' voices, to learn from their perspectives, and to enrich the courses offered in teacher education programs and opportunities in professional learning and development.

This study is one of the first studies that aims to understand the trends in beliefs for both assessment and rje and the reasons behind how these beliefs are held in NL, which provides both qualitative and quantitative research on this. To my knowledge, this study represents the first to examine the intersection of teachers' approaches to ca and rje in both NL and beyond. The overall aim of this study is to understand the approaches of teacher candidates and classroom

teachers to assessment and rje, to understand the relationship between them, and to enhance the quality of teacher education programs and professional learning opportunities in this province.

The Current Educational Context in Newfoundland and Labrador

There is limited research and publications on assessment and rje in NL. However, assessment policies have been revised by the NLESD (NLESD, 2017), and recent rje initiatives were announced in May 2022 by the Provincial Government and Ministry of Education (Executive Council Justice and Public Safety Education, 2022). Hence, understanding the most recent changes in assessment and rje, the structure and resources in this province become essential to interpret the findings of this study. Moreover, as an international graduate student and research assistant at Memorial University, I had an opportunity to work with NLESD, learn about educational policy changes in NL, and take roles in studies about assessment and rje at Memorial University. Therefore, I chose this province for my study.

The Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting policy addresses how teachers provide feedback to students and parents/guardians about student learning to enhance students' academic achievement, specifically that "The primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to support student growth and to improve student learning and achievement" (NLESD, 2017, p. 1). The current policy has been implemented since the 2017-2018 academic year. Formative assessment, self-assessment, and summative assessment are included in this policy by emphasizing the role of assessment in informing instruction, and checking progress and learning outcomes (NLESD, 2017). Moreover, the Provincial Government includes an Assessment and Evaluation section for each K-12 curriculum document and three types of assessment: assessment *as* learning, assessment *of* learning and assessment *for* learning (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2022). Furthermore, the use of high-stakes large-scale examinations was discussed by

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NLESD in the post-Covid era in *An Opportune Time in Newfoundland and Labrador* position paper (NLESD, 2018). This paper states that high-stakes large-scale examinations are problematic, and an educational shift is needed in NL. Similarly, Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (NLTA) opposes any introduction of *high-stakes* testing in which schools are compared and the results of these tests are published (NLTA, 2022). As a result, public exams were canceled for the 2022-2023 academic year in the province (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2022).

Rje practices have been implemented for thirteen years in NL. According to Dr. Dorothy Vaandering, restorative justice was started by 17 educators in 2012, and is now recognized throughout the province by educators, administrators, and directors (Memorial University, 2020). She is also the director of RFNL, whose mission is "to nurture and support relational organizational cultures where children, youth, and adults alike thrive" by providing resources, workshops, and materials to educators (RFNL, 2022). The partnership with NL Department of Education and NLESD includes integrating restorative justice practices into the work of Safe and Inclusive Schools Itinerants and offers rje workshops to educators and administrators (Memorial University, 2020). Moreover, NLESD included restorative justice in Strategic Planning Consultations 2020-2023, Strategic Issue #2 Health and Well-being by defining restorative justice as "…an alternative to punitive responses to wrongdoing. Inspired by indigenous traditions, it brings together persons harmed with persons responsible for harm in a safe and respectful space, promoting dialogue, accountability, and a stronger sense of community." (p. 2). Furthermore, the Provincial Government and Ministry of Education announced a $600,000 investment in restorative justice initiative led by Relationships First: Restorative Justice Education Consortium-NL (Executive Council Justice and Public Safety Education, 2022) on

26th May 2022. In Safe & Caring School Policies, the Provincial Government mentions restorative practices and approaches. NLTA makes reference to restorative justice in the policy handbook in Cyberconduct and Cyberbullying section (NLTA, 2017). Memorial University is the only public university in the province and offers one rje master's course in the Faculty of Education (Memorial University, 2020) and provides a platform to conduct research on restorative justice. NL Department of Education, NLESD, NLTA, RFNL, and Memorial University are working collaboratively on restorative justice regarding academic research and practices in schools.

Researcher Background

After nine years of work experience as a school counselor and psychology teacher, it was exciting and challenging to continue my master's education in a different country. Connecting with new people and returning to become a student is inspiring because I always define myself as a 'life-long student' who is enthusiastic about learning new theories and practices, especially in education. During my university application process for the undergraduate program, I chose 'guidance and psychological counseling' to stay connected with people and to have an ongoing learning process in the field of psychology and education. During my master's program in NL, almost all the lessons helped me to broaden my horizons and gain different perspectives as an educator. Two courses inspired me and shaped my research interests. The first course was titled 'Research Designs and Methods in Education', and the second was 'Relationships First: Rethinking Educational Engagement'. These courses led me to a focus on the relationship between assessment practices and rje practices in schools.

The first course was an introductory course for both quantitative and qualitative research methods in education. I selected some articles about assessment practices during this course for

my assignment. Assessing teachers' approaches to assessment, how teachers' approaches to assessment change over time, the differences among novice and experienced teachers' approaches, the impacts of teacher education programs on teacher candidates' assessment approaches, the cultural context of the assessment, and formative and summative assessment became some of my research interests. In the second course, I gained a deep insight into education paradigms, learned to have a different lens for understanding the school policies and atmosphere, and learned practical ways of building and maintaining relationships, respect, and responsibility. Although I was familiar with circles as a psychodrama co-therapist, implementing them in the classroom was a great experience. As a result, I decided to focus on the relationship between these two areas: ca and rje.

I completed my education through the public school system in Turkey. Until university, I was not familiar with formative assessment practices as a student. Assessment and grades formed the backbone of assessment, and they were used to measure the success and intelligence of the students. Also, the role of the teacher was dominant in the classrooms. There was an apparent hierarchical relationship between teachers and students in the school, and the standardized education model was generally internalized. For enrolling in high schools and universities, nationwide assessments have been used to rank students based on their scores. I was one of the lucky ones because my scores were enough for me to enroll in my favorite schools. In short, summative assessments and a competitive environment predominated classroom practices. However, I met a different education system and assessment at the university. My major was in psychological counseling at the Faculty of Education in Turkey. Suddenly, formative assessments became a part of the grades (i.e., projects, portfolios, presentations, classroom discussions, instructors' feedback). Also, the relationship between instructors and students was

different. Instead of hierarchical relationships, most instructors internalized democratic teaching styles.

Upon graduation, I stepped into a new educational world. The assessment practices and teachers' attitudes towards students were totally different from my personal experiences as a student in the school where I worked for nine years. I first realized that teachers were listening to their students and were looking to me as the school counselor for my suggestions for enhancing their communication with students. There was a robust collaborative environment among teachers. The second thing I realized was that students with special needs were treated differently based on their needs. Teachers, school counselors, and students were able to freely share their opinions to make the most appropriate decisions for the assessment modifications. Of course, there were some policies and implications that could be enhanced. However, this school did not represent the whole education system in my home country. In my current master's degree, the two courses described above made a significant difference and helped me rethink assessment and restorative justice. Also, a very limited amount of research on the intersection of these two fields made me decide on the purpose of my study.

Overview of thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter one introduces the research context for this thesis, the purpose of this study, and the guiding research questions. Chapter two is a review of relevant literature and also provides a theoretical foundation for this study. Chapter three outlines the methods used to address the research questions. Chapter four describes the results of this study. Chapter five provides a discussion of key findings, discusses the limitations of this study, and outlines possible directions for future research.

Vocabulary

- Classroom assessment (ca): The process to establish what students know and are able to do (Looney et al., 2018).

- Restorative justice in education (rje): "Facilitating learning communities that nurture the capacity of people to engage with one another and their environment in a manner that supports and respects their inherent dignity and worth of all, which improve the school atmosphere and improve inclusive environments in schools." (Evans & Vaandering, 2016, p. 8).

- Socio-cultural assessment literacy: "Assessment literacy that is a dynamic context dependent social practice that involves teachers articulating and negotiating classroom and cultural knowledge with one another and with learners, in the initiation, development and practice of assessment to achieve learning goals of students" (Willis et al., 2013).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review is divided into four sections. The first section addresses the theoretical framework. The second section examines the conceptualization of assessment literacy, including teacher-centric, student-centric, and social-cultural conceptions of assessment literacy. The third section explores rje, including its core values, central questions, and role in the educational context. The fourth section of the research focuses on the current situation in NL, including how traditional summative assessment and rje practices are implemented in the schools.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the intersection of relational theory and social constructivism both of which point out the complex and active processes of learning through relationships. Relational theory enhances strengthening connections among all people, highlights the importance of relationships in human development, and advocates for the inevitableness of relationships for humans.

The relationships with other people are the crucial point of relational theory: "Relational theorists recognize that not only do human beings enter into and live in a range of relationships that influence and shape the course of their lives directly or through socialization, but that relationship and connection with others is essential to the existence of the self" (Llewellyn & Llewellyn, 2015, p. 7). In emphasizing this connection of relationship to a deep understanding of self and others, the theory explores the dynamics of relationships by understanding lived experiences of people, their perspectives, cultural backgrounds, contexts of relationships (Blustein, 2011), and power imbalances among these relationships (Clarke, 2019).

This study was also grounded in social constructivism. As a learning theory, social constructivism explains learning as an active and complex process of knowledge and its construction by the learner (Fosnot, 1996; Steffe & Gale, 1995). Vygotsky 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 artifacts with shared meanings" (DeBoer, 2013, p.9). Social constructivism enables learning through interactions with the socio-cultural environment and experiences of the learner (Proulx, 2006). For social constructivism, learning is inseparable from social interactions and the community of knowledge with which the individual engages (Richardson, 2003). In the learning process, the learners' backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences have an important role in shaping the dynamics of the relationships between learners and teachers. The significance of the relationships is underlined both in relational theory and social constructivism.

Assessment is a critical element in the teaching and learning process. It is more than students' responses and submissions of their academic work and teachers' feedback on them; it is a multilayered, complex relational exchange process between teachers and students (Schwartz, 2017). As mentioned in the previous chapter, Willis et al. (2013) defines assessment literacy through a socio-cultural context as "a capability that is situated, and needs to be understood, within the assessment culture and policy context of the community." (p. 9). The assessment also has emotional components for both teachers and students because it is related to enhancing or detracting from learning and engagement in classroom activities. In other words, it can be understood as a relational practice (Schwartz, 2017) and social constructivism (Shepard, 2000).

Rje can be understood through relational theory and social constructivism because it

prioritizes the relationship among all people, interconnectedness, and healing harm as a

collaborative process (Vaandering, 2016). The understanding of rje is constructed through

teachers' own experiences and interactions; therefore, their points of view are essential to

exploring their insights and approaches (Glaserfeld, 1989). The Ripples of Relationships diagram

(Figure 1) shows how relationships are connected within a school. It focuses on how a teacher's

core beliefs can affect their relationship with themselves, and how that in turn affects all of their

other relationships. By valuing themselves and having self-respect, educators can build healthy

relationships with others, their work, and their environment (Evans & Vaandering, 2016). At this

point, the role of educators becomes significant because the relationship with the self is

determinative for educators to build healthy relationships with others, including colleagues and

students (Vaandering & Voelker, 2018).

Figure 1. Ripples of Relationships. Reprinted from *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*

  Education (p. 68) by Evans & Vaandering, 2016, Skyhorse Publishing.

Assessment Literacy

In recent years, assessment has become a hallmark of all educational systems, supporting the growth of teachers' capacity in assessment (Mandinach & Gummer, 2016). As a result, during the past 30 years, there has been a profusion of theories, policies, and professional development practices to support teachers' work in ca. Therefore, there are now several discourses that occasionally overlap, describing teachers' roles and responsibilities in assessment.

Policy and professional standards have played an important role in integrating classroom assessment practices into identifying, monitoring, supporting, evaluating, and reporting student learning (Klinger McDivitt, Howard, Rogers, Munoz, & Wylie, 2015). This growth underlines the connections between high-quality teaching, student learning, and classroom assessment (Coombs & DeLuca, 2022). High-quality assessment has been demonstrated to decrease achievement gaps (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2005), enhance the learning outcomes of diverse learners (Guskey, 2007), and have positive impacts on students' motivation and self-esteem (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Assessment has become an invaluable piece of the education system to verify reaching the standards and meeting accountability requirements.

To understand teachers' classroom practice, educational researchers have conceptualized and operationalized many constructs including assessment competency, assessment literacy, assessment capability, and assessment identity (Coombs & DeLuca, 2022). While assessment literacy is a highly cited construct, how assessment literacy has been articulated has changed over time. Three distinct iterations have occurred since its introduction in 1991 by Stiggins: teacher-centric assessment literacy, student-centric assessment literacy, and socio-cultural assessment literacy.

The first conception is that teacher-centric assessment literacy is a collection of static skills and knowledge about assessment. Advocates of this conceptualization support the notion that there is a set of assessment skills and knowledge teachers should possess (Bredo, 1994; Stiggins, 1991). This teacher-centric conception of assessment literacy emphasizes the importance of test creation and use, and a teacher's skills and knowledge in assessment, particularly in tools and preparation (Popham, 2011). All teachers must have this skill and knowledge as assessment is understood as a *measure* of students' learning and "something that is being done *to* the students." (Klenowski, 2009, p. 89).

The second conception is student-centric assessment literacy which focuses on formative assessment practices (Yan & Pastore, 2022). In this conception of assessment literacy, the progress of students and the understanding of their difficulties in learning are prioritized. Therefore, formative assessment has become a fundamental part of assessment in *enhancing* student achievement, and supporting innovative classrooms (Leenknecht et al., 2021; Wylie, 2020). During the assessment, feedback, support, and guidance from teachers are important components of students' learning and engagement (Black & William, 1998).

Despite the benefits of formative assessment on student engagement and learning, teachers may face some struggles with determining the needs of the students and integrating feedback into the teaching-learning process in real classrooms (Yan & Pastore, 2022). Also, some studies showed that formative assessment is not commonly used in the classrooms (Desimone, 2009), and sometimes it may misalign with educational policies (e.g., professional standards) (Wylie & Lion, 2015). Hence, teachers might not have the knowledge and professional standards needed to use formative assessment practices to inform instruction (Yan & Pastore, 2022). Additionally, teachers' assessment skills and teaching experience might have

an impact on their classroom assessment practices. (Coombs, 2017). Research shows that novice

or early career teachers' assessment practices and knowledge are heavily focused on formative

assessment (Coombs et al., 2018; Rogers et al., 2020). In contrast, experienced teachers have a

tendency to use summative assessments more frequently in their classrooms (MacLellan, 2004).

The third conception of assessment literacy is the socio-cultural assessment literacy

which emphasizes the relationship between teachers, students, *and educational contexts*

(DeLuca, 2016; Hilaski, 2020; Klenowski, 2009; Willis et al., 2013; Yan & Pastore, 2022);

hence it completes what is not being mentioned in teacher/student-centric assessment literacies.

It refers to the ability of teachers to understand and assess the cultural and social factors that

shape the experiences of students and their families. This includes an understanding of the

cultural and language backgrounds of students, their values, beliefs, and practices, as well as an

awareness of the impact of social structures on their lives. Unlike teacher-centric conceptions of

assessment literacy, this conception puts students in an active role during teaching-learning and

assessment. Klenowski (2009) mentions that assessment could not be separate from students in

the classroom. Willis et al. (2013) define assessment literacy through a socio-cultural context.

The socio-cultural conception of assessment literacy includes student-centered and formative

assessment practices, but it also addresses the dynamic relationships in the classroom between

teachers and students (Yan & Pastore, 2022). This dynamic relationship refers to the changes

depending on the context of the classroom and the needs of students in order to create effective

assessments that enhance student learning by involving both teachers and students in sharing and

discussing their knowledge and cultural background (Willis et al., 2013). The dynamic

relationship between teachers and students in creating effective assessments that enhance student

learning is closely related to relational theory. As previously discussed in this chapter, relational

theory emphasizes the importance of the interactions between individuals and how those interactions shape their experiences and perceptions (Brown & Di Lallo, 2020; Llewellyn & Llewellyn, 2015; Schwartz, 2017). In the context of education, this theory emphasizes the importance of the relationship between teachers and students in shaping student learning experiences. When teachers and students engage in a dynamic relationship in the classroom, they create a shared space where knowledge and cultural backgrounds can be discussed and integrated (Blustein, 2011). This allows students to feel seen and heard, and it creates a safe space where students can take risks and engage with new ideas. By emphasizing the relational aspect of teaching and learning, teachers can create an environment that fosters student engagement, promotes deeper learning, and supports positive academic outcomes (Roorda et al., 2011). Hence, it is impossible to set fixed standards for socio-cultural conceptions of assessment literacy (Coombs, 2017).

The development of these assessment conceptions shows how the understanding of assessment literacy by teachers, educational researchers, and policymakers has changed over time. The first conception of assessment literacy emphasizes test use, creation, and static and technical skills and describes assessment as a teacher-centered activity to measure students' learning. In this conception, the role of the teacher is to assess the knowledge of the students who are expected to be ready "*to* be taught". The second conception of assessment literacy highlights the importance of formative assessment and feedback during classroom assessment practices. In this conception, assessment has become student-centered, and students have an active role in teaching and learning. The role of the teacher is to assess "*with* students" included in the process. The last conception of assessment literacy addresses the dynamic relationships between students, teachers, and educational context by enhancing the role of the students in classroom assessment

practices. Assessment can be defined as it is something "done *with* and *for* students" (Klenowski, 2009). Teachers recognize that the students and context matter in learning and assessment practices and the student understands how they self-regulate their own learning and use metacognitive skills in learning by becoming active agents of the classroom assessment practices.

Assessment Approaches of Teachers

Measuring assessment literacy is important for understanding the characteristics of effective teachers (Gotch & French, 2014). Previous research shows that there are many measures aimed at measuring teacher assessment literacy (i.e., Brown, 2004; Campbell et al., 2002; Mertler & Campbell, 2004; O'Sullivan & Johnson, 1993; Plake et al., 1993). However, these measures do not reflect current transformations in the assessment landscape and the dynamic context of assessment practices (Deluca et al., 2016). Gotch and French (2014) discuss that the psychometric evidence is weak in these measures and suggested considering "the representativeness and relevance of content in light of transformations in the assessment landscape (e.g., accountability systems, conceptions of formative assessment)" (p. 17).

There is a substantial amount of research that demonstrates that teachers' classroom experiences influence their beliefs and shape approaches to assessment practice (Coombs, DeLuca, & MacGregor, 2020; DeLuca, LaPointe-McEwan, & Luhanga, 2016). This includes systemic influences (e.g., assessment policies at the provincial, school district, and school level), teacher-level factors (e.g., beliefs and attitudes towards classroom assessment) that shape teachers' classroom practices (Pantic & Wubbels, 2010).

Given the vague nature of how assessment practices are articulated within educational policies (e.g., NLESD, 2017), teachers are afforded considerable latitude in how they approach ca in their classrooms (DeLuca, Coombs, & LaPointe-McEwan, 2019). Within the Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting Policy of NLESD (2017), assessment practices and regulations are interpreted by the district. For instance, article 4.2 is, "There will be a planned approach to assessment and evaluation, which includes using a variety of assessment practices to gather data/evidence of learning to determine the student's level of achievement". However, which assessment practices are included and how these data are gathered to understand students' level of achievement were not explained in detail. Also, article 4.4 has a vague nature as well: "Learning outcomes that appear in multiple subject areas may be assessed through a cross-curricular approach." No specific detail was given about this cross-curricular approach in the policy. Therefore, the high degree of latitude, which is needed for teachers to be able to exercise their professional judgment in supporting student learning, may be impacted by factors not directly related to classroom assessment policies.

Research has shown that teachers' approaches to assessment can be impacted by fundamental beliefs about teaching and learning (DeLuca, Coombs, & LaPointe-McEwan, 2019; DeLuca et al., 2019), and these beliefs can be understood in a socio-cultural context (Adie, Stobart, & Cumming, 2019). Referring to critical theory, which aims to understand power relations based on race, gender, ethnicity, and class while comparing them with the dominant culture (Brown, 2021; Freire, 2020), these approaches to assessment cannot be isolated from teachers' experiences and knowledge about power relations. In other words, "Thinking critically about practice, of today or yesterday, makes possible the improvement of tomorrow's practice"

(Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of Hope, cited in Eagan, 2010, p. 429). Hence, teachers' approaches to assessment and humanity, in general, are related to each other.

Teachers' approaches to assessment have become a focal point across many educational systems; however, there is little research on this construct in Atlantic Canada (Coombs & DeLuca, 2022; DeLuca, LaPointe-McEwan, & Luhanga, 2016). To better understand teachers' approaches to classroom assessment between and within education systems, the *Approaches to Classroom Assessment Inventory (ACAI)* was developed based on a global review of assessment policies and standards (DeLuca, LaPointe-McEwan, & Luhanga, 2016). ACAI has three parts; Approaches to Classroom Assessment, Confidence in Classroom Assessment, and Assessment Professional Learning Priorities and Preferences. This inventory aimed to reflect various approaches to assessment practices based on assessment standards by including summative assessment, grading practice, differentiated assessment, integrated assessment, standardized assessment, and other dimensions. Teachers' approaches to assessment link their responses to both systemwide and local understandings of assessment practices (DeLuca, Rickey, & Coombs, 2021). Hence, exploring teachers' approaches to assessment may help construct a relationship between sociocultural understanding of assessment and the effective use of assessment in different sociocultural contexts. Despite the importance, little research aims to comprehend the relationship between sociocultural context and assessment practices (DeLuca, Rickey, & Coombs, 2021).

Assessment is a social practice (Pastore & Andrade, 2019), and it is a part of multiple and dynamic processes, including political, economic, cultural, educational, and human contexts (Poskitt, 2014). Since political changes and community knowledge influence the school system and its practices, teachers should consider them in their classes to integrate public engagement

and assessment (Poskitt, 2014). Due to the dynamic and complex nature of assessment, it can be fully understood and used effectively by considering socio-cultural factors (Pastore & Andrade, 2019). In Xu & Brown's model of teachers' assessment literacy in practice (2016), institutional and socio-cultural contexts are mentioned, including teachers' personal perceptions of assessment and the role of teachers. Before 2000, summative and standardized assessments and teachers' psychometric understanding of the assessment were at the forefront of assessment literacy. However, since 2000, assessment *for* learning through formative assessment has emerged as a new theme for modern assessment, including socio-cultural context (DeLuca et al., 2016). Other academic scholars agree that ACAI provides an overall profile of teachers' approaches to assessment through the socio-cultural lens (Yan & Pastore, 2022).

Socio-cultural understanding of assessment can be seen as a part of the student-centered practice and culturally responsive teaching since it encourages teachers to allow hearing all students' voices and enables students to reflect on their cultural backgrounds and experiences in the classroom (Ataie-Taber, Zareian, Amirian, & Adel, 2019). Assessment can be defined as an interactive process; students are active agents in this process rather than passive agents (Klenowski, 2009). This understanding corresponds to the definition of assessment as noted by Harris and Hodges (1995), which emphasizes the role of gathering data through assessment to understand the strengths and weaknesses of students. It also frames assessment as a formative process that enhances student collaboration, encourages active learning environments, and increases the importance of feedback in ca (Ataie-Taber, Zareian, Amirian, & Adel, 2019). In Pastore & Andrade's model (2019) of teachers' assessment literacy, the socio-emotional dimension is mentioned, besides conceptual and praxeological dimensions. The socio-emotional dimension includes students' motivation and engagement, emotional dynamics of the assessment

from students' perspectives, social-emotional dispositions that influence learning and its outcomes, and motivation for learning. It also refers to teachers' awareness of the social and emotional aspects of the assessment practices. In individualized Western cultures and schools, students and teachers have many responsibilities within a time frame and focus on completing tasks or assignments. Because of these reasons, the communication content is limited to only academic staff and behavior management issues. However, students' social-emotional needs are as important as academic needs, which are neglected in traditional school systems (Schumacher, 2014).

In contrast, student engagement is about increasing achievement, desired positive behaviors, and the sense of belonging for all students (Parsons & Taylor, 2011). Restorative justice practices in schools enhance students' well-being and school engagement (Norris, 2019), besides improving academic achievement (Brown, 2017). Hence, teachers should manage all these factors to understand students' specific needs and create an inclusive environment for all students instead of being in control (Vaandering, 2011, 2013, 2014).

Restorative Justice in Education (rje)

Rje is defined as *"facilitating learning communities that nurture the capacity of people to engage with one another and their environment in a manner that supports and respects their inherent dignity and worth of all"* (Evans & Vaandering, 2016, p.8). Rje practices have Indigenous and spiritual roots (Graveline, 2003). Elders and leaders in those cultures facilitate circles as open platforms to share traumas, discuss personal issues, listen to other people, and learn from other people (Godlewska et al., 2017). In the late 1970s, restorative justice was introduced into the Western criminal justice system and then spread into education in the late

1990s (Evans & Vaandering, 2016). The term rje has been used to differentiate restorative justice in criminal systems from restorative justice in schools (Evans [2013] as cited in Brown, 2015). The definition of rje includes three main components: *creating just and equitable environments, nurturing healthy relationships, and repairing harm, and transforming conflict* (Evans & Vaandering, 2016).

Creating just and equitable environments emphasizes the importance of relationships in education. Justice is not primarily related to laws and rules in schools but to relationships. Equity is an essential term in rje, which is different from equality. As Evans and Vaandering (2016) discuss, equality is about being fair and is insufficient for understanding students' context and their relationship with the school. Noguera (1997) argues the reasons for the collapse of zero-tolerance policies as ignoring the needs of every student and only focusing on becoming fair instead of understanding the students' contexts. Furthermore, zero-tolerance policies use some oxymoron phrases such as "fighting violence" (Noguera, 1997). A short time later, rje practices were presented as enhancing relationships with inclusive environments instead of highlighting an eye for an eye approach. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador supports this idea with this statement: "vision of inclusive education is to enhance the development of value, respect, and support for the learning and development of all students, as well as the relationships between all members of the school community" (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2018).

The second component is *nurturing healthy relationships* in rje. Schools are places to preserve existing social order by reproducing them. In this sense, the relationship between students and teachers is a micro-level example of hierarchical relationships in society (Evans & Vaandering, 2016). The Relationship Window (Figure 2) was developed by Vaandering (2014)

to show relationship dynamics between teachers and students, among teachers, as well as among students. It is a framework that helps to realize the structure and dynamics of relationships and then to enhance the quality of these relationships (Vaandering & Voelker, 2018). The horizontal axis identifies *expectations* and the vertical axic identifies *support* in this window since power is embodies in these two dimensions (Evans & Vaandering, 2022). This window consists of four quadrants that represent different aspects of the teacher-student relationship: *"to", "not", "for",* and "*with*". The *"to"* quadrant represents high *expectations* and low *support*, where the teacher imparts knowledge and skills to the student and see students as objects to be managed with conditional acceptance. The *"for"* quadrant represents low *expectations* and high *support*, where the teacher see students as objects of need with conditional acceptance. In this quadrant, teachers are supporting students but they use their power to do things for their students in an inpatient way. The *"not"* quadrant represents low *expectations* and low *support*, where teachers are neglecting or rejecting to be involved in situations. They see students as objects to be ignored and do not engage with their students. These three quadrants show the *power-over* relationships between teachers and students, which results in doing things *to* or *for* each other, *or* ignoring each other at all (*not*). Finally, the *"with"* quadrant represents high *expectations* and high *support*, where students are considered as subjects to be honored. This quadrant shows the importance of collaboration and unconditional acceptance between teachers and students, where they work together to co-construct knowledge and learning experiences. Unlike the previous quadrants, the "*with*" quadrant results in *power-with* relationships (Evans & Vaandering, 2022). By considering each of these quadrants, teachers can develop a more nuanced understanding of their relationships with students and work to build positive relationships that promote student growth and success. This window is an example of critical relational theory, which combines

critical and relational theories (Vaandering, 2016), as discussed earlier in this chapter. The aim

of rje is to enhance all relationships in the school by placing them in the "*with*" part because it

relies on a relationship-based, dialogic framework that contrasts with the more common

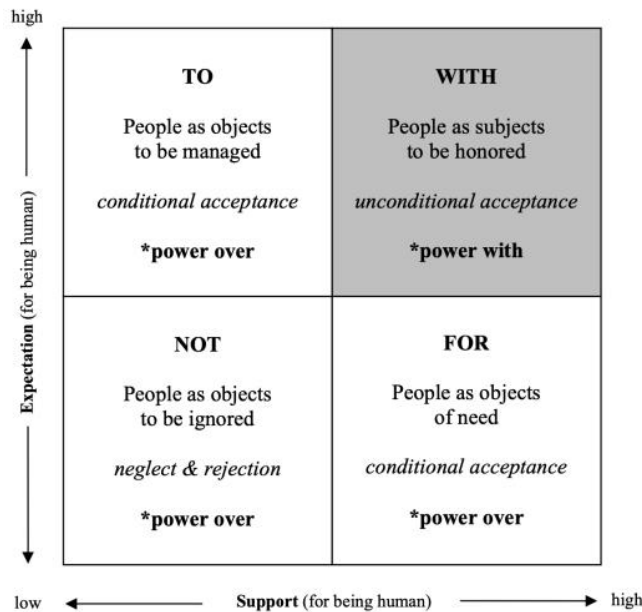hierarchical, power-based structure (Vaandering, 2014).

	high	
	TO	**WITH**
	People as objects to be managed	People as subjects to be honored
	conditional acceptance	*unconditional acceptance*
	*power over	***power with**
	NOT	**FOR**
	People as objects to be ignored	People as objects of need
	neglect & rejection	*conditional acceptance*
	*power over	***power over**

Expectation (for being human)

low ⟵ **Support** (for being human) ⟶ high

Figure 2. Relationship Window. Reprinted from *The Little Book of Restorative Justice Education*

(p. 74), by Evans & Vaandering, 2022, Skyhorse Publishing.

The third component is *repairing harm and transforming conflict*. Harm can be defined

as the intention to destroy someone physically, verbally, or emotionally (Evans & Vaandering,

2016). It undermines the dignity and worth of a person. Restorative justice is a response to

wrongdoing that focuses on repairing the harm that has occurred. This is entirely different from

traditional and standardized sanctions in education. Harm and conflict are not problematic, but

their ways to be resolved may be problematic. The most important aspect is protecting the worth

and dignity of all involved in those situations and focusing on repairing harm, and transforming

conflicts (Evans, Morrison, & Vaandering, 2019). This may be possible only by enhancing

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healthy relationships and focusing on current situations (Evans & Vaandering, 2016).

Being/becoming aware of all kinds of oppression, such as homophobia, racism, classism, and

colonialism is the initial stage of repairing harm and creating an inclusive environment for all

students (Figure 3).
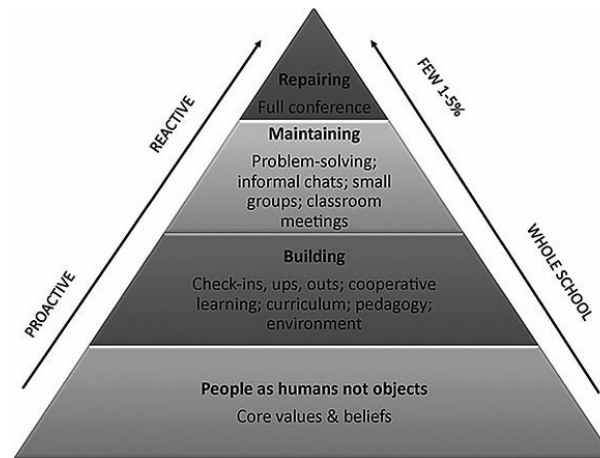
Figure 3. Relationship Triangle. Retrieved from https://www.relationshipsfirstnl.com/

Besides three components at the top of the triangle (as illustrated in Figure 3), rje has a

foundation of values and beliefs, which must be addressed especially by the adults in their own

lives as they are significant if implementing rje practices in schools will be done in a

transformative manner (Evans & Vaandering, 2016). There are three core questions that engage

critical reflection on the values & beliefs inherent in rje:

➢ Am I honoring?

This question asks if I honor people by accepting them for who they are.

➢ Am I measuring?

This question asks if I am measure whether or not people fit my assumed expectations rather than their own progress.

➢ What message am I sending?

This question asks if I consider how my engagement with people is perceived by them. Do they see me as empathetic and accepting of them with unconditional positive regard?

Unlike assessment literature, it is challenging to discuss the theoretical foundations and practices of rje. It addresses harm done, fosters nurturing relationships and healthy communication, and provides an environment for dialogue to understand the needs of individuals who are affected by harm and are responsible for causing harm to others (Vaandering, 2014). The definition and core values and beliefs of rje point out that they are embedded in the theoretical foundation and rje "creates places of shared learning and teaching" (Evans & Vaandering, 2016, p. 12-13). Hence, implementing restorative justice practices and facilitating circles without understanding the theoretical and philosophical foundations may cause harm as well for several reasons. Firstly, restorative justice is a complex and nuanced approach that requires a deep understanding of its principles, values, and methods. Circles are just one aspect of the restorative justice framework, and without a full understanding of the philosophy and theory behind it, using circles as a standalone practice may not be effective. Secondly, circles require participants to share personal experiences and feelings in a safe and supportive environment. If circles are not facilitated properly, participants may feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or exposed, which could cause harm or retraumatization. Thirdly, restorative justice is not a one-size-fits-all approach. It needs to be adapted to each unique context and situation. Without understanding the theoretical foundation of rje, educators may not be able to identify when and

how to use circles in a way that is appropriate and effective for their specific school or classroom setting. For instance, the book "*Circle forward: Building a restorative school community*" offers many circle facilitation ideas categorized by themes. However, the Part I: The Basics explains the theoretical foundation for circle practice in schools and the seven core assumptions of restorative justice (p.3-17).

The Intersection of Classroom Assessment and Restorative Justice in Education

Assessment plays a significant role in teaching and learning (Durga & Kumar, 2020). The development of conceptions in assessment literacy shows that there is a shift from teacher-centric assessment literacy to socio-cultural assessment literacy by including students in the learning process and understanding their cultural backgrounds and personal experiences during classroom assessment practices. As Willis et al. (2013) explain, assessment practices can be perceived as two-way, dynamic interactions rather than one-way, static interactions since assessment has a multilayered structure including ethical, social, and cultural dimensions. Creating socio-cultural assessments is possible by negotiating these practices and including them in classroom assessments (Nortvedt et al., 2020). Furthermore, creating a sense of understanding and appreciation of others is essential to healing democracy and equitable learning environments (Palmer, 2014). Through a socio-cultural understanding of assessment, students are encouraged to participate in classroom activities and reflect on their own cultural backgrounds, values, perspectives, and emotional dispositions of assessment (Pastore & Andrade, 2019).

Rje emphasizes the importance of creating inclusive environments, noticing and listening to all voices in class, enhancing healthy relationships, transforming conflict, and repairing harm in schools, which are the core concepts in rje practices (Evans & Vaandering, 2016). These are related to improving student engagement in school (Norris, 2019). "Relationship Window"

(Figure 2) is a framework for understanding the dynamics and structure of relationships in classrooms (Vaandering & Voelker, 2018). When the teacher and student relationships are considered, *"to"*, *"not"* and *"for"* parts assign teachers' active roles, and students are seen as passive objects to be managed, ignored or of the need (Vaandering, 2014). However, the "*with*" part relies on the relationship-based, dialectic framework by enhancing relationships among teachers and students. In this part, students are considered subjects to be honored; therefore their beliefs, backgrounds, identities, and roles are essential in the classrooms.

Interestingly, it is possible to understand the similar nuances between the conceptions of assessment literacy and the quadrants of the Relationship Window. The first conception of assessment literacy, teacher-centric approach, highlights the importance of summative assessment and defines the role of teacher as assessing the knowledge of students. In this conception of assessment literacy, teachers are in control in the classrooms and responsible for teaching to students, which aligns with the *"to"* quadrant of the Relationship Window. The second conception of assessment, student-centric approach, emphasizes the importance of formative assessment, active roles of students and feedback during assessment. Although this conception of assessment literacy is seen more student-centered rather than the first one, teachers have power over students by providing the feedback and monitoring students' progress. This understanding aligns with the *"for"* quadrant of the Relationship Window. The last conception of assessment literacy, socio-cultural approach, addresses the dynamic relationship between students, teachers and their contexts. In this conception, assessment is defined as something "done *with* and *for* students" (Klenowski, 2009). This conception of assessment literacy aligns with the *"with"* quadrant of the Relationship Window since learning is seen as a reciprocal process without any power imbalances.

Despite the intersection of sociocultural elements in assessment and rje, to date research has not pointed out this intersection. Few assessment literacy conceptions explicitly mention the relationships' dynamics and responsive elements in the relationships (e.g., Coombs & DeLuca 2022; Looney et al. 2018; Xu & Brown 2016). This study aims to enable the fourth assessment literacy conception by considering common core values of rje (i.e., *creating just and equitable environments, nurturing healthy relationships, repairing harm and transforming conflict*), what is being measured in the assessment, what message being sent sending through assessment and whose values/beliefs are presented in assessments.

Summary of the Chapter

Social constructivism and relational theory have a significant impact on the conceptualization of assessment literacy and rje. Social constructivism emphasizes the importance of learners constructing their own knowledge through social interaction and collaboration (Fosnot, 1996; Steffe & Gale, 1995). Relational theory emphasizes the importance of social relationships and connections for learning and development (Brown & Di Lallo, 2020; Llewellyn & Llewellyn, 2015; Schwartz, 2017).

When it comes to assessment literacy, social constructivism and relational theory suggest that assessments should be designed to support learners in constructing their own knowledge and building meaningful relationships with their teachers and peers. This means that assessments should be collaborative and interactive and provide opportunities for feedback and reflection. The third conception of assessment literacy, socio-cultural assessment literacy, as discussed earlier in this chapter, highlights the dynamic relationships between teachers and students and educational context.

Rje also draws on these theories by emphasizing the importance of relationships, collective well-being, transforming conflicts, and repairing harm. By promoting a culture of respect, empathy, and mutual understanding, restorative justice approaches help to build positive relationships between students, teachers, and the wider school community. This not only supports academic achievement but also promotes social and emotional development.

Overall, social constructivism and relational theory provide important insights into how assessment and rje can be designed to support learners' development and promote positive and healthy relationships within the school community.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The research questions were developed to understand teachers' approaches to ca and rje practices in NL. In both phases, data were collected and used to address these research questions:

1. How do educators in NL approach ca?

2. How do educators in NL approach rje?

3. What is the relationship between educators' approaches to ca and rje?

   a. Does this differ between teacher candidates and classroom teachers?

Researcher Positionality

The consistency among the study design (i.e., the purpose of the study, research questions, methods that were used to respond to research questions), the epistemology of the researcher, and the theoretical framework are significant for any study. The philosophical understanding of knowledge is called epistemology (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Consistent with my critical realist understanding of reality, knowledge can be shaped by subjective interpretations of our experiences, relations, and social interaction. This understanding of knowledge aligns with the core ideas of the relational theory, which emphasizes the relationships and connections among people (Brown & Di Lallo, 2020), and social constructivism, which highlights interactions in the learning environment and the active role of the learner during the learning process (Proulx, 2006). The purpose of my study was to understand educators' approaches to ca and rje by focusing on their experiences, understandings, and beliefs; relational theory and social constructivism align with this study.

During my teaching and counseling years in high school, I was curious about integrating assessment and counseling practices to have more inclusive classrooms. After I started my master's degree at Memorial University, two courses helped me to focus on assessment and restorative justice: 'Research Designs and Methods in Education' and 'Relationships First: Rethinking Educational Engagement'. Throughout these two courses, I had a chance to decide my purposes of the study and to understand the alignment among the study design, the understanding of the reality as a researcher, and the theoretical framework.

This study had both quantitative and qualitative phases to answer the research questions. Aligning with the purpose of my study, the understanding of reality and theoretical framework, a two-phase triangulation mixed method research was used. In the quantitative research methods, relationship predominantly indicates the cause-effect relationship between two variables. However, this study is a triangulation mixed method research that uses both quantitative and qualitative research methods. In this context, relationship draws on a qualitative understanding and indicates the connection between these two constructs rather than causation. In the quantitative phase, a survey was used to gather the data from educators to learn their approaches to ca and rje. For assessment approaches, the scenario-based questions of ACAI (DeLuca et al., 2016) were adopted. For rje approaches, research and publication in NL (i.e., Bukola, 2018; Clarke, 2019; Omoregie, 2018; Saleh, 2020; Power, 2015) and survey items from previous research (i.e., Brown, 2018; Vaandering, 2021) were examined. Based on three components of rje; *creating just and equitable learning environments, nurturing healthy relationships, repairing harm, and transforming conflict* (Evans & Vaandering, 2016); survey items were developed. In the qualitative phase, interview questions were developed to explore educators' approaches to ca and rje. The aim of the interview questions was to explore educators' understandings, personal

experiences of these two constructs and their perspectives on the relationship between these two constructs. After reviewing the literature and examining previous research about ca and rje, I collaborated with my supervisors to reach a consensus on the interview questions.

In this study, I had two different roles during the quantitative and qualitative phases. In the quantitative phase of the study, I was personally removed from the research and had an independent role in data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2003). This helped me to protect the objectivity of the quantitative data and eliminate researcher bias from this phase. My opinions, values, and beliefs did not influence the data collection during the quantitative phase.

In the qualitative phase of the study, I obtained information directly from classroom teachers and teacher candidates through semi-structured open-ended interviews, so my role required me to spend considerable time interacting with them to learn from their experiences and perspectives. As a researcher, I had some pre-assumptions about the relationship between assessment and rje practices. As mentioned in the Introduction chapter, I completed my education until my Master's degree in Turkey. During my student life, the Turkish education system focused on standardized exams, summative assessments, and the measurement of learning outcomes. These practices limit social interaction between teachers and students and the emotional expressions of students in the classrooms (Klenowski et al., 2006). It also causes performance anxiety for both teachers and students (Cassady & Johnson, 2002). Hence, I had hesitations and concerns about whether teacher candidates and classroom teachers would be able to understand the relationship between ca and rje since they seemed to be quite separate paradigms although I strongly believed that there was a relationship between the approaches to ca and rje.

In the Turkish education system, during my student life, teachers had the power and knowledge; therefore, they were responsible for teaching and behavioral management in their classrooms. When I was a student, I firmly believed that being a "good student" was listening to the teacher and following the teacher's rules in the classroom. This reminded me to think about the Relationship Window (Figure 2, p.26), which is discussed in the Literature Review chapter, to understand my and my teachers' role in the classroom. Not surprisingly, I experienced "*to*" part most of the time, which sees people as objects to be managed with high expectancy with low support. Teachers were in control, and there were power-over relationships in the classroom where I grew up. Before getting familiar with rje, it was impossible for me to imagine the "*with*" part, which emphasizes the power-with relationships between teachers and students by seeing people as subjects to be honored. Related to this, I was assuming that rje practices are not suitable for all teachers as personal factors (e.g., motivation, engagement, educational background) play a role in their teaching styles. I thought rje was an educational approach that teachers could choose, instead it was a framework. This was a misunderstanding of rje since it is like experiencing the exact opposite for me, who grew up in a standardized education model for years.

As Creswell (2003) noted, the researcher is the research instrument in qualitative research methods; therefore, researcher bias is more likely to influence the data collection results. In order to reduce researcher bias, all necessary steps were taken to help reduce possible bias. I remained as neutral as possible in tone when interviewing the participants, and I did not share my personal opinions during the interview. The interview questions were written carefully in order to avoid leading, confusing, or unanswerable questions and revised with the supervisors. My goal for the

interviews was to obtain proper, unbiased responses from participants to understand their personal experiences, opinions, and perspectives.

Research Design

A two-phase triangulation mixed method research was used to answer these research questions, because quantitative and qualitative methods were used in a complementary fashion in this study. Creswell and Plano (2007) described triangulation mixed method as way of comparing and contrasting quantitative statistical data with qualitative findings and validating quantitative results with qualitative data. In Phase 1, a survey was distributed to teacher candidates and K-12 classroom teachers to explore their approaches to assessment and rje practices. In Phase 2, in-depth semi-structured interviews were used to explore the reasons and factors that play a role in these approaches. Hence, the statistical data gathered from quantitative part was enriched by explaining individual perspectives and personal experiences of educators gathered from qualitative part, which provides a more holistic understanding of assessment and rje.

Gorard and Taylor (2004) suggest that qualitative and quantitative methods are "almost always more powerful when used in combination than in isolation" (p. 4). For descriptive analysis, relationships among different approaches, and general tendencies of teachers about assessment and rje, quantitative methods were needed to understand the approaches, and perspectives of participants on certain purposes and to state common findings with larger sample sizes. However, representing the data holistically with some explanations was impossible without qualitative methods. Hence, in order to answer, *what is happening* and *why or how it is*

happening (Gorard and Taylor, 2004), an appropriate combination of both methods was selected for data collection.

Sample & Recruitment

In Phase 1, a survey was distributed to teacher candidates and K-12 classroom teachers online via NLESD, Memorial University's Faculty of Education email lists, and social media (Facebook and Twitter) within NL.

Table 1

Demographics for teacher candidates (n= 32)

		Mean(SD)
Age		23.23 (6.7)
		Frequency
The completed terms of teacher education		
	1	15
	2	1
	3	4
	4+	11
The grade level(s) of teaching upon graduation		
	Primary (K-3)	24
	Elementary (4-6)	25
	Junior High (7-9)	8
	High School (10-12)	6
Current teaching assignment(s)		
	(Primary/Elementary) Generalist Teacher (e.g., Grade-level classroom teacher)	15

(Primary/Elementary) Specialist Teacher (e.g., French, Music, Phys. Ed.)	14
(Secondary) Humanities and Social Sciences (e.g., English/English Language Arts, French, English/French as a Second Language, Social Studies, etc.)	5
(Secondary) Fine Arts (Drama, Music, Art)	2
Other	
(School Counselor)	1

Gender identity

Cisgender woman	5
Cisgender man	1
Female	20
Male	2
Nonbinary	1
Transgender woman	1

Ethnic identity

Canadian White	2
Caucasian	1
Newfoundlander	1
White	27
White Hispanic	1

Location of completing K-12 schooling

Newfoundland and Labrador	30
Alberta	1
New Brunswick	1
Ontario	1

Enrolling teacher education program immediately after the undergraduate degree (if applicable)		
	Yes	10
	No	7

Among teacher candidates, the average age was 23.33(6.7). Fifteen of them completed their first term, one of them completed the second term, four of them completed third term and eleven of them completed the fourth term in the program. Most teaching certification was in primary ($n=24$) and elementary ($n=25$) grades. Current teaching assignments were mentioned mostly as generalist teachers ($n=15$) and specialist teachers ($n=14$) in primary/elementary grades. Among teacher candidates, there were humanities and social science ($n=5$) and fine arts ($n=2$) as teaching assignments. Gender and ethnic identity items were open-response items in the survey, which provides flexibility to participants to identify themselves rather than selecting from a checklist. Twenty of them identified as female, five identified as cisgender woman, one identified as cisgender man, two identified as male, and one identified as transgender woman. Twenty-seven of them identified as White, two identified as Canadian White, one identified as White Hispanic, one identified as Caucasian, and one identified as Newfoundlander. Most of them completed K-12 schooling ($n=30$) in this province, while three of them completed K-12 schooling in a different province (i.e., Alberta, New Brunswick, Ontario). Table 1 summarizes teacher candidates' demographics.

Table 2

Demographics for classroom teachers (n= 51)

	Mean(SD)
Years of teaching experience	15.83(7.6)
Age	39.20(7.1)
	Frequency
Region	
Avalon	28
Central	5
Western	4
Labrador	13
The grade level(s) of teaching	
Primary (K-3)	10
Elementary (4-6)	23
Junior High (7-9)	20
High School (10-12)	17
Current teaching assignment(s)	
(Primary/Elementary) Generalist Teacher (e.g., Grade-level classroom teacher)	13
(Primary/Elementary) Specialist Teacher (e.g., French, Music, Phys. Ed.)	11
(Primary/Elementary) Special Education	1
(Secondary) Humanities and Social Sciences (e.g., English/English Language Arts, French, English/French as a Second Language, Social Studies, etc.)	9
(Secondary) Natural Sciences (e.g., Science, mathematics, etc.)	12

(Secondary) Fine Arts (Drama, Music, Art)	4
(Secondary) Special Education	2
(Secondary) Physical Education	1
Other	
(Guidance)	1
(Inclusive Practice Coordinator)	1
(EAL/ESL Itinerant Teacher)	1
(LEARN)	1

Highest level of education

Bachelor of Education	14
Masters' Degree	36
Other	
(Bachelor of Education and Psychology)	1

Year of obtaining the degree

2002-2007	8
2008-2013	4
2013-2018	10
2019-2022	11

Gender identity

Cisgender woman	5
Female	42
Male	3

Ethnic identity

Canadian	1
Canadian White	4
White	37
Caucasian	1

Inuit	1
Inuk	1
Newfoundlander	3
Turkish	1
Location of completing K-12 schooling	
Newfoundland and Labrador	46
Ontario	3
Saskatchewan	1
Other	
The U.S.	1
Kenya	1
Turkey	2

Among classroom teachers, the average age was 39.20(7.1), and the average years of teaching experience was 15.83(7.6). Four regions of the province were represented in this sample. Avalon (*n= 28*) and Labrador (*n=13*) were the most represented regions in this sample. Most teaching certification was in elementary (*n=23*) and junior high (*n=20*) grades. Primary (*n=10*) and high school grades (*n=17*) were also represented in this sample. Current teaching assignments were mentioned mostly as generalist teachers (*n=13*) in primary/elementary grades and natural science teachers (*n=12*) in secondary grades. Thirty-six of the teachers had a Master of Education, and fourteen had a Bachelor of Education as the highest degree of their education. Eleven of them obtained their degree between 2019-2022. Forty-two of them identified as female, five identified as cisgender woman, three identified as male. Thirty-seven of them identified as White, three identified as Newfoundlander, four identified as Canadian White, and there was one classroom teacher in each group who identified themselves as Canadian, Turkish,

Inuit, Inuik, and Caucasian. Most of them completed K-12 schooling (*n=46*) in this province,

eight of them completed K-12 schooling in a different province (Ontario and Saskatchewan) or

outside of Canada. Table 2 summarizes classroom teachers' demographics.

In Phase 2, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted to capture teacher

candidates' and classroom teachers' opinions, personal experiences, and backgrounds about

assessment practices and to understand how and why rje practices and assessment approaches

were related to each other. This method helped to gather data informing the researcher's

purposes, as the participants had the chance to explain their own understandings freely.

For recruiting teachers for this study, NLESD, including over 63,000 students and over

250 schools across NL (NLESD, 2018), was preferred. Based on the 2021-2022 School

Information Report of Newfoundland and Labrador K-12 Educational Statistics, there are a total

of 257 schools in the province and 251 of them are NLESD schools. Since NLESD schools

represent 97.6% of NL schools, making NLESD schools the dominant group in the province,

they were preferred to be recruited for this study. Also, I have already built connections with

some teachers, program specialists, and provincial staff during my research assistantship in

various research projects, making reaching out to K-12 teachers easy. The Faculty of Education,

Memorial University, the only university in NL that offers a teacher education program at the

undergraduate level, was preferred for recruiting teacher candidates.

Data Collection & Instruments

Before data collection and analysis, this research proposal was reviewed and approved

by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) and found to be in

compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy (Memorial University, 2022). Informed

consent forms, information letters, recruitment emails, and social media posts included an ethics approval statement of ICEHR: "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."

After ethics approval, recruitment letters (Appendix E) which include a brief introduction about the study and research team, the purpose, and the process of the study, were sent to NLESD, and Memorial University, Faculty of Education to reach out to potential participants. Also, social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter) were used to reach both groups. Digital posters (Appendix F and G) were also used as a recruitment tool for this study. It was sent via email (Memorial University, Faculty of Education, LISTSERV for undergraduate students). For teacher candidates, classroom visits were scheduled by getting in touch with the course instructors. After their permission, 15-minute classroom visits were planned for five courses, and the purpose, significance, and method of the study were shared with teacher candidates, and their questions were answered about the study.

Participants completed informed consent forms before Phase 1 and Phase 2 separately. Therefore, participants had a right to complete the survey (Phase 1) and not participate in interviews (Phase 2). In Phase 1, to proceed to survey items, participants should have confirmed the informed consent form, which was embedded prior to survey items on Qualtrics. In Phase 2, the informed consent letter was read aloud to participants, and their consent was taken verbally before the interviews. Therefore, participants had a chance to go review the ethical procedures, risks, benefits and withdrawal processes of my study. By doing this, participants could pose any questions about the study.

Only members of the research team had direct access to the data. Data will be kept for a minimum of five years, as required by Memorial University's policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research (Memorial University, 2022). Any personally identifying data (i.e., the name of the participant, the name of participants' schools) was not used in any phase of the study to protect anonymity and confidentiality.

In Phase 1, the survey method was used to address research questions. Approaches to Classroom Assessment Inventory (ACAI; DeLuca et al., 2016) consists of five assessment scenarios with close-ended questions. Scenario-based questions were used as survey items in this study. Based on this survey, teachers' approaches to assessment can be classified into four areas: Assessment Purpose, Assessment Process, Assessment Fairness, and Measurement Theory (DeLuca, Coombs, & LaPointe-McEwan, 2019).

An adapted version of ACAI was used in this study. Only scenario-based questions were included as the purpose of this research does not address teachers' learning, professional development, and confidence and competence in the assessment. There were five scenario-based questions and twelve statements for each scenario. For these questions, a 6-point Likert scale and an additional "don't know" option was used. Each of the 12 responses aligned with a specific assessment dimension (i.e., Assessment Purpose, Assessment Process, Assessment Fairness, Measurement Theory) based upon an analysis of 15 contemporary assessment standards. Each theme was associated with three approaches. For instance, the theme of Assessment Purpose was associated with three approaches: assessment *of* learning, assessment *for* learning, and assessment *as* learning (see Table 3). Teacher candidates and classroom teachers prioritized approaches to an assessment dimension a total of five times, once per scenario.

Table 3

Assessment Literacy Themes and Associated Priority Description

Theme	Dimension	Description of Priority
Assessment Purposes	Assessment *of* Learning	Teachers' use of evidence to summate student learning and assign a grade in relation to student's achievement of learning objectives.
	Assessment *for* Learning	Teachers' and students' use of evidence to provide feedback on progress toward learning objectives (i.e., inform next steps for learning and instruction). Involves both teacher-directed and student-centered approaches to formative assessment.
	Assessment *as* Learning	Focuses on how the student is learning by providing feedback or experiences that foster students' metacognitive abilities and learning skills (e.g., self-assessment, goal-setting, learning plans). Involves teachers but is primarily student-centered.
Assessment Processes	Design	Focuses on the development of reliable assessments and items that measure student learning in relation to learning objectives.
	Scoring	Focuses on the adjustment and use of scoring protocols and grading schemes to respond to assessment scenarios.
	Communication	Focuses on the interpretation of assessment results and feedback through communication to students and parents.
Fairness	Standard	Maintains the equal assessment protocols for all students.
	Equitable	Differentiates assessment protocols for formally identified students (i.e., special education or English language learners)
	Personalized	Individualizes learning opportunities and assessments that address each student's unique learning needs and goals
Measurement Theory	Reliability	Works to ensure consistency in results within assessments, across time periods, and between teachers.
	Validity	Works to ensure assessment or evaluation measures what it claims to measure and promote valid interpretations of results.
	Balanced	Works to ensure consistency in measuring what an assessment or evaluation intends to measure, and degree to which an assessment or evaluation measures what it claims to measure.

Survey items related to rje aimed to provide insight into the educators' approaches based on *creating just and equitable learning environments, nurturing healthy relationships,* and *repairing harm and transforming conflict* (Evans & Vaandering, 2016). For each dimension, five statements were presented. These statements represented the theoretical and practical cores of rje. For these statements, 6-point Likert scale and the "don't know" option were used. Teacher

candidates and classroom teachers prioritized approaches to restorative justice practices under these three components.

There is very little quantitative research about rje practices, likely due to paradigmatic conflicts between rje and quantitative data analyses (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020), and empirical support for the positive outcomes of rje may be challenging (Norris, 2019). Also, the survey is not a common data collection strategy for understanding and exploring rje, but it was used in this study. The survey is a functional way of learning educators' approaches to rje and suggests further research questions that could be studied in future studies. Besides exploring the relationship between assessment practices and rje, developing appropriate and valid survey items, gaining insights about teachers' approaches to rje in NL, and learning about the content of teacher education programs in terms of rje are other beneficial contributions of this study.

The survey was established on Qualtrics, Memorial University's institutionally approved survey tool that meets all privacy, security, and legislative requirements of the University (see http://www.mun.ca/surveysolution/ for more details). After submitting the informed consent form, participants proceeded with the survey items. The names of participants and the name of their schools were never asked in the survey. At any point during the completion of the survey, participants had the opportunity to withdraw by simply closing the browser. Any data saved to the Qualtrics server as a result of partial completion was permanently deleted by the research team; it was not included in the final data set for analysis.

In Phase 2, teachers were interviewed via WebEx, Memorial University's approved video conferencing tool provided by Cisco Systems Inc., and each of these interviews took approximately 45 minutes. Due to COVID-19 precautions and ease of access for teachers from different regions, an online platform (WebEx) was preferred for interviews rather than in-person

interviews. Interviews were scheduled via email based on the available times of the participants. The interviews were conducted in private, involving only myself and the participant.

In the interviews, semi-structured open-ended questions were predetermined. I asked educators to share their perspectives, personal experiences and beliefs about ca and rje practices. Also, I asked educators to share their understanding of the relationship between ca and rje.

I posed open-ended questions and listened to educators' responses carefully to understand their perspectives in the interviews. These questions enabled the participants to explain their experiences, and circumstances with ease and express their background and beliefs in their own words. I framed my questions, with the help of my supervisors, in a sensitive and non-judgemental way to create an open communication environment during the interviews. Further, all interview questions focused on the participants' personal experiences and challenges in their classrooms and their teaching practices. Two questions were asked as initial questions and nine probing questions were asked to elaborate on participants' understandings and classroom practices about assessment and rje.

In my study, my aim was to understand educators' views about the school policies and the rationale behind their approaches to ca and rje and asked: "What do you think about classroom assessment practices in Newfoundland and Labrador?" and "Have you ever heard about restorative justice in education before?". Furthermore, I posed questions about learning participants' perspectives on the relationship between ca and rje by asking: "How would assessment practices and restorative justice relate to your teaching practice?" and "What impact might restorative justice practices have on your teaching experiences and/or students' experiences or learning outcomes?"

With the participants' permission, all interviews were recorded using WebEx for transcription purposes. Transcriptions were generated and then analyzed by coding for patterns and emerging themes. Transcriptions were generated using the WebEx platform's automated transcription functionality and then carefully checked for accuracy of the transcription by the research team. Participants had the opportunity to choose audio or video recording during interviews. If a participant wished not to be video recorded, this participant might have chosen to turn off the camera and participate via audio-only. At any point during the interview, a participant had a right to exit the conversation space by choosing the 'leave meeting' option within the virtual platform. In this case, all information provided by the participant during that conversation was deleted and was not included in the transcript. After the completion of the interviews and a careful transcription was created, participants were invited to read the transcripts and had the opportunity to review, change, and/or redact their contributions to the transcript. Participants had one month after they received the transcript to withdraw any or all of their data from the study.

Data Analysis

All data analysis from the survey items was completed by using Statistical Program for the Social Studies version 28 (SPSS v. 28). Quantitative data analysis was conducted to understand the approaches of educators to assessment and rje and to see the relationships between them. Descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, standard deviation) were calculated for all items.

For all survey items, participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed with the following statements or scenarios on a 6-point Likert scale (1= not likely, 6= very

likely). 'Don't know' was also as an option for all scaled items and had an impact on calculating descriptive statistics.

For assessment dimensions, scenario-based questions of ACAI were used. Their approaches to assessment were classified into four areas: Assessment Purpose, Assessment Process, Assessment Fairness, and Measurement Theory (DeLuca, Coombs, & LaPointe-McEwan, 2019). In this study, assessment dimensions under each assessment theme were used to understand educators' approaches to assessment.

Survey items related to rje aimed to provide insight into the educators' approaches based on its core values: *creating just and equitable learning environments, nurturing healthy relationships, and repairing harm and transforming conflict* (Evans & Vaandering, 2016). Due to the limited amount of research that uses quantitative methods in rje, the survey items were adapted from Martha Brown's survey items (Brown, 2018), previous rje publications (Bukola, 2018; Clarke, 2019; Omoregie, 2018), and definitions of the core values (Evans & Vaandering, 2016).

The relationship between demographic groupings (i.e., geographical region of teaching and completion of K-12 schooling, grade levels, K-12 teaching experience, the field of instruction, degree of highest education, gender identity, ethnicity, age, duration in teacher education program) and endorsement of approaches within each theme was examined for both assessment and rje. The null hypothesis for these analyses was that demographic groupings would not influence educators' approaches to assessment and rje.

Statistical significance is a term used to determine whether an observed effect in a dataset is likely to be genuine or just the result of random chance. It is commonly used in scientific research to test the validity of a hypothesis. The term is typically associated with the p-value, which measures the probability of observing a result as extreme as the one obtained, assuming that the null hypothesis is true. If the p-value is below a predetermined threshold (usually 0.05), the result is considered statistically significant, and the null hypothesis is rejected. However, it is important to note that statistical significance does not necessarily imply practical significance or importance (Lane et al., 2003). Pearson correlation, on the other hand, is a statistical measure that assesses the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. It is commonly used in psychology, education, economics, and other social sciences to analyze the association between two continuous variables (Furr & Rosenthal, 2003). The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) ranges from -1.0 to 1.0, where -1.0 indicates a perfect negative correlation, 0 indicates no correlation, and 1.0 indicates a perfect positive correlation. A high positive correlation suggests that as one variable increases, the other also tends to increase, while a high negative correlation suggests that as one variable increases, the other tends to decrease. However, it is important to note that the Pearson correlation assumes linearity and normality in the data, which may not always be the case in real-world scenarios (Osborne, 2015). Additionally, the correlation coefficient alone does not provide information about causation or directionality, which requires further analysis and interpretation.

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on ACAI scenario-based questions and restorative justice items. Principal axis factor extraction with equamax rotation was used to identify underlying factors (Gorsuch, 1983). A scree test was used to determine the number of factors to retain. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure verified sampling adequacy for the

analysis, and all KMO values were greater than .80, which is above the acceptable limit of .50 (Field, 2013). Factor loadings below .4 were suppressed as they did not represent significant values and have been used in prior studies utilizing the ACAI (e.g., DeLuca et al., 2016). Factors had an internal consistency (i.e., Cronbach's alpha) greater than .89, indicating good reliability (Field, 2013). Three assessment approaches double-loaded (assessment *as* learning, equitable fairness, and personalize fairness).

Scores for each factor were calculated by averaging responses of items within each factor. Factor scores were then statistically compared within demographic groupings (i.e., gender, age, years of teaching experience, location of teaching, current teaching assignment, ethnic identity, location of completing K-12 schooling), as previously described. Factor loadings can be found in Table 4.

Table 4

Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis

	M(SD)	Teacher-centered factor	Student-centered factor
AoL	4.19(.73)	.716	.159
AfL	4.69(.77)	.378	.649
AaL	4.40(.89)	.429	.695
Design	4.67(.66)	.299	.717
Scoring	4.21(.73)	.717	.200
Communication	4.68(.75)	.284	.759
Standard	3.94(.86)	.763	-.248
Equitable	4.50(.72)	.606	.515
Personalized	4.37(.89)	.440	.596
Reliability	3.39(.89)	.697	-.022
Validity	4.37(.81)	.714	.239
Balanced	4.24(.82)	.755	.294
Creating just and equitable environments	5.38(.64)	-.028	.564
Nurturing healthy relationships	5.48(.55)	-.148	.737
Repairing harm/transforming conflict	5.55(.56)	-.017	.381
Percent Variability		28.36	25.94
Internal Consistency		.89	.88

Note. All responses on a 6-point scale (1= not likely; 6 = very likely).

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), qualitative data analysis has three steps: 1) *data reduction* (focusing on the complex data to the themes), 2) *data display* (presenting the data using visual representations like charts, graphics, etc.), and 3) *drawing conclusions*. I started with (re)reading the data, establishing codes, and grouping them into themes. Transcriptions were generated and then analyzed by coding for patterns and emerging themes. I read the transcription of each participant and annotated it, and then specific themes and patterns were extracted. A thematic content analysis was conducted by using open, inductive coding to describe the patterns in the interview responses (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). In order to comprehend key components of the dataset, this thematic analysis entailed a multiphase approach that included organizing the data, going through numerous cycles of review, coding, and discussion, and producing themes. The responses were evaluated in accordance with the interview responses, and when necessary, different codes were assigned to different responses (Harvey & Carpenter, 2020). After finishing coding by myself, I discussed these codes and tentative codes, if any, with my supervisors. When we reached a consensus on establishing codes and code descriptions, I started establishing themes and categories from the interview responses. Pseudonyms were used for participants to protect confidentiality and anonymity, which enabled me to use direct quotations from the interview responses. NVivo (version 12) was used to analyze the qualitative data.

Trustworthiness

There are some strategies to achieve trustworthiness and credibility in qualitative research designs (Creswell, 2007). Triangulation and precise description are two strategies for establishing the trustworthiness of qualitative research design. In order to increase the validity of this study, interviews were held over a six-week period. Member-checking by taking unclear data back to the participants for clarification and including supervisors in the data analysis part

was done for triangulation purposes. Also, rich and precise descriptions of the interviews were

included in this study for credibility.

Chapter 4: Results

This study examined teachers' approaches to ca and rje practices in NL and was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do educators in NL approach ca?

2. How do educators in NL approach rje?

3. What is the relationship between educators' approaches to ca and rje?

    a. Does this differ between teacher candidates and classroom teachers?

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides both descriptive and inferential statistics that were calculated to describe teacher candidates' and classroom teachers' approaches to assessment and rje and their relationships with each other in Phase 1. The second section provides thematic analysis of the qualitative data (Saldana, 2011) for both groups, which were collected in Phase 2 by open-ended survey questions and interview data. The third section describes the analysis within assessment themes and rje across career stages.

In Phase 1, a total of 83 educators – teacher candidates ($n = 32$) and classroom teachers ($n = 51$) – completed the survey. In Phase 2, one teacher candidate and six classroom teachers were interviewed.

Phase 1

Table 5 provides descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) for participants within assessment and rje dimensions. Teacher candidates' and classroom teachers' endorsement of approaches to assessment and rje dimensions appear very similar to each other.

Table 5

Descriptive (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (t-test, Cohen's d) for participants (n= 83)

	All participants	Teacher Candidates	Teachers	Cohen's *d*
Assessment dimension	**Mean(SD)**			
AoL	4.19(.73)	4.20(.84)	4.06(.77)	0.17
AfL	4.69(.77)	4.87(.60)	4.55(.81)	0.45
AaL	4.40(.89)	4.58(.69)	4.22(.97)	0.43
Design	4.67(.66)	4.76(.54)	4.55(.77)	0.32
Scoring	4.21(.73)	4.26(.76)	3.95(.96)	0.36
Communication	4.68(.75)	4.96(.62)*	4.51(.78)*	0.64
Standard	3.94(.86)	3.84(1.02)	3.89(.85)	0.05
Equitable	4.50(.72)	4.37(.91)	4.43(.76)	0.05
Personalized	4.37(.89)	4.38(.77)	4.14(1.15)	0.25
Reliability	3.39(.89)	3.37(.73)	3.39(.98)	0.02
Validity	4.37(.81)	4.47(.71)	4.20(.91)	0.33
Balanced	4.24(.82)	4.36(.71)	4.09(.87)	0.34
Restorative justice in education dimension				
Creating just and equitable environments	5.38(.64)	5.29(.72)	5.53(.42)	0.41
Nurturing healthy relationships	5.48(.55)	5.39(.60)	5.63(.43)	0.46
Repairing harm and transforming conflict	5.55(.56)	5.56(.52)	5.39(.59)	0.31

Note. All responses on a 6-point scale (1= not likely; 6 = very likely). '*' denotes significant differences (α =0.05)

Table 5 indicates that (a) the level of endorsement in rje dimensions was greater than assessment dimension scores and (b) most standard deviation scores in rje dimensions were lower than assessment dimension scores for all participants. Teacher candidates and classroom teachers appeared to support the value of the three dimensions of rje. *Repairing harm and*

transforming conflict dimension had the greatest endorsement – as indicated by effect size –

among rje dimensions with the smallest difference between teacher candidates and classroom

teachers. Among assessment dimensions, *assessment for learning* and *communication* had the

greatest endorsement whereas *reliability* had the weakest endorsement with the lowest effect

size.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the mean scores of ca and rje

dimensions between teacher candidates and classroom teachers. There was a statistically

significant difference between the *communication* dimension of teacher candidates

(mean[SD]=4.97[.62]) and classroom teachers (mean[SD]=4.50[.78]), $t(81)$= -2.82, p=.006, d=

0.64. No other statistically significant differences were identified.

Table 6

Correlations between assessment and restorative justice in education for teacher candidates

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1.AoL	--														
2.AfL	.311	--													
3.AaL	.159	.490**	--												
4.Design	.154	.392*	.726**	--											
5.Scoring	.301	.081	.334	.278	--										
6.Communication	-.150	.462**	.622**	.574**	.135	--									
7.Standard	.598**	-.129	-.196	-.131	.427*	-.474**	--								
8.Equitable	.683**	.067	.301	.301	.425*	.096	.440*	--							
9.Personalized	.431*	.116	.440*	.292	.455**	.361*	.342	.629**	--						
10.Reliability	.214	.007	-.028	-.036	.241	-.255	.497**	-.065	.072	--					
11.Validity	.579**	.145	.051	.177	.640**	-.009	.666**	.592**	.513**	.315	--				
12.Balanced	.157	-.048	.167	.121	.598**	.118	.479**	.399*	.447*	.329	.617**	--			
13.Just and equitable environments	.085	.033	.190	.213	.064	.218	-.220	.064	.202	-.301	.088	-.083	--		
14.Nurturing healthy relationships	-.374*	-.136	.188	.181	-.088	.395*	-.557**	.147	.060	-.484**	-.350	-.177	.290	--	
15.Repairing harm and transforming conflict	.128	.024	.303	.227	.329	.292	-.145	.194	.237	-.014	.022	.046	-.213	.249	--

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

A Pearson's correlation provides further insight into the relationship between assessment and rje items (Table 6). Four assessment themes were significantly correlated with each other which aligns well with previous research using these scales in Canada and internationally (e.g., Coombs & DeLuca, 2022; DeLuca, Coombs, & LaPointe-McEwan, 2019). The correlation among assessment dimensions and rje dimensions (see Methodology chapter, Table 3) is discussed below to provide a deeper understanding of their relationships. *Assessment of learning* was correlated with assessment fairness including all three dimensions (i.e., s*tandard, equitable, personalized*). *Assessment for learning* was correlated well with *assessment as learning r*(31)= .49, *p*=.004, communication *r*(31)= .46, *p*=.008 and *design r*(31)= .39, *p*=.027. Like *assessment for learning, assessment as learning* was also correlated with design *r*(31)= .73, *p*<.001 and *communication r*(31)= .62, *p*<001. *Design* and *communication* were correlated well with each other *r*(31)= .57, *p*<.001. *Scoring* was correlated with assessment fairness including all three dimensions (i.e., *standard, equitable, personalized*) and measurement theory, except *reliability. Standard* was correlated well with measurement theory as well. *Equitable* and *personalized* dimensions were significantly correlated *r*(31)= .62, *p*<.001. Moreover, there was a strong correlation between *validity* and *balanced* dimensions *r*(31)= .62, *p*<.001.

Interestingly, rje items were correlated with assessment items in this study. In particular, one dimension of rje, *nurturing healthy relationships*, was significantly correlated with four assessment dimensions. N*urturing healthy relationships* was negatively correlated with *assessment of learning r*(31)= - .37, *p*=.046, *standard r*(31)= -.56, *p*=.002 and *reliability r*(31)= - .48, *p*=.008, positively correlated with *communication r*(31)= .39, *p*=.034. *Creating just and equitable environments* and r*epairing harm and transforming conflict* did not significantly correlate with assessment dimensions.

Table 7

Correlations between assessment and restorative justice in education for classroom teachers

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1.AoL	--														
2.AfL	.458**	--													
3.AaL	.399**	.667**	--												
4.Design	.451**	.634**	.529**	--											
5.Scoring	.585**	.324*	.334*	.466**	--										
6.Communication	.438**	.717**	.682**	.677**	.297*	--									
7.Standard	.656**	.151	.274	.176	.419**	.295*	--								
8.Equitable	.575**	.667**	.601**	.507**	.609**	.623**	.420**	--							
9.Personalized	.379**	.601**	.678**	.558**	.572**	.456**	.160	.658**	--						
10.Reliability	.617**	.411**	.348*	.419**	.647**	.369**	.596**	.459**	.290*	--					
11.Validity	.548**	.545**	.598**	.421**	.527**	.394**	.361**	.603**	.591**	.493**	--				
12.Balanced	.719**	.599**	.606**	.457**	.529**	.516**	.486**	.764**	.589**	.575**	.649**	--			
13.Just and equitable environments	.070	.329*	.236	.420**	.124	.350*	-.084	.306*	.378**	.037	.075	.202	--		
14.Nurturing healthy relationships	.028	.505**	.431**	.564**	.065	.424**	-.158	.272	.413**	.117	.118	.245	.660**	--	
15.Repairing harms and transforming conflict	-.020	.254	.203	.395**	.045	.219	-.096	.087	.134	.130	.084	.082	.487**	.501**	--

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

A Pearson's correlation provides further insight into the relationship between and within assessment and rje factors (Table 7). Like the analysis of teacher candidates, correlations among assessment dimensions, rje dimensions and assessment literacy themes (see Methodology chapter, Table 4) were calculated to provide a deeper understanding of their relationships. With the exception of *standard* and *personalized*, all assessment dimensions were significantly correlated with each other. *Assessment of learning, scoring, standard* dimensions and measurement theory (i.e., *reliability, validity and balanced*) did not have any significant correlations with rje dimensions.

Unlike the analysis of teacher candidates, all rje dimensions were significantly correlated with each other. *Creating just and equitable environments* was correlated with *nurturing healthy relationships r*(50)= .66, *p<*.001 and *repairing harms and transforming conflict r*(50)= .49, *p<*.001. Also, *nurturing healthy relationships* and *repairing harms and transforming conflict* were correlated with each other *r*(50)= .50, *p<*.001.

Assessment and rje dimensions were significantly correlated with each other. Unlike the correlation analysis with teacher candidates, all significant correlations between assessment and rje were positive. *Design* was the only assessment dimension that was significantly correlated with all rje dimensions. This dimension was correlated with *creating just and equitable environments r*(50)= .42, *p=*.003, *nurturing healthy relationships r*(50)= .56, *p<*.001, and r*epairing harm and transforming conflict r*(50)= .39, *p=*.005. *Nurturing healthy relationships* was correlated with *assessment for learning r*(50)= .51, *p<*.001, *assessment as learning r*(50)= .43, *p=*.002, *communication r*(50)= .42, *p=*.003, and *personalized r*(50)= .41, *p=*.004. *Creating just and equitable environments* was correlated well with *assessment for learning r*(50)= .33,

p=.022, *communication r*(50)= .35, *p*=.015, *equitable r*(50)= .31, *p*=.034, and *personalized*

r(50)= .38, *p*=.008.

Phase 2

The qualitative data was collected in the form of open-ended survey items in addition to

interview transcripts to explore the relationship between assessment and rje for both groups. 42

classroom teachers and 14 teacher candidates responded to open-ended survey items. Thematic

analyses (Saldana, 2011) resulted in three broad themes: i) educators' approaches to ca; ii)

educators' approaches to rje, and iii) challenges of educators with assessment and rje practices in

classrooms. For each theme, the dominant subthemes that were commented on the most were

discussed and elaborated for both teacher candidates and classroom teachers.

Educators' Approaches to Classroom Assessment

Educators' approaches to classroom assessment were the most commented aspect of this

study. Approximately 49% of participants, including both teacher candidates and classroom

teachers, commented on approaches to classroom assessment with an emphasis on these

subthemes: multi-methods of assessment, purpose of assessment, and emotional effects of

assessment on students.

Multi-methods of assessment included any comments about implementing or suggesting

different classroom assessment practices and/or activities (e.g., play-based learning activities,

projects, classroom presentations, formative assessments, videos, multi-model literacies) in

classrooms. Approximately 22% of educators mentioned the importance of using multi-methods

of assessment to enhance student learning and motivation, especially for students with diverse

backgrounds and/or special needs, to improve relationships among peers by interactive activities

and to evaluate students' learning by alternative assessment techniques. A junior high teacher

who teaches student with diverse backgrounds noted that multi-model literacies are the only way to establish the concepts related to language and math in students' minds due to the language barriers and lack of sufficient education background of those students. This teacher also shared that short videos, audios, visuals, and even body language can be a tool for teaching regardless of the subject. Another teacher supported that idea by saying; "Assessments can be anything that the student can produce." (T1) A teacher candidate agreed on this as well; "Consider other methods of testing student's knowledge of the subject and allowing them to have a choice - choosing a project, writing a test, or demonstrating another method." (TC- open-ended survey response). In addition, some classroom teachers said that they prefer formative assessments rather than summative assessments as they provide opportunities to choose for students. A classroom teacher mentioned their perspective by saying; "I try to implement more formative assessments than summative, and assessments with choice I learned that providing students with options will help them best portray their knowledge of the concepts in a way that best suits their abilities, relieve anxiety, and improve motivation." (T5)

A high school science teacher stated that understanding students' preferences in assessment and study habits and any obstacles/challenges about learning at the beginning of the semester help to plan classroom activities and methods of assessment. Based on this teacher's experiences, students can come together with their like-minded peers and study collaboratively, which is a great chance to strengthen the relationships among students and between students and teacher. This was supported by another classroom teacher by noting:

> We all have different strengths. And I think it's important that you recognize that for those students, and that you're able to figure out if some are more verbal, if some of them are more creative visually, if some of them are more artistic, I think you have to build on those

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strengths. If not, we just create a generation of average individuals, and no one really good at anything. (T6).

A teacher candidate said: "Reflect on my instruction, provide an alternative form of assessment on the same content to see if the students understand the content. Perhaps the issue was the test or my instruction, not the students' comprehension.". This pointed out how multi-methods of assessment could help teachers to use metacognition for their teaching skills.

Purpose of assessment included educators' perspectives on the aim of assessment practices, the expected outcomes from assessment practices and their personal views on these factors. Approximately 15% of educators commented on the purpose of assessment. Most educators prioritized monitoring students' progress for the purpose of assessment. Evaluating assessment results helped teachers understand the learning progress on individual and classroom levels as a teacher candidate noted; "The purpose of assessment in the classroom was to meet a certain standard to ensure an average level of understanding." (TC1). Also, covering the curriculum outcomes was noted as one purpose of the assessment. Some teachers stated that assessment enables them to set a semester-based standard and specific objectives for teaching learning processes, which present a frame for teaching for all teachers based on subjects and grade levels. This was also mentioned that having certain standards for assessments are important for the quality of the education. However, monitoring students' progress and covering the curriculum could be challenging for some teachers. A classroom teacher said that it is a lot to balance to cover the curriculum objectives and monitor students' progress in a strict timeline. Another teacher drew attention to the significance of formative assessments. This teacher mentioned that formative assessments are tools for receiving and giving feedback about learning progress without waiting for a final grade at the end of the semester. A teacher supported this

idea by saying; "Assessments can be used in the learning process, not just to provide information of how much knowledge one has of a subject area at that given time." (T5). Therefore, students could have time to improve their learning and to see their strengths /weaknesses in their own learning, and teachers could have time to scaffold students' learning based on the feedback on formative assessments. In sum, formative assessment enables teachers to evaluate the process rather than the outcome. This teacher supported implementing formative assessments by saying: "We have to catch the children before they fall off the waterfall, it's no good to catch them after they've already fallen, is no good to scoop them out of that water after they're already done, you have to catch them before they fail."

Educators talked about *emotional effects of assessment on students* besides its academic functions. Despite the advantages of assessment (e.g., providing a standard for learning, a tool for feedback on students' learning, evaluating students' learning outcomes), the detrimental emotional effects of assessment were also noted as disadvantages of assessments. Approximately 12% of educators commented on the emotional effects of assessment and most of them pointed out the negative effects of assessment on students' stress, anxiety and confidence. An ESL teacher noted; "I don't enjoy exams in general, because it makes students feel stressed." (T1). All of these educators agreed that the competitive structure of assessment and evaluating learning outcomes with only grades make students feel stressed, anxious, which may lead to low self-esteem and self-confidence. A teacher provided an example for this idea by saying; "It's a scary world to be in as a teenager, and many teens may see assessments as monsters they can't escape from. Assigning a definite/physical number grade enforces the judgment and makes it feel very real. This can have detrimental effects on their mental health, including their self-esteem, and motivation." (T5). A teacher candidate explained this by sharing their personal experience.

This teacher candidate said that during school years, they defined assessment as a way of being and as a tool for measuring intelligence. Hence, becoming academically successful and getting "good" grades from the assessment are indicators of being "smart". Another teacher candidate added; "During grades 7-12, I personally became a very big perfectionist about my schoolwork because I wanted to get good grades. However, this really manifested itself as anxiety, and I became super nervous to hand in assignments or take tests because of the possibility of failure." (TC- open-ended survey response).

A high school teacher highlighted how family dynamics affect students' perceptions of assessment by stating that: "Like some parents take tests and assessment very seriously and spent hours grilling a child at home to prepare them for, you know, the science tests the next day or the math tests the next day, whereas other people don't do that. And so kids are going to have different levels of stress at home for it too." On the contrary, some educators pointed out the positive emotional effects of assessment. A junior high teacher stated that through assessment, students could build confidence, strengthen their study habits and empower their resilience, which are great life-skills.

Educators' Approaches to Restorative Justice in Education

Educators' approaches to rje included familiarity with rje, impact of rje on educational practices, and the importance of open communication in classrooms. In this section, the thoughts, observations, and personal experiences of educators were discussed; 29% of educators, including teacher candidates and teachers, commented on this theme in this study.

Familiarity with rje provides knowledge, background and perspectives of educators about rje practices. Most of them mentioned that they are somehow familiar with rje from various

resources (e.g., PL sessions, undergraduate/graduate courses, personal interest). A classroom teacher gave examples from their personal experiences in their classrooms to elaborate how rje is used to enhance relationships among students; "But we went into the circle with our students. And we spoke about, you know, why did you tell this? How did you feel when you [were using] these words? And the other students [shared] how they felt. So, everyone spoke, everyone told me, [how] they feel [now]." (T1)

However, educators defined rje with different concepts based on their understandings. Relationships, equality, equity, inclusive classrooms and circles were the most cited words for defining rje. Interestingly, some educators said that rje might be related to teachers' personality traits; hence implementing rje practices are only possible with certain personality profiles. A teacher said; "A lot of it probably comes from your personality, just the type of person that you are in general." (T3) A primary/elementary teacher defined rje as a technique rather than an educational paradigm and stated that circles are used in their classrooms, especially for conflict resolution.

Additionally, some teacher candidates and classroom teachers mentioned they do not have a deep understanding of rje or it is limited by their personal interest. A teacher candidate said; " I did a lot of research into restorative justice, and what that means and the impact that it can have on minority communities." (TC1). A classroom teacher shared their perspectives about the teacher candidates' knowledge by saying; "I believe many teacher candidates and teachers have no idea about restorative justice. Our system should be renewed and restorative justice should be told to teacher candidates properly. Otherwise, it is not possible to embed it to whole education system."(T- open-ended survey response)

Impact of rje on educational practices was about how implementation and understanding of rje shape or change educational practices at the classroom level and teacher-student dynamics in classes. Many educators agreed that rje practices helped them to become more empathetic and think harder about their relationships with students. A teacher candidate mentioned that rje enables to see not only the tip of the iceberg but also the part under the sea in terms of the needs of students and relationships. This teacher candidate also said rje practice provides an opportunity to understand students' contexts and personal histories, which enhances the relationships with students by saying; "Restorative justice, from my own experiences, has taught me to be more open-minded" (TC1). Another classroom teacher commented on this; "I think it gives it gives the student an ability to show." (T2)

A classroom teacher cited that through a restorative justice lens, it is possible to use assessment practices to understand students' needs and added; "Hopefully, it makes me a better teacher, I would hope and makes me more understanding and more responsive and more willing to think about the needs of others." (T3). This teacher noted that rje shapes their own approach to assessment in a positive and supportive way without defining assessment as a punitive and stressful evaluation tool. Related to this, another teacher talked about understanding assessment results in terms of rje. This teacher mentioned that rje enables seeing assessment as a learning tool by considering individual contexts and needs of students. Therefore, the results of the assessment can be used for the personal and academic growth of students.

Another subtheme was the *importance of open communication in classrooms* through rje. Most educators noted that rje helped them create spaces for open communication and meaningful conversations in their classrooms. A classroom teacher said; "I guess my number one thing is that the kids feel safe and comfortable in the room and then engaged in the conversation or in the

learning is second and then assessment." (T4). A teacher candidate mentioned that Canada welcomes many refugees and immigrants each year, which led to having students with different cultural backgrounds in the classrooms. In these multicultural classrooms, it is important to respect and listen to each student and make them feel belong and comfortable by saying: "I want to make it so that they all feel equal, but they understand the cultural differences between each culture that's in the room.". Another teacher supported this idea; "I think in order for them to be vocal about their differences, and about their cultural divides, and a socio-economic divide, I think we all have to be very open up front with that, I think transparency is key." (T6). In addition, an itinerant teacher agreed with this idea and shared an anecdote from their classrooms. This teacher mentioned that teaching in multicultural classrooms may be challenging due to language barriers and variations in body language. Students may directly translate some idioms or expressions from their mother tongue to English, which may become a language barrier. Another example that is shared by this teacher is about the challenges of students with diverse backgrounds regarding body language in the Canadian context. Some gestures or behaviors may have different meanings in various cultures. For example, running down to the hall during break may be a usual student behavior in Turkey, but it may be unusual in Canada. This teacher said asking questions to learn what they meant is the key factor to overcoming this kind of misunderstanding in multicultural classrooms, which helps to have comfortable spaces for all students and added; "Definitely so we just need to understand it [as] communication is one of the most important things."

Challenges of Educators with Assessment and Restorative Justice Practices in Classrooms

Despite the enthusiasm and motivation of educators to use assessments effectively and to enhance relationships in their classroom through a restorative lens, approximately 21% of educators commented on their challenges with assessment and rje practices. In this section, both system-wide and classroom-wide challenges were noted by teacher candidates and teachers: meeting the curriculum expectations, autonomy of teachers and the need for change in education policies.

Approximately 25% of educators who commented on this section talked about *meeting curriculum expectations* as a challenge in their classrooms. Most teachers shared that covering all curriculum outcomes within a tight timeline hinders meeting the individual learning needs of students and proceeding with the same pace in the classroom. A junior high teacher highlighted the importance of curriculum outcomes as they are resourceful guides for teachers. This teacher also mentioned these outcomes limit her flexibility in the classroom and lead to a dilemma: covering the curriculum or making necessary changes in the curriculum for every student. Another teacher agreed on this and said that the strict timeline and heaviness of the curriculum objectives make it difficult for themselves and for students; "I should be finishing all of the grade 1 to 8 curriculum of math and science and social studies and get ready to a high school education. So what kind of assessments are we talking about here?" (T2). Similarly, another teacher mentioned that the strict timeline limits their flexibility for using formative assessments; "I do a lot of formative assessment, you know, even orally or check coins and just see and try to keep on the government's suggested timeline." (T4). Another teacher pointed out the necessity of curricular outcomes with the same hesitation by saying: "If we measure the "curricular outcomes" differently among students with different rubrics/criteria we logistically cannot

compare them (grades on a report card, etc.). Standardized tests appear to compare students equally but not fairly.". Hence, teachers may experience inconsistencies between curriculum outcomes and individual needs of students time to time in their classrooms. A teacher had a different perspective about meeting the curriculum expectations by mentioning; "Due to high academic expectations in high school grades, not sure about rje practices might be implemented in all high school grades." (T- open-ended survey response).

Another challenge for educators was not having *autonomy* in teaching-learning processes. As discussed in the covering curriculum outcomes part, following the curricular objectives might limit the flexibility of teachers in their classroom, which is directly related to their autonomy. A teacher said; "I think the policies make it hard to really make your own decisions about what you would like to do with assessment." (T3). Many teachers agreed that teachers could understand the needs of students through observation, assessment and classroom activities. Therefore, they should have room for autonomy in their classes in terms of academic progress. A teacher said: "I always believe that I am the person who decides what is good or wrong about the students. Not the policies that are written by somebody else who doesn't have an idea what's going on in this classroom". Another teacher pointed out how the emphasis on standardized educational policies (e.g., report cards, grade system, end-year exams, standardized tests) contradict their autonomy in the classrooms.

The need for change in educational policies presented educators' perspectives, opinions and personal experiences about the educational shift in NL. Most teachers agreed that there is a long way to go and NL is at the beginning of a turning point. A teacher mentioned the need for change by saying this, "Obviously, [education system] is not working right now, so there has to be a kind of a shift, a change in the policies in the way the things that we are doing in the

classrooms and the way we are behaving as teachers" (T2).

An elementary teacher cited that educational policies or practices should be updated to have a more effective education system for teachers and students, such as report cards. This teacher said: "Our whole report card really needs to change, like we're using this rating scale. People don't understand the rating scale, and parents don't understand the rating scale." Building an inclusive education system that can be understood by teachers, parents, and students enhances parent and student engagement, which is an important factor for student motivation and socio-emotional needs of students. A teacher supported this idea by saying," They need to remove outcomes in some subjects and update the health curriculum so we can focus more on SEL and not fall behind on other outcomes" (T- open-ended survey response). Also, another teacher pointed out that the understanding of the education should be changed since it is more than academics, "I think we really need to re-evaluate why there is such a push for semesterization in high schools in this province. I agree, there are many pros of semesterization but there are also many setbacks. I do not think semesterization truly realizes the potential of each student as everything is so rushed. It does NOT allow the teachers to build rapport and relationships. School is so much more than books and academics" (T- open-ended survey response).

Teachers underlined the need for change in assessment and rje. A teacher mentioned that creating a new educational system that includes rje practices is only possible with teacher education programs by saying, "Our system should be renewed and restorative justice should be told to teacher candidates properly. Otherwise, it is not possible to embed it to whole education system" (T – open-ended survey response). Hence, the role of teacher candidates could become more important in implementing rje practices in classrooms in the long run. Another teacher highlighted the need for professional learning and development (PLD) sessions for current

teachers to learn more about rje. Well-planned and long-term PLD sessions could help teachers to understand the theory of rje and internalize how to embed it in their classrooms. Another teacher pointed out the need for including rje into PLD sessions to move forward; "NLESD is in big need of professional development for staff (support staff and teaching staff) to understand restorative practice and relationships first…" (T- open-ended survey response).

Across Career Stages

As discussed within Chapter 3, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted on ACAI scenario-based questions and rje items. Two factors were identified: *teacher-centered* and *student-centered. The factor teacher-centered contained assessment of learning, assessment as learning, scoring, standard, equitable, personalized, validity, reliability and balanced. The student-centered factor contained assessment for learning, assessment as learning, design, communication, equitable, personalized, creating just and equitable environments and repairing harm and transforming conflict. Assessment as learning, equitable and personalized are common in both factors.* In order to examine teacher candidates' and classroom teachers' approaches to assessment and rje in relation to demographic groupings, their average scores and standard deviations were calculated for *teacher-centered* and *student-centered* factors. Differences between teacher candidates' and classroom teachers' average scores to these factors were examined in relation to their teaching assignment and location of K-12 schooling.

Table 8

Mean scores and standard deviations for teacher-centered and student-centered factors

Demographics	*Teacher-centered*	*Student-centered*	*n*
Teaching assignment			
Primary/Elementary	4.19(.57)	4.78(.50)	82
Secondary	4.04(.69)	4.57(.66)	51
Cohen's *d*	.24	.36	
Location of K-12 schooling			
Newfoundland and Labrador	4.12(.63)	4.69(.58)	76
Outside of Newfoundland and Labrador	3.86(.69)	4.77(.70)	11
Cohen's *d*	.39	.12	

Note. All responses on a 6-point scale (1= not likely; 6 = very likely).

For teaching assignment, all participants were grouped as primary/elementary and secondary. Previous research shows that the grade levels of teachers are important indicators of approaches to assessment (Coombs & DeLuca, 2022; DeLuca et. al., 2018); therefore, current teaching assignment(s) for both teacher candidates and classroom teachers were grouped as primary/elementary and secondary grades. For the location of K-12 schooling, educators were grouped as people who completed their K-12 schooling in NL and outside of NL. The majority of teacher candidates and classroom teachers completed their K-12 education in this province, only eight of them completed their K-12 education outside of this province. Although the mean scores and standard deviations were not similar in *teacher-centered* and *student-centered* factors, location of K-12 schooling was not significant indicator for determining these factors, likely due to the small sample size of the latter group.

Demographic variables were not included: region of teaching, the highest degree of education, the year of obtaining the highest degree of education, and stage of terms in the teacher education program due to limited variability within groups or sample-specific variables.

Summary of Results

After reviewing the findings of this study, four major patterns have emerged;

1. Across the 15 approaches to ca and rje dimensions (twelve dimensions for ca and three dimensions for rje), teacher candidates' and classroom teachers' endorsement were not statistically significantly different (with the exception of *communication*).

2. How each group of educators understood the relationship between the 15 approaches to ca and rje dimensions were quite different.

3. Both teacher candidates and classroom teachers believed they did not have sufficient knowledge about rje, however they did not indicate similar concerns about ca.

In the final chapter of my thesis, the main findings of this study will be discussed through addressing research questions and relevant literature. Moreover, the significance of these findings, limitations of this study, and possible areas of future research will be discussed.

Chapter 5: Discussion

While there is plenty of research in the Canadian educational context supporting the perspective that classroom experiences influence Canadian teachers' beliefs and shape approaches to assessment practice (e.g., Coombs, DeLuca, & MacGregor, 2020; DeLuca, LaPointe-McEwan, & Luhanga, 2016), few studies have examined how rje, which explicitly invites educators to recognize the importance of relationships in education, are connected to classroom assessment practice. Also, few studies focus on the perspectives of teacher candidates at the end of their teacher education program (e.g., Coombs, DeLuca, & MacGregor, 2020), which is important for professional development plans and understanding future educators' approaches. Willis et al. (2013) define assessment as "a dynamic context-dependent social practice," which emphasizes the relationships between teachers and students and the cultural context of learning. Rje emphasizes the interconnectedness and mutual relationships among students and teachers, respecting the dignity and worth of all and the importance of inclusive environments in the classroom (Evans & Vaandering, 2016), in which beliefs and values have a significant role. Therefore, this study explores the relationship between future and current teachers' approaches to assessment and their rje practices by addressing three research questions:

1. How do educators in NL approach ca?

2. How do educators in NL approach rje?

3. What is the relationship between educators' approaches to ca and rje?

    a. Does this differ between teacher candidates and classroom teachers?

Through survey and interviews, teacher candidates and classroom teachers from NL shared their perspectives on assessment, rje, and the relationships between them. In this chapter,

I will discuss the implications of key findings in relation to literature review. I will begin to summarize some literature and then address the key takeaways from this study related to educators' approaches to assessment and rje, and the key differences between the approaches of teacher candidates and classroom teachers on assessment and rje. I will conclude this chapter by considering the significance and limitations of this study and suggesting future directions.

Relationships Matter

Across the 15 approaches to ca and rje dimensions, teacher candidates' and classroom teachers' endorsement were not statistically significantly different, except in the area of *communication*. There was a statistically significant difference between the *communication* dimension of teacher candidates and classroom teachers, which indicates that classroom teachers endorse communication at a greater extent than teacher candidates. Despite the differences of the mean scores in other dimensions, these differences were not found to be statistically significant. Since *communication* is the common dimension in three assessment literacies, teacher-centric, student-centric, and socio-cultural assessment literacies, this difference was anticipated. Previous research (e.g., DeLuca, Coombs, & LaPointe-McEwan, 2019; Hilaski, 2020; Klenowski, 2009; Willis et al., 2013; Yan & Pastore, 2022) supports this notion that *communication* plays an important role in interpreting the results and providing feedback to students for summative assessment (assessment *of* learning), formative assessment (assessment *for* learning and assessment *as* learning) and three conceptions of assessment literacy (i.e., teacher-centric assessment literacy, student-centric assessment literacy, and socio-cultural assessment literacy).

Relationship between students and teachers was discussed in Literature Review chapter from different perspectives in these three assessment literacies. In teacher-centric assessment literacy, teachers communicate with students through summative assessments,

assessment expectations, criteria, and grades to make decisions about instructional practices and assessment design. By measuring the learning outcomes, teachers can use assessment to tailor their instruction and provide targeted support for students. For student-centric assessment literacy, teachers communicate with students through formative assessment and feedback. This collaborative learning environment enables students to understand assessment expectations and criteria, which results in being able to take ownership of their learning, set goals, and self-assess their progress. Socio-cultural assessment literacy emphasizes the dynamic relationships between students, teachers, and the context by enhancing the role of the students in classroom assessment. *Communication* that takes into account the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of students can help teachers design assessments that are culturally responsive and inclusive, and that support equitable opportunities for all students to succeed.

As explained by DeLuca (2016), Hilaski (2020), Klenowski (2009), Willis et al. (2013), Yan & Pastore (2022), and many other assessment scholars, the socio-cultural assessment literacy addresses the relationship between teachers, students, *and their contexts*. The definitions of assessment as a multilayered, complex relational exchange process between students and teachers (Schwartz, 2017) and dynamic social practice (Willis et al., 2013) support the importance of *communication* to enhance learning outcomes and academic achievement. The socio-cultural assessment literacy is closely related to relational theory since it addresses the socio-cultural context and dynamic relationships in teaching-learning processes. The relational theory emphasizes strengthening relationships among all people and the inevitableness of relationships for humans (Brown & Di Lallo, 2020; Llewellyn & Llewellyn, 2015; Schwartz, 2017). This theory underscores the significance of the interaction between teachers and students in shaping the learning experiences of students in the educational realm. When teachers and

students have a dynamic relationship, they establish a common ground to discuss and blend knowledge and cultural backgrounds (Blustein, 2011). Consequently, students feel respected and appreciated, which in turn creates a safe environment that enables students to explore novel ideas and take risks. Positive relationships between teachers and students are linked to enhanced academic achievement and learning (Hattie, 2012; Smith et al., 2017). When teachers intentionally pay attention to the quality of their interactions with students and use deliberate instructional strategies, it creates a positive learning environment where relationships between the teacher and students naturally develop. This leads to the formation of classroom communities that support academic, social, and emotional growth (Crownover & Jones, 2018; Reeves & Le Mare, 2017).

The significance of relationships is also underlined by social constructivism, which is a learning theory that emphasizes the role of social interaction and collaborative learning in the construction of knowledge (DeBoer, 2013; Richardson, 2003). It posits that individuals construct knowledge by interacting with their environment and with others and that knowledge is not simply transmitted from teachers to students but is co-constructed in social contexts (Proulx, 2006). Thus, both social constructivism and socio-cultural assessment literacy acknowledge that learning and assessment are not isolated events but are influenced by social and cultural factors. They both suggest that assessments should be designed in a way that takes into account the social and cultural contexts of the students and the assessment process. Therefore, assessments cannot be separated from teachers' and students' cultural backgrounds, beliefs, experiences, feelings, and relationships.

Rje can be understood by relational theory and social constructivism since it emphasizes the interconnectedness and mutual relationships among students and teachers to enhance

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relationships and understand the context of teachers and students in the classroom (Evans & Vaandering, 2016). Three core values of rje (i.e*., creating just and equitable environments, nurturing healthy relationships and repairing harm,* and *transforming conflict*) accentuate the importance of collective well-being and the dynamics of the relationships. At this point, it is important to note that the dynamics of the relationships were mentioned in both the socio-cultural assessment literacy and rje. As they seem to be quite separate paradigms, they both emphasize the importance of creating inclusive and equitable learning environments that take into account the social and cultural contexts of learners. Rje focuses on how these relationships create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students by nurturing healthy relationships and repairing harm, while the socio-cultural assessment literacy focuses on how these relationships impact the assessment process and learning outcomes by considering the context. When these two paradigms are combined, they can lead to a more holistic and inclusive approach to education that recognizes and values the diverse social and cultural backgrounds of learners. Using rje principles in classroom assessment practices allows teachers to create a safe and supportive environment where students feel seen and heard, and where their cultural backgrounds and experiences are respected. This leads to more equitable and culturally responsive assessment practices that support the learning and success of all students.

The Relationship Window (see Literature Review, Figure 2, p.26) presents a framework for how communication and interaction with others are influenced by the expectation and support for being human (Vaandering, 2014). It also shows the dynamics of relationships between teachers and students, as well as among teachers and students. This window has four quadrants: "*to", "not", "for"*, and "*with*", which represent different aspects of the teacher-student relationship (Evans & Vaandering, 2022). The *"to"* and *"for"* quadrants show power-

over relationships, where teachers see students as objects to be managed or supported with conditional acceptance. The *"not"* quadrant represents neglect or rejection of involvement in situations. The *"with"* quadrant represents power-with relationships, where teachers and students work collaboratively to co-construct knowledge and learning experiences. By understanding these quadrants, teachers can develop a deeper understanding of their relationships with students and work to build positive relationships that promote student growth and achievement. The aim is to enhance all relationships in the school by placing them in the *"with"* quadrant because it relies on a relationship-based, dialogic framework that contrasts with the more common hierarchical, power-based structure (Vaandering & Voelker, 2018).

As discussed previously in the Literature Review chapter, the conceptions of assessment literacies overlap three quadrants of the Relationship Window (Figure 2, p.26). The teacher-centric assessment literacy aligns with the *"to"* quadrant of the window, as it emphasizes the role of teachers in controlling and assessing students' knowledge. The student-centric assessment literacy aligns with the *"for"* quadrant, as it emphasizes the importance of formative assessment, feedback, and active roles of students, while teachers still hold power over students. The socio-cultural assessment literacy aligns with the *"with"* quadrant, as it emphasizes the dynamic relationship between teachers, students, and the context, and promotes assessment as a mutual process without power imbalances. While the *"with"* quadrant of the Relationship Window and the socio-cultural approach to assessment literacy share a focus on collaboration and mutual respect between teachers and students, the socio-cultural approach is broader in scope and emphasizes the importance of cultural factors in assessment practices. The *"with"* quadrant, on the other hand, focuses specifically on the teacher-student relationship and emphasizes the importance of power-sharing and collaboration between them. Thus, different ways of

communication are embedded in these assessment literacies and quadrants in the Relationship Window. Expectedly, teacher candidates and classroom teachers supported the notion that assessment and rje are intertwined in the *communication* dimension. It is important to note that despite the overlapping characteristics between socio-cultural assessment literacy and rje, there is not any assessment literacy that includes common core beliefs and values of rje, which addresses the need of developing the fourth assessment literacy in future research.

Seeing the Forest or the Trees: Teacher Candidates and Classroom Teachers

How teacher candidates and classroom teachers understood the relationship between the 15 approaches to ca and rje dimensions was quite different. There were three common trends between each group's perspectives based on the data: (a) teacher candidates were able to see the relationship only between *nurturing healthy relationships* and assessment themes, (b) classroom teachers were able to see the relationship within all rje dimensions (i.e., *creating just and equitable environments, nurturing healthy relationships*, and *repairing harm and transforming conflict)* and their relationship with all assessment themes, (c) teacher candidates were not able to see the relationship within rje dimensions. As a result, classroom teachers seemed to have a unified approach, which leads to a more complex understanding of the relationship between ca and rje. A plausible explanation for these trends is classroom teachers' age, teaching experience and education policies and professional standards in the district.

Classroom teachers (mean[SD]=39.20[7.1]) were older than teacher candidates (mean[SD]= 23.23[6.7]) and had more years in K-12 teaching (mean[SD]=15.83[7.6]). Teaching experience within a classroom setting is quite important for implementing ca (Mertler, 2003) and rje practices (Hollweck et al., 2019). Previous research shows that teaching experience plays an important role in influencing teachers' beliefs (Coombs, DeLuca, & MacGregor, 2020; DeLuca,

LaPointe-McEwan, & Luhanga, 2016) and shaping teachers' assessment practices (MacLellan, 2004; Liu, 2008; Remesal, 2011). Despite the advantages of formative assessment on student learning and engagement (Yan & Pastore, 2022), they are not commonly used in classrooms (Desimone, 2009), in which teaching experience plays an important role. Novice or early career teachers' assessment practices and knowledge are heavily focused on formative assessment (Coombs et al., 2018; Rogers et al., 2020), whereas experienced teachers tend to use summative assessments more frequently (MacLellan, 2004). In order to implement rje practices effectively, classroom teachers need to be exposed to it in their classrooms regularly and teacher candidates should experience it throughout their teacher education rather than coursework since rje is best understood through relationships (Hollweck et al., 2019). Coursework is generally designed to assess students' knowledge and skills covered in the course by completing tasks and is led by an instructor. On the contrary, experiencing an educational concept allows students to practice its basics and to build relationships during the learning process. Since rje focuses on the dialectical relationships between theory and practice, and maintaining relationships, teacher candidates should experience it through relational structures including circles. Since teacher education tends to focus on more technical expertise rather than relationship building in the Canadian context (Jackson & Boutte, 2018), teacher candidates have challenges implementing rje with adequate context and resources (Kohli et al., 2019) and embedding rje to all areas of the classroom, including assessment. Since classroom teachers had more teaching experience in classrooms and were older, they had more chance to practice and experience both assessment and rje, which resulted in having a more complex understanding of the relationship between assessment and rje practices.

Relational theory emphasizes the importance of the interactions and relationships among people (Brown & Di Lallo, 2020; Llewellyn & Llewellyn, 2015; Schwartz, 2017). In the context of teaching and learning, this theory suggests that teachers' beliefs, practices, and professional development are shaped by their interactions with students, colleagues, and the broader educational community. The differences between the approaches of teacher candidates and classroom teachers highlighted the role of experience and practice in shaping teachers' understanding of assessment and rje practices. Classroom teachers were able to practice both assessment and rje in their classrooms; however, teacher candidates were only able to learn these concepts theoretically and did not have a chance to implement them. As such, understanding the relationship between ca and rje practices requires educators to draw on their past experiences, relationships, and interactions with students, colleagues, and other stakeholders in the educational community, which is consistent with the relational theory. Hence, classroom teachers' approaches relied on operationalization, whereas teacher candidates' approaches relied on conceptualization.

Education policies and professional standards have played an important role in using classroom assessment practices for student development (Klinger, McDivitt, Howard, Rogers, Munoz, & Wylie, 2015). Provincial educational policies (e.g., Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2022; NLESD, 2017) explicitly support both formative and summative assessments (assessment *of* learning) and formative assessments (assessment *for* learning and assessment *as* learning). The *Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting* policy highlights the role of assessment in informing instruction and checking progress and learning outcomes as well. In the policy documents, the purpose of assessment was defined as supporting student growth and improving student learning and achievement (NLESD, 2017). Rje was acknowledged by the provincial

government and the school district but has not yet been developed in the policy. RFNL has had a partnership with NLESD which includes incorporating rje practices in Safe and Inclusive Schools Itinerants and professional learning opportunities for educators and administrators (Memorial University, 2020). NLESD also supported rje policies and practices by including it in Strategic Planning Consultations under Issue #2 Health and Well-Being. Also, the Provincial Government announced an investment in rje (Executive Council Justice and Public Safety Education, 2022), including restorative justice as a term in Safe & Caring School Policies. This collaborative work among NLESD, Memorial University, RFNL, and the Provincial Government and providing resources and professional development opportunities for both assessment and rje promotes classroom teachers' understanding the relationships between assessment and rje.

The Known and Unknown Gaps

The perspectives of teacher candidates and classroom teachers were explored through surveys and semi-structured interviews for ca and rje. In the survey, five scenarios related to ca with thirteen statements were presented to both groups and 18 statements were presented to both groups to understand their perspectives on rje (Appendix I and J). As discussed in the Methodology chapter, twelve dimensions for ca and three dimensions for rje were analyzed. In the interviews, participants were asked to explain their understanding of ca and rje through their experiences and/or classroom observations, and the intersection of assessment and rje (Appendix K and L).

In the analysis of the survey, mean scores for rje dimensions for both teacher candidates and classroom teachers were above five on a 6-point scale, and these items were correlated with each other. Teacher candidates and classroom teachers appeared to agree on these items on the survey (see Results chapter). This could indicate that both groups had a sufficient understanding

of rje practices; however, the analysis of the interviews showed the opposite. Both teacher candidates and classroom teachers did not believe they have sufficient knowledge about rje, however they did not indicate similar concerns about ca.

Four classroom teachers said that they somehow have heard about rje, but they do not have sufficient knowledge about it. One teacher candidate mentioned that the teacher education program does not provide opportunity for deeper understanding of rje but it is her personal research interest that she has explored on her own. Previous research shows that teacher candidates feel underprepared to implement rje practices upon graduation if rje is taught as content rather than experience (Kohli et al., 2019); thus, integrating rje practices into teacher education (Winn, 2016) and embedding rje practices into all areas of classroom climate including design, of the course syllabi, assignments, learning outcomes and assessment (Hollweck et al., 2019) are important. As rje underscores the importance of interactions among people and dialectical relationships between theory and practice, teacher candidates should experience and practice it during their teacher education programs. In order to provide teacher candidates with a firsthand experience of rje, it is valuable for them to engage in relational structures, such as circles. These circles serve as a means for teacher candidates to actively participate in and understand the principles of rje, fostering a deeper comprehension of its implications in real-world educational settings. However, the current programs continue to model an unrelational approach, so teacher candidates only have their own K-12 experience to draw on. This finding emphasizes the importance of investment in rje initiatives (Executive Council Justice and Public Safety Education, 2022), including rje as a framework in educational policies in order to reach out to more educators by providing resources, workshops, and materials to educators (RF-RJNL, 2022).

Two classroom teachers mentioned that they are implementing rje practices in their classrooms regularly. On the contrary, the examples provided for rje showed that these practices have been implemented on a surface level, without a theoretical foundation. For instance, implementing check-in circles before the lesson or for conflict resolution, considering the cultural backgrounds of students for inclusive classrooms and enhancing relationships among students were defined as implementing rje. Since rje practices, beliefs and core values are embedded in the theoretical foundation, it is challenging to separate the theoretical foundation and its practices. The aim of them is to create spaces of shared learning and teaching (Evans & Vaandering, 2016). Therefore, the implementation of rje practices and the facilitation circles without a theoretical foundation does not reflect a sufficient understanding of rje as a framework. As discussed in the Literature Review chapter, rje practices, such as circles, require a deep understanding of their principles, values, and methods to be effective. Rje is not a one-size-fits-all approach and needs to be adapted to each unique context and situation. Understanding the theoretical foundation of rje is necessary to identify when and how to use circles appropriately and effectively in a specific school or classroom setting. Previous research shows that prior planning, consistent support from the district, and deliberation are needed to have a sustainable and effective rje implementation (Wearmouth et al., 2007). Without an education reform, rje implementation remains at the individual level, which may lead to the misunderstanding of it. Therefore, rje must be "normative within the culture, not an alternative" (Reimer, 2011, p. 39). This finding draws attention to the need for regular professional development opportunities for classroom teachers and the need for learning about *and experiencing it* in teacher education programs for teacher candidates (Hollweck et al., 2019) in order to build a sufficient understanding of rje and implement it effectively across the province.

A plausible explanation for why teacher candidates and classroom teachers felt more confident in assessment than rje is that assessment has traditionally been seen as a core part of teaching and learning (Mandinach & Gummer, 2016), and a central component of standards-based, accountability models of education throughout Canada (DeLuca, Rickey, & Coombs, 2021). Thus, teacher candidates have experienced various forms of assessment throughout their own education, giving them a greater confidence. Teacher education programs have a tendency to concentrate on mental and technical expertise rather than socio-emotional development and relationship building (Jackson & Boutte, 2018; Reimer, 2018). Therefore, assessing student learning and using assessments to monitor progress and provide feedback becomes important in education policies (NLESD, 2017, 2022). However, plenty of studies highlight that teacher candidates are not prepared to engage in high-quality assessment practices (Coombs, 2017; DeLuca, Chavez, Bellara, & Cao, 2013; Volante & Fazio, 2007). Teacher candidates and classroom teachers feel confident in ca although previous research shows the lack of preparation for ca. In contrast, rje practices are relatively new and less familiar to many educators. Despite the partnerships, professional learning opportunities, and initiative from the district as mentioned in the 2021-2022 NLESD Annual Report, both teacher candidates and classroom teachers do not believe they are receiving the same level of training or experience for rje, leading to a lack of confidence.

Limitations

Although important findings were found in this study, there were some limitations to the study design and analysis. The first limitation was the impact of the recruitment process and sampling on the findings. The participants were not randomly selected; therefore, educators who were interested in assessment, rje, and the relationship between them were involved in this study.

However, in order to ensure accessibility to participants and the practicality of the study (Cohen et al., 2000), purposive sampling was used in the study. Additionally, the sample size was small in this study to make inferences for the population, all teacher candidates and classroom teachers in this province. As this exploratory study was the first study that examined the intersection of educators' approaches to ca and rje in NL by including both teacher candidates and classroom teachers, this limitation was anticipated.

Second, only NLESD schools were included this study to collect the data. According to the 2021-2022 School Information Report of Newfoundland and Labrador K-12 Educational Statistics, NLESD schools represent 97.6% of NL schools, which makes NLESD schools the dominant group in the province. Further research could address this limitation by including educators from Counseil Scolaire Francophone and independent schools. Interestingly, although it seems like a limitation, including classroom teachers only from NLESD schools, was also a strength since all of them operated within a similar policy context.

Third, the demographic characteristics of teacher candidates and classroom teachers were different. Teacher candidates had a smaller sample size ($n= 32$) compared to classroom teachers ($n=51$) in the survey. Similarly, only one teacher candidate participated in interviews, whereas six classroom teachers participated. The possible reason behind this is that teacher candidates might doubt having sufficient knowledge and experience on assessment and rje and choose not to share their perspectives. Future research could address this limitation by inviting more teacher candidates to share their perspectives.

Fourth, the distribution of grade levels and teaching assignments was more balanced for classroom teachers (see Methodology chapter). The majority of teacher candidates were in primary/elementary levels, whereas classroom teachers had a more even distribution for

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primary/elementary and secondary levels. It is possible that differences between teacher candidates' and classroom teachers' approaches to assessment and rje may have been affected by this, as standardized exam preparation is more common at secondary levels.

Significance and Emerging Questions

This study supports that assessment is a "dynamic context-dependent social practice that involves teachers articulating and negotiating classroom and cultural knowledge with one another and with learners" (Willis, Adie, & Klenowski, 2013, p. 2). This understanding of assessment relates to accepting the interconnectedness among teachers and students by knowing their cultural backgrounds, families, and values and accepting relational well-being as a part of the community is significant in creating equitable classroom practices (Vaandering, 2012). Previous research shows the benefits of student-centric and socio-cultural assessment literacies on enhanced student learning and achievement (e.g., Black & Wiliam, 1998, 2006), students' metacognitive abilities (e.g., Earl, 2012), and motivation and positive self-perception (e.g., Harlen, 2006). The socio-cultural assessment literacy highlights the importance of communication and understanding socio-cultural context between teachers and learners to create inclusive and equitable classrooms for all learners. Future research in this area needs to examine how classroom teachers embed the socio-cultural context in their subject-specific assessment practices.

Findings from this study serve to inform the development of teacher education programs, professional learning opportunities, and educational policies in NL. Previous research shows that gaining experience through teacher education and professional learning opportunities is essential for both teacher candidates and classroom teachers in terms of assessment (Coombs et al; 2020; Mertler 2003) and rje (Winn, 2016). This study is one of the first studies that aim to understand

the trends in beliefs for assessment and rje for both teacher candidates and classroom teachers. As previously mentioned, there is limited research on assessment and rje in this province, which includes both teacher candidates and classroom teachers. Future research in this area needs to examine trends in beliefs for assessment and rje for both teacher candidates and classroom teachers longitudinally. This will allow for understanding the changes in their approaches to assessment and rje over time regarding their teaching experience and age.

In order to understand the relationship between approaches to assessment and rje, future research could replicate this study in a larger context (e.g., including teacher candidates and classroom teachers from different provinces) with a larger sample size. A mixed-method study with a larger context and sample size allows to generalize findings and deepens the understanding of both groups across Canada.

This study highlights the need to enrich the knowledge of rje policies and practices for both teacher candidates and classroom teachers. Both groups believed that there is a lack of basic knowledge of rje among current and future educators. Previous research points out the need of offering a mandatory rje course during teacher education program in order to enhance the knowledge of teacher candidates prior to entering classrooms (Hollweck et al., 2019) and the need of offering professional development opportunities in order to make classroom teachers more confident about rje practices (Mayworm et al., 2016). Since rje is "a way of being" (Hollweck et al., 2019), both teacher candidates and classroom teachers should experience it before implementation. Future research could focus on how to provide the theoretical foundation and practices of rje to teacher candidates and classroom teachers through teacher education programs and professional learning opportunities. Once a solid foundation is built in this area,

the research could focus on promoting these practices and making connections among

educational contexts.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

It is clear that educators' beliefs shape their classroom practices (Pantic & Wubbels, 2010). Educators' beliefs influence their approaches to assessment (DeLuca, Coombs, & LaPointe-McEwan, 2019; DeLuca et al., 2019) and they are indispensable to understanding their rje practices (Vaandering & Voelker, 2018). Teacher candidates' and classroom teachers' approaches to ca and rje were examined to better understand how educators perceive the interconnectedness of these dimensions of their teaching practice. In doing so, critical differences between these two populations in how they understood this interconnectedness were elucidated. Based on this research, three key findings were presented: (a) across the 15 approaches to ca and rje dimensions, teacher candidates' and classroom teachers' endorsement were not statistically significantly different (with the exception of *communication*), (b) how each group of educators understood the relationship between the 15 approaches to ca and rje dimensions were quite different, and (c) both teacher candidates and classroom teachers did not believe they have sufficient knowledge about rje; however they did not indicate similar concerns about assessment. There was an untapped potential within our teacher education program, professional development initiatives, and school-board policies to support the development of our educators, not only in their skills and knowledge related to ca and rje, but also in enhancing their capacity to forge connections between these critically important two domains of practice. Strengthening the relationship between these two paradigms, which finally works to improve classroom assessment practices, enhance socio-cultural assessment literacy and create inclusive classrooms.

This study was a unique experience for me both academically and personally. I gained valuable insights into the perspectives of teacher candidates and classroom teachers on ca and rje, depending on their teaching experience and educational background. Prior to conducting the research, I had some assumptions about the relationship between ca and rje. However, during the data collection and analysis, I gained a deeper understanding of how both groups viewed the relationship between these two components of educational culture. To my surprise, both teacher candidates and classroom teachers supported the idea that ca and rje were connected in some way. I had expected that teacher candidates would have a more nuanced understanding of the relationship, given their recent exposure to educational theories and their role as both students and teachers. However, the results of the study showed that classroom teachers actually had a more complex understanding of the relationship between ca and rje.

During my master's degree at Memorial University, I became familiar with rje. As someone who grew up in the Turkish education system, which relied heavily on standardized exams, summative assessments, and a teacher-centered approach, I did not have the opportunity to experience rje as a student or practice it as a teacher. Before taking the 'Relationships First: Rethinking Educational Engagement' course and conducting this study, I believed that implementing rje depended mainly on personal factors such as motivation, engagement, and educational background, and might not be suitable for all teachers. My educational background in Turkey also contributed to my initial misunderstanding of rje. However, experiencing it as a graduate student was a transformative experience for me and helped me appreciate the value of rje as a framework for education. It was an enlightenment and inspiration for me!

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Appendix A: ICEHR Approval Letter

MEMORIAL
UNIVERSITY

Interdisciplinary Committee on
Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR)

St. John's, NL Canada A1C 5S7
Tel: 709 864-2561 icehr@mun.ca
www.mun.ca/research/ethics/humans/icehr

ICEHR Number:	**20230588-ED**
Approval Period:	September 29, 2022 – September 30, 2023
Funding Source:	
Responsible Faculty:	Dr. Dorothy Vaandering Faculty of Education
Title of Project:	*Understanding Teachers' Approaches to Assessment and Restorative Justice in Education in Newfoundland and Labrador*

September 29, 2022

Mrs. Nevra Sener
Faculty of Education
Memorial University

Dear Mrs. Sener:

Thank you for your correspondence addressing the issues raised by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) for the above-named research project. ICEHR has re-examined the proposal with the clarifications and revisions submitted, and is satisfied that the concerns raised by the Committee have been adequately addressed. In accordance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2)*, the project has been granted *full ethics clearance* for **one year**. ICEHR approval applies to the ethical acceptability of the research, as per Article 6.3 of the *TCPS2*. Researchers are responsible for adherence to any other relevant University policies and/or funded or non-funded agreements that may be associated with the project. If funding is obtained subsequent to ethics approval, you must submit a Funding and/or Partner Change Request to ICEHR so that this ethics clearance can be linked to your award.

The *TCPS2* **requires** that you **strictly adhere to the protocol and documents as last reviewed** by ICEHR. If you need to make additions and/or modifications, you must submit an Amendment Request with a description of these changes, for the Committee's review of potential ethical concerns, before they may be implemented. Submit a Personnel Change Form to add or remove project team members and/or research staff. Also, to inform ICEHR of any unanticipated occurrences, an Adverse Event Report must be submitted with an indication of how the unexpected event may affect the continuation of the project.

The *TCPS2* **requires** that you submit an Annual Update to ICEHR before **September 30, 2023**. If you plan to continue the project, you need to request renewal of your ethics clearance and include a brief summary on the progress of your research. When the project no longer involves contact with human participants, is completed and/or terminated, you are required to provide an annual update with a brief final summary and your file will be closed. All post-approval ICEHR event forms noted above must be submitted by selecting the *Applications: Post-Review* link on your Researcher Portal homepage. We wish you success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

James R Drover

James Drover, Ph.D.
Vice-Chair, Interdisciplinary Committee on
    Ethics in Human Research

JD/bc

cc: Supervisor – Dr. Dorothy Vaandering, Faculty of Education

Appendix B: NLESD Approval Letter

Newfoundland & Labrador English School District

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Chair: Greg O'Leary
C.E.O./Director of Education: Anthony Stack

October 24, 2022

Dear Mrs. Nevra Sener,

nozorensener@mun.ca

Your request to conduct education-related research entitled "Understanding Teachers' Approaches to Assessment & Restorative Justice Practices in Newfoundland and Labrador" in the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD) has been reviewed. Your request has been approved under the agreed upon conditions outlined in the signed checklist.

Please sign and return the attached approval form that requires you to adhere to conditions outlined by the NLESD. It is your responsibility as the researcher to:

- Contact principals of schools to gain their permission to conduct your research. You will need a copy of the signed form to present to school principals. Please visit the website of NLESD at https://www.nlesd.ca/index.jsp to gain contact information for schools within the District.
- Submit a final copy of research findings and resulting papers/reports of your research to the CEO/Director of Education.

Please note that NLESD does not promote, or facilitate/conduct any part of the research for the researcher and is not held liable for any negative impacts relating to your research effort.

Sincerely,

ED WALSH
Associate Director of Education - Programs and Human Resources

Faculty of Education

G.A Hickman Building

St. John's, NL Canada A1B 3X8

Tel: 709 864 6980 www.mun.ca

 Informed Consent Form

Title:	*Understanding Teachers' Approaches to Assessment and Restorative Justice Practices in Newfoundland and Labrador*
Researcher:	Nevra Ozoren Sener, M.Ed. Candidate, Faculty of Education, Memorial University, nozorensener@mun.ca
Co-supervisors:	Dr. Dorothy Vaandering, Professor, Faculty of Education, Memorial University, dvaandering@mun.ca
	Dr. Andrew Coombs, Postdoctoral Fellow, Faculty of Education, Memorial University, andrewjc@mun.ca

Dear Teacher,

Thank you for your interest in this research study entitled, *Understanding Teachers' Approaches to Assessment and Restorative Justice Practices in Newfoundland and Labrador,* a part of my Master's thesis. Your participation is valued as it will inform educational development in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research.

What follows is part of Memorial University's official informed consent process. Though lengthy, it will give you a basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read this. If you have any questions about the study or would like more information before you consent, please contact the researcher, Nevra Ozoren Sener, or thesis co-supervisors Dr. Dorothy Vaandering, and Dr. Andrew Coombs. To take the survey, please proceed to the next page.

Please note that you can skip any questions that they do not wish to answer.

Purpose of Study:

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between educators' approaches to assessment and their restorative justice in education practices in Newfoundland and Labrador.

What You Will Do in this Study:

I am contacting you to invite you to participate in a survey in which you will be asked to offer your opinion on classroom assessment and restorative justice in education practices. Participation will involve **an anonymous survey** that will take approximately **20 minutes** to complete online using web-based software. At the conclusion of the survey, you will be asked if you would be willing to participate in a 45-minute virtual interview (i.e., Phase 2 of the study) to discuss the relationships between your classroom assessment practice and restorative justice in education practices. You may, however, choose to complete the survey and not participate in the interview at all.

Length of Time:

Participation will consist of answering questions on an online survey, which will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Withdrawal from the Study:

Participation in this research is voluntary with no penalty for declining to participate or

withdrawing from the study at any point. Once the survey is submitted, withdrawal of the data is not possible as no identifying information is collected from you. At any point during your completion of the survey, you may decide to withdraw by simply closing the web browser.

Any data saved to the Qualtrics server as a result of partial completion will be permanently deleted by the research team; it will NOT be included in the final data set for analysis.

Possible Benefits:

This research is of great significance to Newfoundland and Labrador English School District, the Department of Education, and the Newfoundland and Labrador general public. A recent scoping review of assessment constructs did not include any studies in Newfoundland and Labrador or Atlantic Canada. The proposed study will shed light on the assessment practices of educators in this area. This study will be one of the first studies that aim to understand both the trends in beliefs for assessment and restorative justice in education and the reasons behind how these beliefs are held in Newfoundland and Labrador, which provides both qualitative and quantitative research on this issue. This study represents one of the first, definitely the first in Newfoundland and Labrador, to

examine the intersection of teachers' approaches to classroom assessment and restorative justice in education.

Possible Risks:

Participation in any research study carries with it the potential risks to you. These risks are expected to be no worse than many everyday activities. This study focuses on classroom assessment practice and restorative justice in education practices, and prompts you to reflect; reflection can result in potential social, emotional, and psychological risks associated with this topic. These may be positive and/or negative. It is impossible to predict these potential outcomes. As such, the research team has evaluated these risks and made every reasonable attempt to minimize them. There are no financial risks associated with participation in this study. To assist you with accessing support if negative responses occur, please see the list of some mental health resources available to you.

NLTA Employee Assistance Program

3 Kenmount Road St. John's, NL A1B 1W1

Phone: 709.726.3223 / 1.800.563.3599 (toll-free in province)

Website: http://www.nlta.nl.ca/employee-assistance-program/

MUN Student Wellness and Counseling Center

UC-5000, University Centre, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 5th Floor, St. John's, NL A1B 3R5

Phone: 709.864.8500

Website:https://www.mun.ca/studentwellness/supports-services-and-resources/counselling-services/

Confidentiality & Anonymity:

The ethical duty of confidentiality includes safeguarding participants' identities, personal information, and data from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure. All data will be downloaded from the Qualtrics platform and maintained on Memorial University's institutional server, which is only accessible by the research team. Your data will be kept confidential at all times.

Anonymity refers to protecting participants' identifying characteristics, such as the name or description of physical appearance. While some demographic data will be collected to help us describe our sample, details that could potentially lead to the identification of an individual have been aggregated at the group level. This way, the research team is able to describe the sample

without gathering details specific enough to allow for your identification as an individual. You will not be asked to provide your name at any time.

Use, Access, Ownership, and Storage of Data:

Only members of the research team will have direct access to the data. All data will be

stored on Nevra Ozoren Sener's institutional server at Memorial University. Data will be kept for a minimum of five years, as required by Memorial University's policy on [Integrity in Scholarly Research](#).

Third-Party Data Collection and/or Storage:

Survey data collected from you in this project will be hosted and stored electronically by

Qualtrics, Memorial University's institutionally approved survey tool that meets all privacy,

security, and legislative requirements of the University (see http://www.mun.ca/surveysolution/ for more details). If you have questions or concerns about how your data will be collected or

stored, please contact the researcher and/or visit the provider's website for more information before participating in the study. The privacy and security policy of the third-party hosting data collection and/or storing data can be found at: https://www.qualtrics.com/privacy-statement/.

Reporting and Sharing of Results:

The results of this study will be presented in my Master's thesis. The thesis will be publicly available at the QEII Library. Direct quotations and summarized data may be included in this thesis.

My completed thesis will be available at Memorial University's Queen Elizabeth II library and can be accessed online at: https://research.library.mun.ca/view/theses_dept/

I may also present the findings of this research at academic conferences and/or in journal articles.

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 the researcher, Nevra Ozoren Sener via email at nozorensener@mun.ca or thesis co-supervisors Dr. Dorothy Vaandering via email at dvaandering@mun.ca and Dr. Andrew Coombs via email at andrewjc@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.

Consent:

By completing this survey/questionnaire you agree that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been advised that you may ask questions about this study and receive answers prior to continuing.
- You are satisfied that any questions you had have been addressed.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw participation from the study by closing your browser window or navigating away from this page, without having to give a reason and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that this data is being collected anonymously and therefore your data **cannot** be removed once you submit this survey.

By consenting to this online survey, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Please retain a copy of this consent information for your records.

Clicking insert term here (NEXT PAGE) **below and submitting this survey constitutes consent and implies your agreement to the above statements.**

Faculty of Education

G.A Hickman Building

St. John's, NL Canada A1B 3X8

Tel: 709 864 6980 www.mun.ca

Informed Consent Form

Title:	*Understanding Teachers' Approaches to Assessment and Restorative Justice Practices in Newfoundland and Labrador*
Researcher:	Nevra Ozoren Sener, M.Ed. Candidate, Faculty of Education, Memorial University, nozorensener@mun.ca
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What follows is part of Memorial University's official informed consent process. Though lengthy, it will give you a basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read this. If you have any questions about the study or would like more information before you consent, please contact the researcher, Nevra Ozoren Sener, or thesis co-supervisors Dr. Dorothy Vaandering, and Dr. Andrew Coombs.

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What You Will Do in this Study:

I am contacting you to invite you to participate in an interview in which you will be asked to discuss your opinion on classroom assessment practices and restorative justice in education practices. At any point during the interview, you may choose to skip any questions that you would prefer not to answer.

Length of Time:

Participation in interviews will take approximately 45 minutes which will be held online via web-based meeting software.

Withdrawal from the Study:

Participation in this research is voluntary with no penalty for declining to participate or

withdrawing from the study at any point. At any point during the interview, you may exit the conversation space by choosing the 'leave meeting' option within the virtual platform.

Should you do so, all information provided by you during that conversation will be deleted; it

will NOT be included in the transcript. After completion of the interviews, you will have the opportunity to review and redact your contributions in the transcript. You will have one month after they receive the transcript to withdraw any or all of your data from the project.

Possible Benefits:

This research is of great significance to Newfoundland and Labrador English School District, the Department of Education, and the Newfoundland and Labrador general public. A recent scoping review of assessment constructs did not include any studies in Newfoundland, Labrador, or even Atlantic Canada. The proposed study will shed light on the assessment practices of educators in this area. This study will be one of the first studies that aims to understand both the trends in beliefs for assessment and restorative justice in education and the reasons behind how these beliefs are held in Newfoundland and Labrador, which provides both qualitative and quantitative research on this issue. This study represents one of the first, definitely the first in Newfoundland and Labrador, to examine the intersection of teachers' approaches to classroom assessment and restorative justice in education.

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Participation in any research study carries with it the potential risks to you. These risks are expected to be no worse than many everyday activities. This study focuses on classroom assessment practice and restorative justice in education practices and prompts you to reflect; reflection can result in potential social, emotional, and psychological risks associated with this topic. These may be positive and/or negative. It is impossible to predict these potential outcomes. As such, the research team has evaluated these risks and made every reasonable attempt to minimize them. There are no financial risks associated with participation in this study. To assist you with accessing support if negative responses occur, please see the list of some mental health resources available to you.

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MUN Student Wellness and Counseling Center

UC-5000, University Centre, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 5th Floor, St. John's, NL A1B 3R5

Phone: 709.864.8500

Website:https://www.mun.ca/studentwellness/supports-services-and-resources/counselling-services/

Confidentiality & Anonymity:

The ethical duty of confidentiality includes safeguarding participants' identities, personal information, and data from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure. While some basic demographic data will be collected (e.g., teaching specialization, the level of education, and your geographical location), this information will be reported at the aggregate level (i.e., not individual details) in order to provide a general description of the participants who took part in the interview. The data from this research will be published; however, your identity will be kept confidential. Under no circumstances will your personal information be shared with Newfoundland and Labrador English School District, Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, Memorial University and any other party.

Anonymity refers to protecting participants' identifying characteristics, such as name or description of physical appearance. Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure your anonymity. Aside from the contact form and the transcript, your name will never be included in any reporting of the study's findings. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcript (your name will be converted to a pseudonym immediately after the interview and prior to analysis of the data) and

any statement(s) that could potentially identify you as a participant will not be directly quoted in any presentations or publications. However, you may be identifiable to informed readers based on what you say, particularly if direct quotations are reported, as it is possible that you may be recognizable within the teaching community.

Recording of Data:

All interviews will be audio and video recorded using WebEx (see Third-Party Data Collection and or Storage section below) for transcription purposes. Video recording is optional and you may turn off your camera. However, audio recording is required. Transcriptions will be automatically generated by WebEx, refined by the researcher, and be made available to you to review prior to analysis.

Use, Access, Ownership, and Storage of Data:

Only members of the research team will have direct access to the data. All data will be

stored on Nevra Ozoren Sener's institutional server at Memorial University. Data will be kept for a minimum of five years, as required by Memorial University's policy on [Integrity in Scholarly](#) [Research](#).

Third-Party Data Collection and/or Storage:

Interviews will be recorded (with your permission) using WebEx, Memorial

University's approved video conferencing tool provided by Cisco Systems, Inc. Details about Cisco's online privacy policy can be found at: https://www.cisco.com/c/en_ca/about/legal/privacy-full.html

Reporting and Sharing of Results:

The results of this study will be presented in my Master's thesis. The thesis will be publicly available at the QEII Library. Direct quotations and summarized data may be included in this thesis.

My completed thesis will be available at Memorial University's Queen Elizabeth II library, and can be accessed online at: https://research.library.mun.ca/view/theses_dept/

I may also present the findings of this research at academic conferences and/or in journal articles.

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 the researcher, Nevra Ozoren Sener via email at nozorensener@mun.ca or thesis co-supervisors Dr. Dorothy Vaandering via email at dvaandering@mun.ca and Dr. Andrew Coombs via email at andrewjc@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.

Consent:

By completing this interview you agree that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been advised that you may ask questions about this study and receive answers prior to continuing.
- You are satisfied that any questions you had have been addressed.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw participation from this interview by closing your browser window or leaving this meeting, without having to give a reason and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that if you choose to withdraw, you may request that your data be removed from the study by contacting the researcher within one month of this interview.

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

Please retain a copy of this consent information for your records.

Read aloud by the interviewer: "I have read and explained this consent form to the participants before receiving the participants' consent, and the participants had knowledge of its contents and appeared to understand it."

Dear Teacher,

Are you curious about exploring the relationship between classroom assessment and restorative justice in education? If yes, I would like to learn more about your perspective!

My name is Nevra Ozoren Sener, and I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the

Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador. I am conducting a research project called, *Understanding Teachers' Approaches to Assessment and Restorative Justice Practices in Newfoundland and Labrador,* for my Master's thesis. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between educators' approaches to assessment and their restorative justice in education practices in Newfoundland and Labrador.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. Your participation is not a requirement of the employer, union, or any Memorial University program and no information regarding your decision to participate will be recorded.

I am contacting you to invite you to participate in a survey in which you will be asked to offer your opinion on classroom assessment and restorative justice in education practices. Participation will involve **an anonymous survey** that will take approximately **20 minutes** to complete online using web-based software. At the end of the survey, you will be invited to take part in an **optional** 45-minute virtual interview.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please click here: **survey link here**

If you have any questions about me or my project, please contact me by email at

nozorensener@mun.ca or thesis co-supervisors Dr. Dorothy Vaandering by email at dvaandering@mun.ca and Dr. Andrew Coombs by email at andrewjc@mun.ca

Thank you in advance for considering my request,

Nevra Ozoren Sener, *M.Ed. Candidate*

Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning Strategies

Faculty of Education, Memorial University

Appendix F: Social Media Poster – Classroom Teachers

Appendix H: Social Media Post

K-12 Teachers and teacher candidates in NL, we want to hear from you about your attitudes towards #assessment and #RJE. For this 20-minute online survey please click **here**. At the end of the survey, you will be invited to take part in an **optional** 45-minute virtual interview. Your responses will inform @MemorialU & @MUNEducation about exploring approaches of teachers and teacher candidates. @NLESD @NLTeachersAssoc

This study is conducted by Nevra Ozoren Sener, M.Ed. Candidate at Memorial University.

Appendix I: Survey Questions- Classroom Teachers

Part A: Demographic Items

1. In which region of Newfoundland and Labrador do you work?
   a. Labrador
   b. Western
   c. Central
   d. Avalon

2. At what grade level(s) do you currently teach? Check all that apply.
   a. Primary (K-3)
   b. Elementary (4-6)
   c. Junior High (7-9)
   d. High school (10-12)

3. What describes your current teaching assignment? Check all that apply.
   a. (Primary/Elementary) Generalist Teacher (e.g., Grade-level classroom teacher)
   b. (Primary/Elementary) Specialist Teacher (e.g., French, Music, Phys. Ed.)
   c. (Primary/Elementary) Special Education
   d. (Secondary) Humanities and Social Sciences (e.g., English/English Language Arts, French, English/French as a Second Language, Social Studies, etc.)
   e. (Secondary) Natural Sciences (e.g., Science, mathematics, etc.)
   f. (Secondary) Fine Arts (Drama, Music, Art)
   g. (Secondary) Special Education
   h. (Secondary) Physical Education
   i. Other-please specify

4. How many years have you been an educator in any position?

5. What is the highest degree you have obtained?
   a. Bachelor of Education
   b. Masters
   c. Doctorate
   d. Other-please specify

6. When did you obtain it?

7. How can you describe your gender identity? (e.g., male, female, two-spirit, non-binary, genderqueer, transgender woman, transgender man, cisgender woman, cisgender man, etc.)

8. How can you describe your ethnicity? (e.g., White, African American, Asian, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, etc.)

9. What is your age?

10. Where did you complete K-12 schooling? Check all that apply.

      a. Newfoundland and Labrador

            i. Avalon

           ii. Central

         iii. Western

         iv. Labrador

      b. Alberta

      c. British Columbia

      d. Manitoba

      e. New Brunswick

      f. Nova Scotia

      g. Ontario

      h. Prince Edward Island

      i. Quebec

      j. Saskatchewan

      k. Other- please specify

Part B: Approaches to Assessment

Please interpret the scenarios in relation to your current teaching context (i.e., grade, school, community); if you teach across contexts, select one context and keep this context in mind when completing the entire survey. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your honest responses to the scenarios. If you do not understand the statement, select 'Don't Know.'

Scenario 1: You give your class a paper-pencil summative unit test with accommodations and modifications for identified learners. Sixteen of the 24 students fail. As a teacher in this situation, how likely are you to engage in each action:

(1=not likely, 6=very likely; don't know)

1. Record the test grade as each student's summative assessment for the unit but reduce its weight in the final grade.
2. Based on your analysis of the test, reteach parts of the unit focusing on items students struggled with, give students opportunities to apply their learning, and then re-test the material.

3. Ask students to reflect on their test preparation, analyze their test responses, and make a personal learning plan for re-learning the material. Then re-test the material.
4. Recognize that your test design may be flawed and design a revised unit test to give students.
5. Remove test questions that most students failed and re-calculate students' scores without those questions.
6. Schedule student conferences (individual or group) to discuss grades, areas of confusion, and next steps.
7. Allow all students to retake a similar test and average the two grades.
8. Ensure students with identified learning exceptionalities retake a similar test and take the better of the two grades.
9. Have each student who failed the test negotiate with you a new task/activity that would appropriately demonstrate their learning.
10. Analyze test questions that the majority of students consistently answered incorrectly. Then provide students with new questions to test those concepts.
11. Consider student test scores in light of previous, formative assessment information available for each student. Consider this information and adjust grades accordingly.
12. Reflect on which students failed, considering the wording of test items and extenuating circumstances that may have contributed to the failure in relation to previous assessment information. Then adjust grades accordingly.

13. What other action(s) would you engage in:

Scenario 2: You discover that one of your students has plagiarized some of their assignment (i.e., an essay). As a teacher in this situation, how likely are you to engage in each action:

(1=not likely, 6=very likely; don't know)

1. Administer consequences in alignment with school policies on plagiarism.
2. Have them highlight the plagiarized text and then rewrite the section in their own words. As a teacher, reflect on how this incident might inform your future teaching practice.
3. Ask them to document how they obtained and used reference materials for the assignment and what they would do differently next time. Have them write a work plan for re-doing the assignment.
4. Reflect on how you as a teacher designed and presented the assignment. In the future ensure that you deliberately design opportunities for students to learn about plagiarism.
5. Grade the aspects of student work that are original and deduct grades for the plagiarized sections.
6. Talk with them about the severity of plagiarism and negotiate potential next steps for their learning.
7. Explain to them the policy on plagiarism and how you could consistently apply the policy so that it is fair for all students.

8. Consider their specific learning needs and exceptionalities before determining whether or not to apply the general plagiarism policy.
9. Conference with them to review the implications of plagiarizing and agree upon an appropriate alternate assignment.
10. Consistently apply a grade of zero to the plagiarized work.
11. Consider the original aspects of the assignment and the plagiarized text to determine what they know and do not appear to know about the content expectations.
12. Examine extenuating circumstances that led to the plagiarism and then develop an alternative assignment to assess the expectations relevant to the plagiarized section of the assignment.

13. What other action(s) would you engage in:

Scenario 3: Out of 28 students in your class, you have 4 identified students on Individualized Education Plans (IEP) (who require accommodations but not modified curriculum) as well as several other unidentified students with differentiated learning needs. You must decide how to accurately measure their learning in your class. As a teacher in this situation, how likely are you to engage in each action:

(1=not likely, 6=very likely; don't know)

1. Provide the 4 identified students with accommodations on all summative assessments.
2. Implement scaffolded formative assessments with all of your students based on their individual learning needs, leading up to the final accommodated unit test.
3. Allow each student to develop a personal learning plan based on his/her strengths, learning needs, and learning goals.
4. Design a variety of assessment tasks that allow students to choose how they will demonstrate their achievement of learning expectations.
5. Adjust your rubrics and scoring guides to reflect accommodated and modified programs.
6. Explain to students and parents the purpose of accommodations and how they will be implemented and communicated on students' report cards.
7. Grade students based on the same assessments including homework, quizzes, and a unit test.
8. Ensure students with identified learning exceptionalities are provided with accommodations on all assessment tasks.
9. Negotiate differentiated assessments for all students based on their individual learning needs.
10. Use the same scoring rubric for all students.
11. Develop different scoring rubrics for identified students.
12. Use the same scoring rubric for all students but use professional judgment to apply criteria differently based on individual student ability.

13. What other action(s) would you engage in:

Scenario 4: You are planning a unit for your class. As a teacher in this situation, how likely are you to engage in each action:

(1=not likely, 6=very likely; don't know)

1. Start by designing a summative evaluation and use backward planning to create your lesson plans.
2. Design formative assessments to be used during instruction. Use information from these assessments to guide the design of subsequent lessons, learning activities, and summative assessment tasks.
3. Start by reviewing the curriculum learning expectations with students and require each student to develop and negotiate a personal learning and assessment plan for the unit of study.
4. Design a summative evaluation that covers all relevant curriculum expectations for the unit.
5. Consult school policy to decide how homework, quizzes, and summative evaluation will be weighted in the overall grade for the unit.
6. Co-construct learning goals and discuss assignments and grading criteria for the unit with your students.
7. Plan class lessons and assessments that are the same for all students and encompass the curriculum expectations.
8. Give all students a diagnostic assessment at the beginning of the unit to group students for differentiated learning and assessment activities.
9. Give all students a diagnostic assessment at the beginning of the unit and have students use their results to select appropriate learning and assessment activities.
10. Use the professionally developed quizzes and unit tests provided in the teacher's guide.
11. Develop assessments based on the content and activities of your enacted lessons.
12. Develop assessments based on questions/activities that have worked well with other students like yours but adjust them to take into consideration the content and activities of your enacted lessons.

13. What other action(s) would you engage in:

Scenario 5: A parent of one of your identified students is concerned about an upcoming standardized test. As a teacher in this situation, how likely are you to share the following statements with the parent(s):

(1=not likely, 6=very likely; don't know)

1. Standardized testing provides an important measure of how the school system is working for all students and the results allow the school district to invest resources into schools where improvement is needed.

2. Standardized tests can provide feedback on students' learning towards educational standards and help guide teaching and learning.
3. The standardized test will provide students an opportunity to develop learning strategies, test-preparation skills, and goals for their learning.
4. Prior to testing, all students will complete practice tests to prepare and become familiar with the standardized test.
5. Standardized test results will not be incorporated into their child's report card grades but will facilitate instructional decisions regarding subsequent courses or programs.
6. The purpose of standardized testing will be explained in detail to all students prior to testing and the results explained to students and parents.
7. All eligible students in the class must write the standardized assessment.
8. Their child's IEP will be consulted prior to testing and appropriate accommodations will be provided.
9. Discuss with the parent why standardized tests are required and how classroom assessments enable greater differentiation.
10. Standardized assessments are designed to provide a measure of students' achievement across the school district.
11. Report card grades allow parents to draw more valid conclusions about their child's growth and achievement of expectations that are grounded in the curriculum and prioritized by the teacher in response to student needs.
12. Standardized assessments, in conjunction with report card grades, allow parents to draw more informed conclusions about their child's growth and achievement than either source alone can provide.

13. What other action(s) would you engage in:

Part C: Approaches to Restorative Justice in Education

Please read the statements and give a response to each statement in relation to your current teaching context (i.e., grade, school, community); if you teach across contexts, select one context and keep this context in mind when completing the entire survey. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your honest responses to the statements. If you do not understand the statement or do not have any idea, select 'Don't Know.'

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements: (1=strongly disagree, 6= strongly agree; don't know)

1. Mostly I try to understand the student's context and what they are telling me before reaching a conclusion in the student related cases like a sudden change in the student's behavior, having a major academic shift, a change in the attitude of a student, etc.
2. I believe being fair and treating each student the same way is insufficient for understanding students' contexts and needs.
3. I believe the relationship between students and teachers is at the forefront of academic outcomes in the school.

4. I believe the relationship between students and teachers is at the forefront of behavioral outcomes in the school.
5. I believe the school's physical structure should allow students to share their experiences and perspectives.
6. I believe the school's social structure should allow students to share their experiences and perspectives.
7. I believe the school's academic structure should allow students to share their experiences and perspectives.
8. I allow all students to share their perspectives, even if I don't agree.
9. I believe students have the right to become active members of the decision-making process in the school.
10. I believe having a sense of belonging is related to students' engagement in the school.
11. Listening to each other is needed to enhance relationships in the school among students and their families, teachers, and administrators.
12. I conduct activities that allow students to get to know each other better.
13. I use classroom activities that promote students' awareness of others.
14. I believe a school should be a safe place for all students.
15. I believe establishing trust and respect for the dignity of all students are my priorities.
16. I believe internalizing an inclusive language helps students not to feel left out in the school.
17. A school may seem like a big family.
18. I believe supporting all students, both academically and non-academically, sufficiently is one of the school's responsibilities.

Part D: Closing Items

1. Is there anything you think we should know about classroom assessment practice and/or restorative justice in education?
2. Are you willing to participate in an interview about your classroom assessment practice and restorative justice in education? If so, please click here. By doing so, you will be brought to a separate survey to collect your contact information in order to protect your anonymity in completing this survey.

Appendix J: Survey Questions- Teacher Candidates

Part A: Demographic Items

1. How many terms of your teacher education program have you completed?
   a. 1
   b. 2
   c. 3
   d. 4 +

2. Upon graduation, what grades will you be certified to teach? Check all that apply.
   a. Primary (K-3)
   b. Elementary (4-6)
   c. Junior High (7-9)
   d. High school (10-12)

3. What describes your current specialization in the program? Check all that apply.
   a. (Primary/Elementary) Generalist Teacher (e.g., Grade-level classroom teacher)
   b. (Primary/Elementary) Specialist Teacher (e.g., French, Music, Phys. Ed.)
   c. (Primary/Elementary) Special Education
   d. (Secondary) Humanities and Social Sciences (e.g., English/English Language Arts, French, English/French as a Second Language, Social Studies, etc.)
   e. (Secondary) Natural Sciences (e.g., science, mathematics, etc.)
   f. (Secondary) Fine Arts (Drama, Music, Art)
   g. (Secondary) Special Education
   h. (Secondary) Physical Education
   i. Other- please specify

4. How can you describe your gender identity? (e.g., male, female, two-spirit, non-binary, genderqueer, transgender woman, transgender man, cisgender woman, cisgender man, etc.)

5. How can you describe your ethnicity? (e.g., White, African American, Asian, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, etc.)

6. What is your age?

7. Where did you complete K-12 schooling? Check all that apply.

   a. Newfoundland and Labrador

      i. Avalon

      ii. Central

      iii. Western

      iv. Labrador

     b. Alberta

     c. British Columbia

     d. Manitoba

     e. New Brunswick

     f. Nova Scotia

     g. Ontario

     h. Prince Edward Island

     i. Quebec

     j. Saskatchewan

     k. Other-please specify

8. If applicable, did you enroll in the teacher education program immediately after your undergraduate degree?

Part B: Approaches to Assessment

Please interpret the scenarios in relation to your current teaching context (i.e., grade, school, community) and observations; if you teach across contexts, select one context and keep this context in mind when completing the entire survey. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your honest responses to the scenarios. If you do not understand the statement, select 'Don't Know.'

Scenario 1: You give your class a paper-pencil summative unit test with accommodations and modifications for identified learners. Sixteen of the 24 students fail. As a teacher in this situation, how likely are you to engage in each action:

(1=not likely, 6=very likely; don't know)

1. Record the test grade as each student's summative assessment for the unit but reduce its weight in the final grade.
2. Based on your analysis of the test, reteach parts of the unit focusing on items students struggled with, give students opportunities to apply their learning, and then re-test the material.
3. Ask students to reflect on their test preparation, analyze their test responses, and make a personal learning plan for re-learning the material. Then re-test the material.
4. Recognize that your test design may be flawed and design a revised unit test to give students.
5. Remove test questions that most students failed and re-calculate students' scores without those questions.

6. Schedule student conferences (individual or group) to discuss grades, areas of confusion, and next steps.
7. Allow all students to retake a similar test and average the two grades.
8. Ensure students with identified learning exceptionalities retake a similar test and take the better of the two grades.
9. Have each student who failed the test negotiate with you a new task/activity that would appropriately demonstrate their learning.
10. Analyze test questions that the majority of students consistently answered incorrectly. Then provide students with new questions to test those concepts.
11. Consider student test scores in light of previous, formative assessment information available for each student. Consider this information and adjust grades accordingly.
12. Reflect on which students failed, considering the wording of test items and extenuating circumstances that may have contributed to the failure in relation to previous assessment information. Then adjust grades accordingly.

13. What other action(s) would you engage in:

Scenario 2: You discover that one of your students has plagiarized some of their assignment (i.e., an essay). As a teacher in this situation, how likely are you to engage in each action:

(1=not likely, 6=very likely; don't know)

1. Administer consequences in alignment with school policies on plagiarism.
2. Have them highlight the plagiarized text and then rewrite the section in their own words. As a teacher, reflect on how this incident might inform your future teaching practice.
3. Ask them to document how they obtained and used reference materials for the assignment and what they would do differently next time. Have them write a work plan for re-doing the assignment.
4. Reflect on how you as a teacher designed and presented the assignment. In the future ensure that you deliberately design opportunities for students to learn about plagiarism.
5. Grade the aspects of student work that are original and deduct grades for the plagiarized sections.
6. Talk with them about the severity of plagiarism and negotiate potential next steps for their learning.
7. Explain to them the policy on plagiarism and how you could consistently apply the policy so that it is fair for all students.
8. Consider their specific learning needs and exceptionalities before determining whether or not to apply the general plagiarism policy.
9. Conference with them to review the implications of plagiarizing and agree upon an appropriate alternate assignment.
10. Consistently apply a grade of zero to the plagiarized work.

11. Consider the original aspects of the assignment and the plagiarized text to determine what they know and do not appear to know about the content expectations.
12. Examine extenuating circumstances that led to the plagiarism and then develop an alternative assignment to assess the expectations relevant to the plagiarized section of the assignment.

13. What other action(s) would you engage in:

Scenario 3: Out of 28 students in your class, you have 4 identified students on Individualized Education Plans (IEP) (who require accommodations but not modified curriculum) as well as several other unidentified students with differentiated learning needs. You must decide how to accurately measure their learning in your class. As a teacher in this situation, how likely are you to engage in each action:

(1=not likely, 6=very likely; don't know)

1. Provide the 4 identified students with accommodations on all summative assessments.
2. Implement scaffolded formative assessments with all of your students based on their individual learning needs, leading up to the final accommodated unit test.
3. Allow each student to develop a personal learning plan based on his/her strengths, learning needs, and learning goals.
4. Design a variety of assessment tasks that allow students to choose how they will demonstrate their achievement of learning expectations.
5. Adjust your rubrics and scoring guides to reflect accommodated and modified programs.
6. Explain to students and parents the purpose of accommodations and how they will be implemented and communicated on students' report cards.
7. Grade students based on the same assessments including homework, quizzes, and a unit test.
8. Ensure students with identified learning exceptionalities are provided with accommodations on all assessment tasks.
9. Negotiate differentiated assessments for all students based on their individual learning needs.
10. Use the same scoring rubric for all students.
11. Develop different scoring rubrics for identified students.
12. Use the same scoring rubric for all students but use professional judgment to apply criteria differently based on individual student ability.

13. What other action(s) would you engage in:

Scenario 4: You are planning a unit for your class. As a teacher in this situation, how likely are you to engage in each action:

(1=not likely, 6=very likely; don't know)

1. Start by designing a summative evaluation and use backward planning to create your lesson plans.
2. Design formative assessments to be used during instruction. Use information from these assessments to guide the design of subsequent lessons, learning activities, and summative assessment tasks.
3. Start by reviewing the curriculum learning expectations with students and require each student to develop and negotiate a personal learning and assessment plan for the unit of study.
4. Design a summative evaluation that covers all relevant curriculum expectations for the unit.
5. Consult school policy to decide how homework, quizzes, and summative evaluation will be weighted in the overall grade for the unit.
6. Co-construct learning goals and discuss assignments and grading criteria for the unit with your students.
7. Plan class lessons and assessments that are the same for all students and encompass the curriculum expectations.
8. Give all students a diagnostic assessment at the beginning of the unit to group students for differentiated learning and assessment activities.
9. Give all students a diagnostic assessment at the beginning of the unit and have students use their results to select appropriate learning and assessment activities.
10. Use the professionally developed quizzes and unit tests provided in the teacher's guide.
11. Develop assessments based on the content and activities of your enacted lessons.
12. Develop assessments based on questions/activities that have worked well with other students like yours but adjust them to take into consideration the content and activities of your enacted lessons.

13. What other action(s) would you engage in:

Scenario 5: A parent of one of your identified students is concerned about an upcoming standardized test. As a teacher in this situation, how likely are you to share the following statements with the parent(s):

(1=not likely, 6=very likely; don't know)

1. Standardized testing provides an important measure of how the school system is working for all students and the results allow school districts to invest resources into schools where improvement is needed.
2. Standardized tests can provide feedback on students' learning towards educational standards and help guide teaching and learning.

3. The standardized test will provide students an opportunity to develop learning strategies, test-preparation skills, and goals for their learning.
4. Prior to testing, all students will complete practice tests to prepare and become familiar with the standardized test.
5. Standardized test results will not be incorporated into their child's report card grades but will facilitate instructional decisions regarding subsequent courses or programs.
6. The purpose of standardized testing will be explained in detail to all students prior to testing and the results explained to students and parents.
7. All eligible students in the class must write the standardized assessment.
8. Their child's IEP will be consulted prior to testing and appropriate accommodations will be provided.
9. Discuss with the parent why standardized tests are required and how classroom assessments enable greater differentiation.
10. Standardized assessments are designed to provide a measure of students' achievement across the school district.
11. Report card grades allow parents to draw more valid conclusions about their child's growth and achievement of expectations that are grounded in the curriculum and prioritized by the teacher in response to student needs.
12. Standardized assessments, in conjunction with report card grades, allow parents to draw more informed conclusions about their child's growth and achievement than either source alone can provide.

13. What other action(s) would you engage in:

Part C: Approaches to Restorative Justice in Education

Please read the statements and give a response to each statement in relation to your current teaching context (i.e., grade, school, community); if you teach across contexts, select one context and keep this context in mind when completing the entire survey. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your honest responses to the statements. If you do not understand the statement or do not have any idea, select 'Don't Know.'

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements: (1=strongly disagree, 6= strongly agree; don't know)

1. Mostly I try to understand the student's context and what they are telling me before reaching a conclusion in the student related cases like a sudden change in the student's behavior, having a major academic shift, a change in the attitude of a student, etc.
2. I believe being fair and treating each student the same way is insufficient for understanding students' contexts and needs.
3. I believe the relationship between students and teachers is at the forefront of academic outcomes in the school.
4. I believe the relationship between students and teachers is at the forefront of behavioral outcomes in the school.

5. I believe the school's physical structure should allow students to share their experiences and perspectives.
6. I believe the school's social structure should allow students to share their experiences and perspectives.
7. I believe the school's academic structure should allow students to share their experiences and perspectives.
8. I allow all students to share their perspectives, even if I don't agree.
9. I believe students have the right to become active members of the decision-making process in the school.
10. I believe having a sense of belonging is related to students' engagement in the school.
11. Listening to each other is needed to enhance relationships in the school among students and their families, teachers, and administrators.
12. I conduct activities that allow students to get to know each other better.
13. I use classroom activities that promote students' awareness of others.
14. I believe a school should be a safe place for all students.
15. I believe establishing trust and respect for the dignity of all students are my priorities.
16. I believe internalizing an inclusive language helps students not to feel left out in the school.
17. A school may seem like a big family.
18. I believe supporting all students, both academically and non-academically, sufficiently is one of the school's responsibilities.

Part D: Closing Items

1. Is there anything you think we should know about classroom assessment practice and/or restorative justice in education?
2. Are you willing to participate in an interview about your classroom assessment practice and restorative justice in education? If so, please click here. By doing so, you will be brought to a separate survey to collect your contact information in order to protect your anonymity in completing this survey.

Appendix K: Interview Questions- Classroom Teachers

- What do you think about classroom assessment practices in Newfoundland and Labrador?
- Have you ever heard about restorative justice in education before? If yes, participants will be asked whether or not they practice implementation in their classes.
- Were there any times when you faced any challenges with assessment practices regarding relationships with students?
    - How did you resolve it?

- What are your assessment practices and why do you practice assessment the way you do?
    - How would you describe the purpose of classroom assessment? (e.g., meeting curriculum expectations, understanding the students' levels, evaluating the learning outcomes, monitoring students' progress, etc.)
    - What are the advantages and disadvantages of assessment for the students in your own words?
- How are assessment practices and restorative justice related to your own teaching practice?
    - How are restorative justice in education practices related to student achievement?
    - What impact might restorative justice practices have on your teaching experiences and/or students' experiences or learning outcomes?

    - Can you explain where your perspectives of restorative justice in education originate?

Appendix L: Interview Questions- Teacher Candidates

- What do you think about classroom assessment practices in Newfoundland and Labrador?
- Have you ever heard about restorative justice in education before? If yes, participants will be asked whether they had a chance to practice or observe it in their classes or not.
- What would be any challenges with assessment practices regarding relationships with students?
    - How would you resolve it?

- What would be your assessment practices and why would you practice assessment in this way?
    - How would you describe the purpose of classroom assessment? (e.g., meeting curriculum expectations, understanding the students' levels, evaluating the learning outcomes, monitoring students' progress, etc.)
    - What may be the advantages and disadvantages of assessment for the students in your own words?
- How would assessment practices and restorative justice relate to your teaching practice?
    - How are restorative justice in education practices related to student achievement?
    - What impact might restorative justice practices have on your teaching experiences and/or students' experiences or learning outcomes?

    - Can you explain where your perspectives of restorative justice in education originate?