

Restorative Approaches: resolving conflict, increasing participation

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Overview

- Roots of restorative approaches
- Research
- Current situation in Scotland, UK and internationally
- Restorative Approaches: potential, parameters, possibility for use in conflict resolution and enhancing participation

Defining a Restorative Approach?

- Restoring good relationships when there has been conflict or harm, and developing an ethos, policies and procedures to reduce the possibility of such conflict and harm arising;

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- Emphasising the importance of **participation** by all those who have a direct stake in the event (s) and in the community;
- And recognising that 'Putting things right' requires that we
 - address harm and
 - address causes of harm

Tracing the roots of restorative approaches



Aims of the Scottish research

- Learn how Restorative Approaches could be developed in school settings
- Identify factors associated with success and challenges

Research aims in more detail

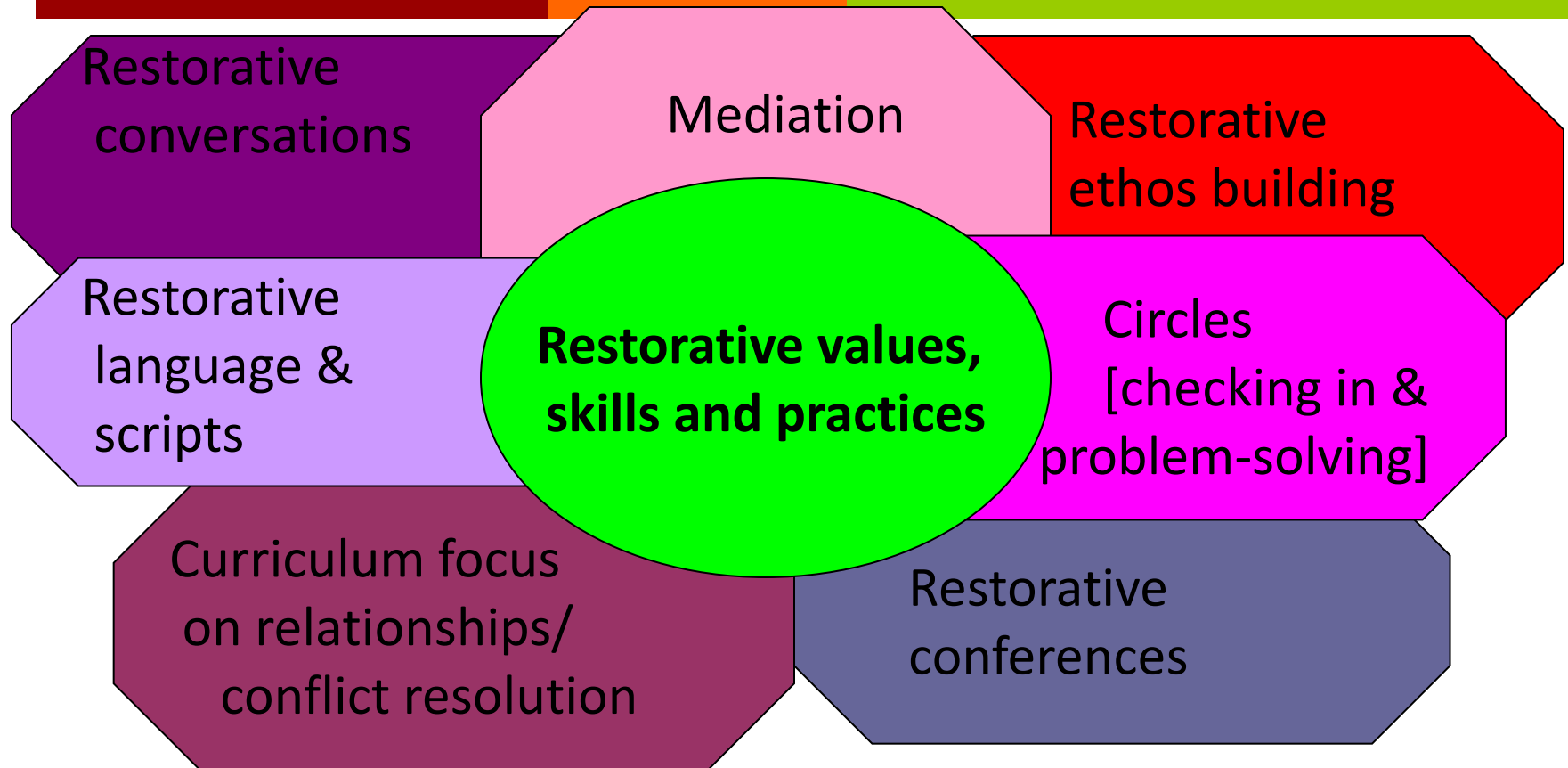
- to identify the training and support which staff felt were required to enable them to implement the initiatives effectively;
- to explore the different situations, contexts and areas of the curriculum where the new approaches were employed;
- to analyze the ways in which different participants (teachers, classroom assistants, students, parents) responded to the innovative approaches and the conditions which appeared to produce beneficial outcomes;
- to identify the characteristics of schools, staff or others which contributed to positive or negative outcomes; and
- to identify the support required from local authorities to promote and support school-level implementation.

Restorative Questions

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- In what way?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?



Restorative Approaches in action



RA works best when...

- Seen as framework of values, practices and skills
- A whole school approach
- Supported by high quality staff training
- School leaders modelled the way
- Disciplinary procedures compatible with RA
- Schools and communities made it their own



Challenges

- Time needed for change
- Leadership
- Understanding change processes
- Staff change
- Involvement of all members of the community
- Support structures for e.g. non academic staff in the community
- **Communication**
- Use of RA among and between staff
- **Discipline and punishment**

What did success look like?



Success



What people think it
looks like

Success



What it really looks
like

A proposition...

➤ 'Nothing about us, without us, is for us'

➤ Make a start!

What does a Restorative Approach ask of academic staff?

- 'I cannot be a teacher if I do not perceive with even greater clarity that my practice demands of me a definition of where I stand. A break with what is not right ethically. I must choose between one thing and another thing. I cannot be a teacher and be in favour of everyone and everything. I cannot be in favour merely of people, humanity, vague phrases far from the concrete nature of educative practice. Mass hunger and unemployment, side by side with opulence, are not the result of destiny'.
- (Freire 1998: 93)

Punishment and sanctions

‘Teachers are afraid we are stealing their strength’



Understanding behaviour in the university community

Academic errors	Relational errors?
Errors are accidental	
Errors are bound to happen	
Learning requires exploration- students learn by questioning and challenging what they are told	
Academic learning difficulties signal a need for additional or modified teaching	

Understanding behaviour in the university community

Academic errors	Relational errors
Errors are accidental	Errors are deliberate
Errors are bound to happen	Errors should not happen
Learning requires exploration- students learn by questioning and challenging what they are told	Students should not explore limits, nor question and challenge what they are told – they should accept and obey
Academic learning difficulties signal a need for additional or modified teaching	Behavioural difficulties should be suppressed, and signal a need for sanctions

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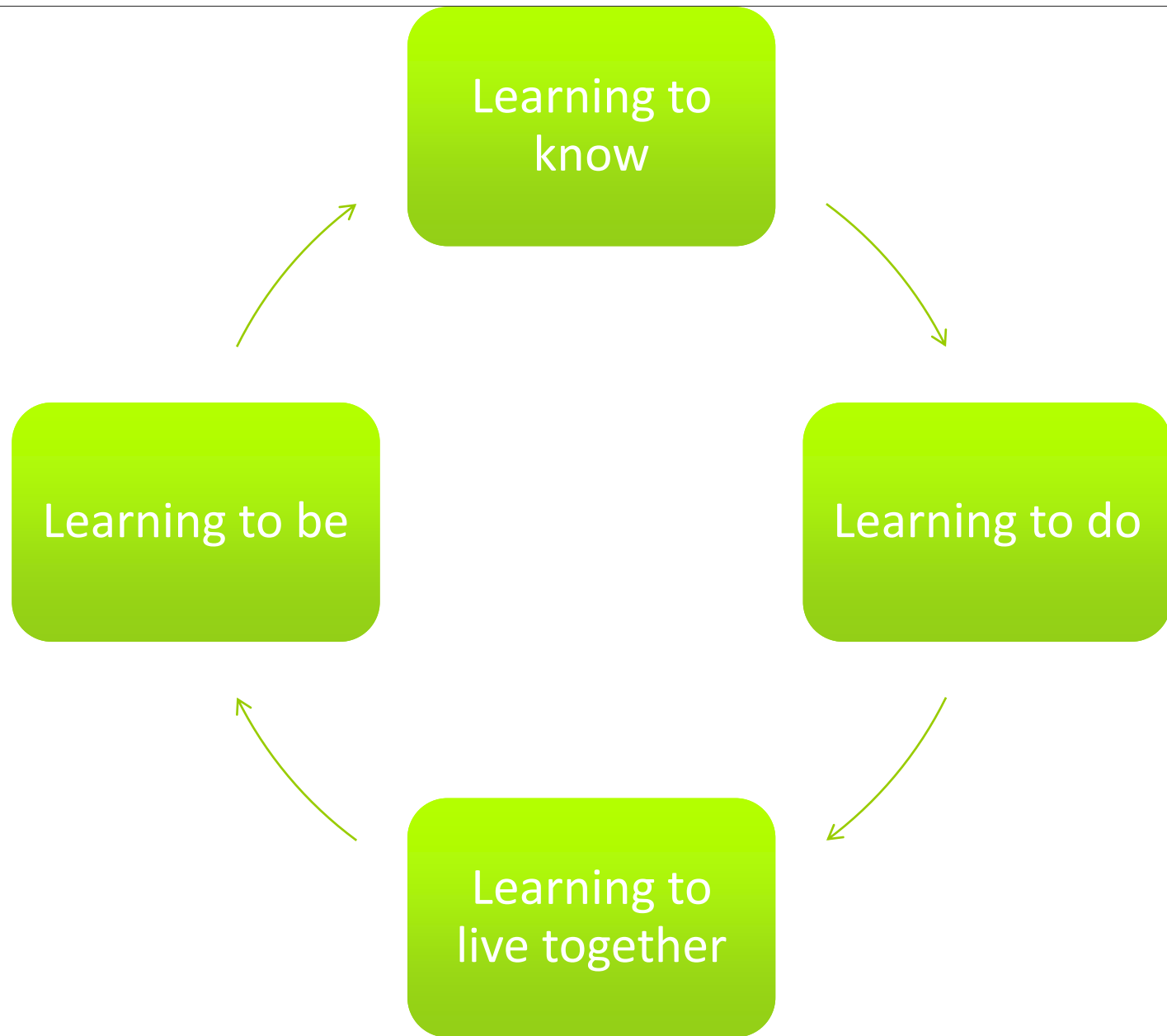
Four Pillars of learning

Learning to
know

Learning to
do

Learning to
live together

Learning to
be



Facing conflict head on...

- 'When conflict arises, some people simply look at it and go their way as if nothing happened; they wash their hands of it and get on with their lives. Others embrace it in such a way that they become its prisoners; they lose their bearings, project onto institutions their own confusion and dissatisfaction and this makes unity impossible. **But there is a third way**, and it is the best way to deal with conflict. **It is the willingness to face conflict head on, to resolve it and to make it a link in the chain of a new process**'.

What does a Restorative Approach ask of students?

➤ If not us, then who?

➤ If not now, then when?

Finding a place to start the restorative conversation?

➤ Three priorities for a socially just university?

Principles of a restorative approach

- A respect for people
- The seen face; that is, present yourself to people face to face
- Look, listen... speak
- Share and host people, be generous
- Be cautious
- Do not trample over the mana [honour, dignity, power] of people
- Don't flaunt your knowledge

(from L T Smith, Decolonising Methodologies, p124)

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