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Book Review

Implementing Restorative Practices in Schools. A Practical Guide to Transforming School Communities by Margaret Thorsborne and Peta Blood

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Implementing Restorative Practices in Schools. A Practical Guide to Transforming School Communities

Margaret Thorsborne and Peta Blood

London. Jessica Kingsley Publishers (2013) pp.230 paperback £25

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Restorative practice is an approach to discipline in schools prioritising relationships rather than retribution, which has been shown to improve behaviour and enhance teaching and learning outcomes. However restorative practice needs a relational school culture and this may require change in a school community.

In this clearly written and helpful book Margaret Thorsborne and Peta Blood explain what has to happen in a school if it is to become truly restorative. Using the work of theorists from the field of change management, they provide an essential understanding of change. Drawing on the available research on implementation they identify useful insights and provide practical direction. Drawing also from their own wealth of experience, they suggest what the pitfalls are likely to be, and how these might be overcome. They offer case studies from schools all over the world.

Section 1 explains the potential of restorative practice in schools, describing the positive outcomes for students and teachers. Measures that need to be in place in order to develop restorative practice are then outlined. In Section 2 the process of understanding and managing change is carefully examined providing realistic guidance on the practical and emotional barriers that may be met. Finally, Section 3 provides strategic guidance in eight practical steps for achieving a restorative culture. The book also includes useful pro formas and templates.

Getting away from blame and negative attitudes, this book is a practical guide for staff seeking to change the ethos of a school and getting people to think about and change behaviour. This book will be a valuable resource for schools wherever they are on the restorative journey.