

**A WINDOW ON RELATIONSHIPS:
ENLARGING THE SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW FOR A BROADER PERSPECTIVE**

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The International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) trains many educators worldwide in the principles and practices of restorative justice (rj) for schools. Central to the training is a conceptual theory of rj developed by McCold and Wachtel (2003) that includes the Social Discipline Window (See Figure 1). This window encourages educators to think beyond a punitive-permissive response to students and their behaviour to a restorative, authoritarian response where they work together WITH students in a more engaged and relational manner. Participants in this training often return to their schools and classrooms enthused and committed to doing what they can to engage WITH students. However, many fall back or continue to use punitive-permissive responses to student behaviour undermining the restorative justice principles they are committed to implementing.

McCold and Wachtel (2003) in proposing their conceptual theory of rj invite social scientists to test its validity in explaining and predicting the effects of rj practices. Other than research carried out by the IIRP itself, a search of current literature does not reveal any direct responses to their proposed theory. Added to this are calls from others to address the concern that theoretical and evidence-based research is falling behind practice (Braithwaite 2006; Morrison & Ahmed, 2006; Sherman & Strang, 2007). In a qualitative critical case study conducted in a public school in Ontario, Canada in 2009 that examined implementation and sustainability factors, evidence informing the validity of McCold and Wachtel's Theory of Restorative Justice emerged. In particular the influence of and manner in which educators engaged with the Social Discipline Window (one of the three distinct structures in the theory) emerged as a contributing factor to effectively implementing rj principles and nurturing the relational school cultures they desired.

The purpose of this article is two-fold—to present documentation identifying the dilemma presented by the Social Discipline Window for educators and second to propose a structural renovation in the form of a Relationship Window. Central to this suggested renovation is a shift in focus from emphasizing behaviour to one that emphasizes relationships.

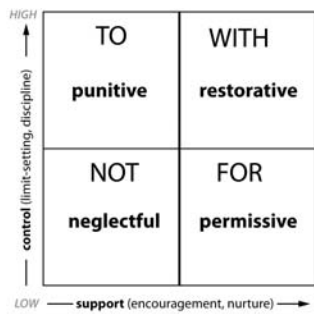


Fig.1 McCold & Wachtel (2003)

Research Background

Prior to becoming a researcher, I was an educator in primary and elementary schools, intrigued by and committed to peacemaking and conflict resolution programs. I asserted that student learning was directly affected by their ability to socialize and deal with conflicts. In that journey, I was introduced to McCold and Wachtel’s (2003) theory and was especially intrigued by the Social Discipline Window. This simple diagram, from my perspective at the time held the key to understanding the student-teacher relationship as well as the student-student relationship and I set about exploring its use in the classroom. The window and the practical direction provided by the IIRP (Wachtel,1998) became my companions as I journeyed through each day in the classroom and school impacting my relationships, but also my pedagogy and curriculum. Intrigued by the changes that took place and the hope it gave me as a teacher, I eventually engaged in graduate studies and research that would lead to the promotion of rj principles and practices for schools. This required a careful examination of my own experience and allowed for me to observe and reflect on the experience of others committed to rj.

The lens I chose to employ for this examination was provided by educational theorists committed to transformative teaching and learning as I believed rj held the potential for educational transformation. In particular I drew on Paulo Freire (2005) and bell hooks (1994, 2003) who modelled for me the significance of interrogating education using critical theory. Central to critical theory is the use of questions such as: Where does a particular education practice/theory come from? What is its frame of reference? And whose interests are served by it? Central also was the need for the responses to result in action that would lead to the well-being of all people (Kincheloe & McLaren 2005). In that, critical theory seeks to make hope practical (Giroux, 1988; Williams, 1980). This combination of critique, action and hope I trusted would open up my understanding of rj so that I might be able to encourage effective implementation and sustainability of rj in education more broadly. And it did. However, the process was difficult and the answers are not easy to accept. In fact the experience was and continues to be much like an encounter with a cactus! Stepping back however, it is possible to discover that cacti flower.

Besides my own experience with rj and IIRP training, the particular research context that resulted in this proposal for installing a window on relationship was a school in Ontario, Canada where the adults, students and community had all received training as was recommended by the IIRP. Qualitative, narrative case study methodology led me to interview thirteen educators individually each for approximately 45 minutes about their interpretations and practice of rj for education. Of these, three agreed to have me observe

them in their daily practice over a 6-week period—one administrator and two teachers. Both individually and collectively a significant contribution was made to a clearer understanding of *rj* in education when viewed through the questions posed by critical theory. For this article, I refer briefly to a few key instances that reflect the participants understanding of the Social Discipline Window and then focus my attention on how this Social Discipline Window provides a springboard for a Relationship Window that provides a broader perspective.

The experience of implementing the Social Discipline Window

I relate four incidents beginning with my own personal engagement with the Social Discipline Window as a grade three teacher. Prior to providing these details, it is necessary to point out that each occurs in a social context where an understanding of *justice* as ‘right-order’ is dominant, rather than *justice* as ‘inherent rights’ where the well-being of all is encouraged (Wolterstorff, 2008). In education this has resulted in schools “traditionally adopt[ing] a quasi-judicial approach to the management of student misconduct, modelled on existing western criminal justice systems” (Thorsborne and Vinegard, 2003). With this in mind, the reason for each of the following incidents, which will be elaborated on in the next section of the paper, becomes clear.

1. As a teacher, I read and reread, examined again and again, the different components of the Social Discipline Window. High control of wrongdoing, high support of the individual person was what I aimed to provide to my students. When students did not respond to the expectations I set out for them, I would question if I was clear enough in setting limits and if I was providing enough support for them. Most often by adding to one or the other, or a bit to both, students responded positively. If they didn’t, I assured myself that I was providing the correct balance, and they were not interested in working WITH me. As a result, for their well-being and the well-being of those around them, I would move into the TO box or the FOR box but always with an invitation to return to the WITH box if they were interested. It all made sense.

Or did it?

After describing the principles and practice of *rj* to a colleague, she responded with “it still seems like all you’re doing is trying to manage your students. It’s all about you being in control of them.” I stopped short. My intrigue with *rj* was challenged. What was my intention in using *rj*? Was it to better control my students so my job would be easier? Was it for their well-being? What was *rj* anyway? Whose interests were really being served? Had I really left the punitive-permissive continuum?

2. My initial understanding of the Social Discipline Window is mirrored in the explanation of it by the administrator to the students in her school when she goes to each class with a Social Discipline Window poster after they had received a refresher training session three years after their first.

We want to be in the WITH box because we like kids and believe this is important. I try not to ask, Why? However if *rj* doesn’t work we move into the TO

box. ... we tell you the rules, if you break them, you are reminded. If you still do it, we'll talk more, if you still do it, we'll get all sides, if that doesn't help, we'll need to move to the TO box.

Two things are worth questioning at this point. First, what is the source of the similarity between the administrator's and my own thought processes? Second, the administrator's comment came after being involved with rj for four years. She was passionate about rj, excited that her school was implementing rj, and confident that after several years of engaging with the approach the culture in the school was changing. Though there is no doubt that changes had occurred in the school, the question arises as to why the lived experience with a rj approach over time did not result in the administrator recognizing that moving into the TO box was returning to the punitive-permissive continuum.

3. To further demonstrate the return to a punitive-permissive response, the administrator's perspective is illustrated in an incident that occurred when a student had caused some damage to a boys' bathroom by throwing wet paper towel balls onto the ceiling. In an effort to identify who was responsible, the administrator announced the incident over the intercom for the whole school to hear, enlisting student and teacher help. A half hour after the first announcement a second was given:

I am pleased to announce that we have caught the culprit and he is sitting in the office with me right now. Justice will be served.

Later when asked about the response, she states she was operating out of both the TO and WITH box:

We explained to them what the problem was, what they were doing and why it was an issue and the importance of it ... there was also a consequence and there was no warning in it. Kids know ... it's vandalism, it's not telling the truth because they knew what they were doing and they kept doing it."

Though the administrator had defined rj earlier as "a process for resolution of issues that is fair and gives everyone a voice" in this instance she does not recognize the student has not been given a voice in either the establishment of the school rules or his explanation of his actions. She does not notice how she returns to the quasi-judicial school structure (Thorsbourne & Vinegard, 2002) rj is seeking to replace when she uses the terms "culprit" and "justice will be served".

4. Finally, in interviewing 12 teachers in the school about their perspectives and experiences with rj a theme that emerges is that rj allows students voice but ultimately the teacher is in charge and responsible for disciplining individual student behaviour that requires them to implement the bottom line. This perspective is encapsulated in the words of one teacher who, when asked about using rj with a student who was not participating in class activity as asked, she states rj is not appropriate:

That's when you need to be firm with the kid and say "what you've done is unacceptable. I don't want to talk about it. You know yourself it is ridiculous"... [Rj] is just something that you use ... as a strategy for bigger problems. This is

between the boy and me and I want him to stop behaving like a fool and he knows it.

Again this response and others similar to it indicate that teachers maintain or revert to an authoritarian, punitive approach even when they commit to rj and have visual reminders in the form of posters around them all the time.

A punitive, authoritarian approach is defined by Wachtel and McCold (2003) as a place of high control of wrongdoing and low, nurturing support of the individual student. In each of the four examples given, when faced with students not complying with set out expectations, the adult felt justified in dictating what was to happen without providing a space for the student's voice. Why is it that educators fully committed to rj principles and practices have no qualms about or cannot recognize when they are doing things TO their students often for their own convenience, even to the point of name-calling (culprit; fool).

Because of the centrality of the Social Discipline Window to the training provided, its visibility in the schools working to implement rj practices, and educators reference to the distinctions amongst TO, FOR, NOT and WITH responses, a careful analysis of its components is warranted.

The influence of the Social Discipline Window

McCold and Wachtel (2003) in defining rj explain that "it focuses on repairing harm done to *people* and *relationships* rather than punishing offenders" and that "justice requires the healing of harm as much as possible (p. 1)." The Social Discipline Window has come out of this foundation as a means for moving away from the perceived effectiveness of punishment that believes the more one is punished, the less likely they will do it again. The intention of the window is instead to embody the belief that the stronger the relationship the less likely we will act inappropriately towards each other (IIRP, n.d.).

The key components of the window that are intended to bring this to life are the vertical and horizontal axes which create four quadrants that outline the choices one has for responding to harm done. The title "the Social Discipline Window" is also significant as a description of the theory. In essence, the window provides a metaphor and structure for communicating a summary of intention and begins to positively influence and challenge the predominant use of adversarial justice. However, after a decade of use and growth, if committed to the principles and practices of rj, it is important to reflect critically on the window's actual impact. In so doing, the effectiveness of implementation and hope for sustainability will improve.

What follows is an overview of the language used to describe the window and how this seems to be interpreted by educators who are committed to practicing rj in their educational environments.

McCold and Wachtel (2003) place the Social Discipline Window on a foundation shared by other proponents in the field, who find its strength in principles that highlight *people* and *relationships*. However, in the description of the window, these words disappear and are replaced with terms such as *authority*, *regulation of behaviour*, *maintaining social order*, *enforcement of behavioural standards*, and *social control*. Examining this shift using questions arising from critical theory such as where are rj practices coming from, what frame of reference is being employed and whose interests

are being served, it is disconcerting to realize that a language of dominance which gives permission for maintaining hegemonic environments has taken precedence over the intended desire to strengthen relationships. This shift is not surprising, given the fact that “Western societies have relied on punishment ... to discipline those who misbehave or commit crimes” as McCold and Wachtel (2003) themselves acknowledge. And most of us who consider ourselves proponents of rj are part of this Western context.

It is important to recognize the strength of dominant social influences if the desire is to shift paradigms (Zehr, 2005). Without this awareness, the juxtaposition of terms such as *behaviour* and *maintaining social order* with concepts of *relationship* and *people*, results in confusion and discrepancies amongst those seeking to implement rj practices. To address this it is important to reflect critically and look through the different concepts to their roots. In doing this it becomes apparent that different perspectives of *justice* are being referenced and used. Language highlighting behaviour and control defines justice as right-order; language that speaks of relationship defines justice as ‘inherent rights’ (Wolterstorff, 2008). In essence the first is narrowly understood in the context of the Western judicial system and reinforces a perspective of people as objects; the second is a broad perspective that speaks of social justice and people as humans where the well-being of all humanity is sought (see Vaandering, 2009 for a full discussion). In what follows I identify how the Social Discipline Window itself in its use of language and focus on behaviour reinforces the first perspective.

Beginning with the name of the window, the term *discipline* is problematic. Definitions in a wide variety of dictionaries clearly point to its current use as a means of punishment, enforcement of rules, and training for compliance (www.dictionary.com). Lost is its etymological perspective of ‘being guided in learning’. As a result, the window sends a message that rj focuses on the need to change the behaviour of those who have *caused* harm. The needs of those who have been harmed and those who care about both parties are not part of the window. Though rj espouses to have originated as a response to those who have been harmed who are often left out of the picture (Zehr, 2005), this theoretical window encourages educators to use rj to respond primarily to the one causing harm which would then indirectly address the needs of the one harmed.

The axes also contribute, emphasizing the behaviour of the ones causing harm as the central concern. The vertical axis focuses on the need to control, set limits, and provide discipline by one who is in authority *over* others. The horizontal axis focuses on the need to provide support in the form of encouragement and nurturing by one who is in the position of *knowing* what is acceptable. This alludes to assistance and advice, a position in which one has authority to “fix” another. Again, this is a language of dominance that reinforces a hegemonic society that marginalizes and manipulates some of its members and works against the very intention of rj. This is not an easy pill to swallow. As a member of this dominant social segment, I am involved in rj because I desire desperately to work for equity and honouring the well-being of all humanity. Yet, I am discovering that the very tools I believed were helping are actually perpetuating what I am working against. Those of us who are promoting rj practices, must wake up to these discrepancies before the system we are trying to change and those we are “trying to help” rise up and point this out, seriously discrediting the foundation of rj itself.

The task of educators is complex and difficult as they are constantly engaged with people of different personalities, abilities, and attitudes. Often struggling to meet the needs of their students, when they are presented with options that will increase their

effectiveness as a teacher for the nurturance of their students, they are eager to listen. When *rj* is presented as such, though perhaps sceptical initially, many teachers can relate to the Social Discipline Window and quite willingly embrace its structure as something that ‘is common sense’ and helpful for analyzing and structuring their current practice. However, though *rj* is presented as a means for working with students in a restorative, relational manner, the explanation of its theory sends educators a very different message. The hidden point underlying the explicit relational intention is that *rj* is a means for educators to maintain social discipline, that they are in control of wrongdoing and limit-setting, that they can support and provide assistance to those lacking in some way--that their students can be manipulated. They hear that *rj* will help them *manage* student behaviour and that working WITH students is for the purpose of regulation and social order, not relationship.

Given that the root of *rj* lies in an integrated, relational world and life views promoted since ancient times through indigenous and spiritual traditions (Zehr, 2005; Bianchi, 1994; Pranis, Stuart & Wedge, 2003), the Social Discipline Window in its emphasis on controlling wrongdoing and supporting ‘rightdoing’ steps away from *rj* principles by promoting a response to behaviour, rather than relationship. When *rj* is limited to issues of management and discipline it inadvertently gets redirected to answering questions about rules, blame and punishment. In order to redirect thinking so that questions of harm done, the needs of those hurt, and repair are addressed, concepts of relationship must be highlighted.

At a time and place where a judicial understanding of justice is firmly imbedded and promoted in society that is intent on maintaining social discipline and order, the design of the window is not surprising. It takes intense effort and ongoing alertness to initiate and advance a paradigm shift. It takes a mass of people to create the momentum needed to shift social perceptions. McCold and Wachtel have been instrumental in gathering this mass by taking the monumental step in articulating an initial conceptual framework for *rj* and have provided a path forward in terms of understanding *rj* principles and practices so that *rj* could be used in all kinds of daily interactions besides the judicial system. To continue this growth, however, perspectives need to be examined constantly.

As critical theory’s purpose is to initiate action, I respond to this critique with a proposal for a “Relationship Window” in hopes that it will better reflect the essence of *rj* which seeks to honour the inherent worth of all people and prevent the perpetuation of the punitive-permissive paradigm in schools.

A window on relationship

The basic design of the Social Discipline Window is valuable. As a matrix, each of the four quadrants clearly identifies the results of varied responses given for which the terms TO, FOR, NOT and WITH serve as apt descriptions. Changing the axes and the name of the window however, creates a very different and much more effective framework for thinking about and practicing *rj*.

Focusing on *relationship* amongst people and their environments invites users of the revised window to reflect on interpersonal interactions first and foremost which can include individual behaviours that harm others. As with the Social Discipline Window, this occurs when two continuums are created and combined where each measures high and low levels of engagement. In the renovated window (see figure 2), however, the combination of the axes unpack different types of relationships by using a vertical axis

that is identified as *expectations for being human* and a horizontal axis that is identified as the *support one gives for being human*. The four quadrants that result identify interactions as either diminishing or nurturing one’s inherent worth as a human being. This perspective of humanity is foundational to the broader concept of justice as Zehr, (2005) Bianchi (1994), and Pranis, Stuart & Wedge (2003) put forth as the ultimate goal of rj and is also most likely the intention Wachtel and McCold also endorse. Justice, in this sense is understood as honouring the inherent worth of all, where people meet with the intent of fulfilling “their vocation of becoming more fully human” (Freire, 2005).

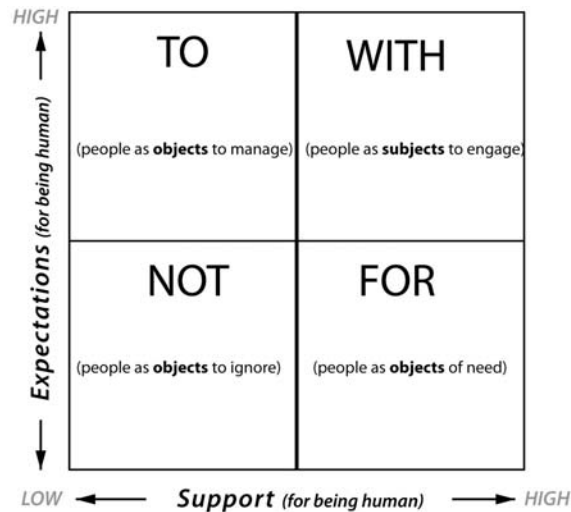


Figure 2: Relationship Window

Specifically then, when people provide each other with high support and high expectations they treat each other as *subjects*, as humans (Buber, 1958, pp. 24-25; Freire, 2005, p. 69) and the way is clear for a reciprocal relationship to develop. By combining a high level of expectations for the other and low level of support, a hierarchical, power relationship results. Disagreement, dominance, and disruption characterize the relationship as people are turned into *objects* and so they can contribute to what the giver needs. High support and low expectations result in unhealthy interactions as well. Though it may begin well, in time the relationship deteriorates as people are *objects* of need and fulfil the giver’s need to be needed. Combining no support with no expectations results in a non-existent relationship or an extreme form of objectification. In the latter three responses, it is important to notice that harm is perpetuated, not repaired. When these quadrants are entered into, one is working against the paradigm shift needed for rj. It is also important to note that expectations and support can be given and received by anyone of any age, not just by an adult to a student.

Another way of thinking about this Relationship Window is using Sydney Simon’s (1991) self-esteem terms *lovable* and *capable* as axes (see Figure 3). If one is seen as NOT lovable or capable, they are neglected and ignored. If they are capable, but not lovable their skills are *used* to benefit the other. If they are lovable, but not capable, they are used for the others comfort. Only when I engage with someone believing they are lovable and capable can I support and encourage them to be who they are becoming, and only here am I nurtured to be more fully human myself.

Kohn (2005) identifies this restorative quadrant as a place of unconditional love where unconditional teaching and learning occurs—it doesn't matter what you say or do, I'm still going to love you AND hold you accountable to be all you can be. All the other quadrants represent places of conditional acceptance, teaching, and learning. In this regard, it becomes clear that if we are committed to honouring one another as human beings, it is not acceptable to move to any of the other three quadrants as I first believed was possible using the Social Discipline Window. Glasser (1985, p. 244) whose work McCold and Wachtel draw on identifies the importance of this when he states,

Warmth and care are done *with* students, not *to* or *for* them. ...If students reject warmth and care, they do so because they do not believe it is sincere. (Glasser, 1985, p. 244).

Glasser then proceeds to encourage educators to continue to offer warmth and care till the student is convinced of the sincerity of commitment.

A Relationship Window grounded in the principles of rj provides the simple framework Morrison (2007) identifies as necessary for schools who are looking for a way to embed responses to behaviour in the broader context of relationship as “many of the problems encountered in a typical school day are frequently misdiagnosed if not viewed through a relational lens and an exploration of factors contributing to relationship breakdown” (p. 348). This framework also allows for the organic growth of a relational school culture where participants in school communities explore together the fundamental principles of living in community so that the growth towards humanization occurs. This common commitment from people within the school is critical for its growth and development (Glasser, 1985).

Finally the Relationship Window is also supported by contemporary educational research (Noddings, 2005; Van Maanen, 2002; Palmer, 1998; Kohn, 2005; Morrison, 2007) which calls clearly for developing the foundational role of relationship, care, and trust in school cultures so conducive learning environments can be nurtured and democratic citizenship can be encouraged.

An example

Beyond the theoretical foundation the window on relationship provides, what would it look like for a school committed to rj practices? In an effort to put theory into practice, the following fictional narrative generated using personal experience and the examples provided in the research conducted in Ontario in 2009 provides an example. Though set up as an explanation for students, a variation of the same presentation is required for the adults in the school community as the shift in thinking for adults cannot be assumed. Adults will need to commit to living this out in their relationships with each other before or while expecting the students to engage with it meaningfully as it is critical that students see this modelled for them each moment they are at school.

As a school we are committed to living together in relationship in such a way that everyone is honoured and supported as a human being who is using and discovering their unique gifts that contribute to the wonder of life. This Relationship Window will remind us of this commitment we make to each other.

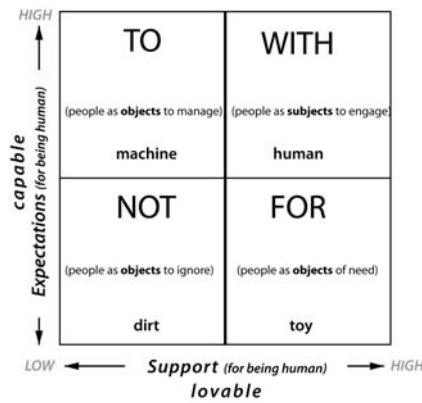


Figure 3: Relationship Window

The window shows us that this won't always be easy. Sometimes we'll forget that we are human and we'll treat ourselves and each other as objects instead. We might think we aren't good enough or others aren't worth anything. This will show in what we do and how we interact with each other. At our best we will support each other and expect each other to be all that we can be. When we do this we live *WITH* each other as human beings. If we only support each other but don't expect each other to be human, then we treat one another like a stuffed toy—an object that we do things *FOR*. If we expect lots from each other but don't support each other then we turn each other into machines and do things *TO* another. If we don't support or expect anything from each other, we ignore each other and treat each other like dirt--*NOT*. When we treat each other or ourselves like toys, machines, or dirt we need to remind each other that we're human or else we'll never become the people we could be.

An example of what could happen when things go wrong: Imagine that one of you has vandalized the bathroom by writing graffiti on the wall. In such a situation, we will use the Relationship Window to guide us in working *WITH* you to remind you that in the vandalism you forgot that your actions impacted others ability to be human. You have ignored all the other people's need for a clean facility treating them like dirt and you expect the custodian to be a machine who has to clean up your mess. You have also forgotten that you are capable of doing things that support others and in this way forget that you are human. Lots of people have been impacted and you have caused harm (a problem).

At our school, when this happens, the key to remember is that human beings can repair harm. Then to help repair the harm, we will bring together people affected by this and let each person tell their story including you by responding to the 5 questions ... In this way, you will have a chance to understand how to better support and have expectations of others that help them to be human.

This example shows how the Relationship Window keeps educators focussed on the relationship and humanity of the people involved rather than the behaviour and the incident. It is a reminder that the people involved are capable and worthy of support, regardless of what has been done. It also reminds educators that for reparation or healing, all stakeholders are required for dialogue needed. Finally, it clearly illustrates that moving into the TO or FOR quadrants is not an option as educators would then be objectifying the students they are seeking to support and encourage.

What about the child who refuses to participate, continues to cause harm, or is a significant threat to others? Is it not necessary to then move into an assertive, controlling role? Again the Relationship Window is a reminder that educators are in relationship WITH students, always supporting them, always expecting them to be human. In this way, the window reminds us to look beyond the incident that has occurred to what it is that prevents the student from trusting us and wait as Glasser (1985) indicates till that trust is built. For the well-being of all, the student may need to be removed from the context, but not as a punishment, but rather as a means for rebuilding relationship, for gaining trust, for taking time simply to grow in what it means to be human.

Beyond addressing harm, it is of utmost importance to see the critical role the relationship window holds for being the soul of all we do (Sullivan & Tifft, 2005). The explanation could continue:

The Relationship Window will also guide how teachers and students learn together. When we teach each other we will remember to support each other and expect each other to be human. What we teach and learn will always be for the purpose of being human not objects. We need to remind each other when we feel that what we are learning is not for the well-being of all people. We need to tell each other when we feel like machines or stuffed toys or dirt while we are learning or teaching.

Here the window illustrates its impact on curriculum, learning and pedagogy. As a teacher, content is examined through the Relationship Window. Does the story being read reflect healthy relationships? If not does the lesson allow students to critically reflect on the essence of the story? Does the math lesson encourage a use of math skills that will contribute to people being fulfilled or does it idolize profit and economic gain for a few? Does the history unit give voice to marginalized peoples? Further to this, teaching methods are examined and developed by looking through the Relationship Window. Is a transmissive model of education employed where students take in knowledge simply for the purpose of performing well on tests so that department standards are upheld? Are transformative models of education employed that honour the insights and ability of the students so that teachers and students walk WITH each other discovering more fully the wonder of this world? Are assessments and evaluations used for adultist purposes that highlight teacher and school quality instead of student growth and well-being? For students, the Relationship Window guides their engagement with content, peers and teachers. Do they recognize what they are learning as significant for how they and others engage with all aspects of this world—people & environment? Do they see their

responsibility in interacting with teachers and peers as holding potential for supporting and encouraging their humanity?

Extending beyond the school and classroom to the role of administrators, district and national education boards, parents and community of the educational institution, the Relationship Window also provides a clear foundation for engaging with each other and the educational task at hand. Further to this, the Relationship Window has much to offer proponents of rj involved in other sectors of society as well—a topic for another paper. Ultimately, the Relationship Window provides all people with a basic value system on which they can rely to discern what nurtures or diminishes life. At a time when many citizens of Western societies are reeling from a post-modern, individual liberalism that has left them untethered and unaware of their potential for harming and being harmed, such grounding in humanization (Freire, 2005) is welcome. It also provides a way forward in terms of recognizing how past indigenous and spiritual traditions can speak to current and future societies.

If there is any doubt that a window on relationship is necessary, perhaps the insights of Jaron Lanier, Scholar at Large and Partner Architect for Microsoft Research who pioneered the technology for and coined the term ‘virtual reality’ can provide a final rationale. In his 2010 book entitled *You are Not a Gadget: A Manifesto*, he states: “something started to go wrong with the digital revolution around the turn of the 21st Century... A new generation has come of age with a reduced expectation of what a person can be, and who each person might become.” (p. 3-4).

Conclusion

The Social Discipline Window is used globally to educate school personnel in the use of rj practices. Presented in this way, the intent is for the window to identify that rj practices are significant for addressing the emotional and relational needs of students in order to achieve and sustain a healthy civil school culture (McCold and Wachtel, 2003). In the first decade of its use, many changes have taken place as a result of such professional development sessions. However, this article indicates that where educators believe they are moving away from the punitive-permissive paradigm, in reality many do not or are inconsistent in terms of working restoratively with students.

To address this concern, the design and premise of the Social Discipline Window was examined and found to be a contributor to these misperceptions because of its focus on behaviour instead of relationship. In its stead, a Relationship Window that describes people’s engagement with each other as objects or humans is proposed. This window which is grounded in the foundational understanding of justice as honouring the worth and well-being of humanity, builds a matrix that has the potential for serving as a simple framework that moves beyond a response to people’s behaviour to a means to guide how people engage with each other and their environments at all times.

As a contribution to the theoretical discussion in the field, the proposed Relationship Window is presented for consideration to all in hopes that it contributes to the growth of the critical mass needed to shift to a hopeful paradigm that frees people to be who they are meant to be.

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