It’s not a PD, It’s Pedagogy: Designing a Restorative Justice Curriculum for Urban School Educators using Community Co-Teaching and Active Learning

Bettie Ray Butler

College of Education

Department of Middle, Secondary, and K-12 Education

PhD in Curriculum and Instruction (Urban Education Strand)
Abstract

Restorative justice (RJ) has gained popularity among educators as a promising alternative to school suspensions. A growing concern among teachers, however, is that they lack the necessary understanding to effectively implement culturally responsive restorative practices in urban classrooms. Currently, RJ training is limited to professional development workshops that occur only after teachers have entered the profession. The success of RJ requires early ongoing exposure to evidence-based restorative practices to develop a positive school climate, prevent disruptive behavior, and reduce suspensions. This research intends to reform teacher education curriculum by proposing that a restorative philosophy be integrated into teacher preparation programs. Using a combination of community co-teaching and active learning, prospective teacher educators, doctoral students in EDCI 8320: Social Deviance, Delinquency, and Education (Curriculum and Instruction), will bridge research and practice by (1) becoming familiar with restorative philosophy; (2) engaging community leaders who have a record of success implementing RJ practices in urban classrooms; (3) observing and participating in RJ processes; and (4) planning and developing RJ courses for preservice teachers. At the conclusion of the course, participating doctoral students will co-facilitate a Summit on Restorative Justice in Urban Education for practitioners, policymakers, university faculty, and others to address how institutions of higher education can work collaboratively with urban schools/districts and community organizations to narrow the discipline gap and improve academic outcomes. Survey data collected from the Summit will be empirically analyzed and subsequently compiled into a report to inform RJ initiatives both at the policy level and in practice.

Word Count: 249 (excluding the Title)
# Budget Request for SOTL Grant

**Year: 2016-2017**

**Joint Proposal?**  
- Yes  
- No  

**Title of Project**  
It’s not a PD, It’s Pedagogy: Designing a Restorative Justice Curriculum for Urban School Educators Using Community Co-Teaching and Active Learning

**Duration of Project**  
January 2017 to June 2018

**Primary Investigator(s)**  
Bettie Ray Butler, PhD

**Email Address(es)**  
bettie.butler@uncc.edu

**UNC Charlotte SOTL Grants Previously Received (please names of project, PIs, and dates)**  
N/A

**Allocate operating budget to Department of**  
Middle, Secondary, K-12 Education (MDSK)

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**GRAND TOTAL**  
$ 8,750
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944000 | Educational Equipment | 951000 | Other Current Services |
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| **GRAND TOTAL** | | **$12,670** | |

### Attachments:

1. Attach/provide a narrative that explains how the funds requested will be used.

2. Has funding for the project been requested from other sources? ___ Yes ___*__ No. If yes, list sources.
Budget Narrative

The funds for the proposed study will be used in four (4) distinct ways: 1) to compensate external consultants; 2) to provide research support and participant incentives; 3) to cover expenditures for supplies and services; and 4) to provide a faculty research stipend to the principal investigator (PI).

External Consultants ($5000)

Funding for the proposed study will be used to secure two (2) external consultants. Both consultants possess a demonstrated expertise in the facilitation of restorative practices; a skill set that is currently unavailable at UNCC. Two separate consultants are needed because they each provide a unique approach to restorative justice. One specializes in criminal justice (focusing on mediation and reconciliation with juvenile offenders), and the other in education (focusing on classroom management strategies and interventions for African American males).

Martin E. Price, JD is a nationally and internationally recognized pioneer and leader in Restorative Justice. As the Director of the Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP) in Charlotte and an Advisor to the Capital Restorative Justice Project in North Carolina, Price has sought to bring restorative justice reform to criminal justice systems. He has been featured on 20/20, Oprah, the A&E series Confrontation, and other reputable television programming. Additionally, Price has taught graduate and undergraduate students how to apply culturally appropriate restorative practices for youth/juvenile offenders. As a two-time Fulbright Senior Scholar, Price’s teaching has received notable recognition as his highly interactive pedagogical approach has span the globe (U.S., Mexico, Central America, Central and Eastern Europe) in high demand. The PI intends to utilize Price’s expertise to give participating doctoral students, in EDCI 8320: Social Deviance, Delinquency in Education, extensive firsthand exposure to
restorative processes. Using active learning, Price will facilitate four (4), 2-hour group sessions ($250 p/h consulting fee) with students enrolled in the doctoral seminar to walk them through the step-by-step process of using reconciliation and group mediation to reduce recidivism among those labeled juvenile delinquents.

Brian Bulluck has over 20 years of experience in developing and implementing culturally responsive classroom management strategies that integrate a restorative philosophy. As a local Behavioral Modification Technician (BMT) within a large urban school district, and critically acclaimed author of the *ABC’s of Classroom Management*, Bulluck has devoted his career to applying restorative approaches to school discipline that work to prevent, or deescalate, inappropriate and/or disruptive behavior in the classroom. Bulluck’s approach to RJ is unique from that of Price in that he develops restorative interventions which are largely used in urban classrooms for students with disabilities, as well as, students of color (namely African American males). The PI intends to utilize Bulluck’s specialized knowledge to give participating doctoral students an opportunity to engage in critical conversations with a community leader who has a record of success implementing RJ practices in urban classrooms for African American students. Using, community co-teaching, Bulluck will teach four (4) of the sixteen (16) lessons for EDCI 8320. During this time, in collaboration with the PI, Bulluck will present evidence-based restorative strategies and interventions that he has personally developed and has found significant and positive effects among students with whom he has interacted.

Both consultants will be invited to present at the Summit on *Restorative Justice in Urban Education* as featured guest speakers. Each will be given an honorarium of $500.
**Research Support and Participant Incentives ($8670)**

Funding for the proposed study will grant financial support to one (1) PhD student actively enrolled in the Curriculum and Instruction doctoral program. This student is expected to work closely with the PI to provide a total of 880 hours of research support (estimated @ $9.00 p/h, 20 hours per week, for 44 weeks) over the duration of the proposed 2-year project; beginning Summer I (2017) and extending to Summer I (2018). The designated graduate researcher will work alongside the PI and assist with data collection, research analysis, and survey administration directly associated with the proposed project.

In addition to graduate student research support, there is a need to encourage on-going participation in the proposed study, beyond the course (EDCI 8320), among participating doctoral students. As such, doctoral students that: a) engage in continuous professional development opportunities, provided by the PI and the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), to further develop their RJ courses; and b) who commit to presenting their course designs at the Summit on *Restorative Justice in Urban Education* (via roundtable, conference-style presentation, or poster) will, in turn, receive a $50 gift card (estimated @ $50 per student, 15 students maximum course enrollment).

**Supplies and Services ($3900)**

Funding for the proposed study will be used to purchase supplies for the Summit on *Restorative Justice in Urban Education*. The following list identifies communication/reporting materials needed to accommodate Summit participants: notebooks ($6.00 each + tax), bags ($0.81 each + tax), writing instruments ($0.50 each + tax), USB flash drives ($4.00 each + tax), and event posters that display the Summit agenda ($89.97 + tax). All quotes are provided by Discount Mugs (total $1220.97 + tax) with the exception of the event posters (quote provided by
Staples). It is estimated that the Summit attendance will be approximately 75-100 participants inclusive of local and state practitioners, policymakers, university administration, and others (faculty, community leaders, etc.).

Additionally, it is the intention of the PI to host the Summit at the UNCC Center City Campus. As such there are two service charges that will be incurred to use this location: a) space rental ($150) and; b) tech support ($30 p/h @ 8 hours). Meals for Summit participants will also be provided. Funds have been budgeted for breakfast ($891.25) and/or lunch ($1117.00) during the event through Chartwells Catering at UNCC. The total estimated service costs are roughly $2398.25 (not including taxes or additional fees).

**Faculty Research Stipend ($3850)**

Funding for the proposed study will be used to provide a faculty stipend to the PI to continue research activities associated with the proposed grant during Summer I (2017) (the researcher is not scheduled to teach during this period). At this time the researcher plans to edit, finalize, and post (online) the survey (pilot instrument designed in EDCI 8320 to assess perceptions of, and competence in, restorative justice), as well as, to begin planning for the Summit on *Restorative Justice in Urban Education* (e.g., developing the agenda, creating a prospective invitation list, booking featured speakers, purchasing supplies and services)- which is scheduled for Spring, 2018.
October 26, 2016

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Grants Committee
Center for Teaching and Learning
UNC Charlotte
9201 University City Boulevard
Charlotte, NC 28223

Dear SoTL Grant Selection Team,

I enthusiastically support the project designed by Bettie Ray Butler called, “It’s not a PD, It’s Pedagogy: Designing a Restorative Justice Curriculum for Urban School Educators using Community Co-Teaching and Active Learning.” The content of the professional development should and can be incorporated into our teacher preparation program, and I applaud Dr. Butler in doing so. I am also excited by the summit she will hold for all of us on the topic following the project. Our College is involved in much diversity work and this project will contribute to it greatly.

It is no secret that exclusionary discipline practices have historically had a disproportionate and detrimental impact on marginalized students. With the growing overrepresentation of racial and ethnic minorities for school suspensions nationally; school discipline has easily become one of the most pressing and emergent issues facing schools today. For this reason, Dr. Butler’s proposal is a much needed research effort. Her pedagogical ingenuity to integrate community co-teaching and active learning among prospective teacher educators (PhD students), community leaders, the Race Matters for Juvenile Justice (RMJJ) initiative in Charlotte and the locally based Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP), exemplifies the type of forward-thinking and solution oriented mindset that supports the spirit of community collaboration and thereby advances the mission of the University of North Carolina Charlotte and especially that of the College of Education.

Our College recognizes that P-12 classrooms are becoming more and more diverse which is why our existing curriculum develops the kinds of competencies that help prepare our candidates to teach in increasingly diverse settings. Yet and still school discipline and classroom management remain a top concern for many pre-service and novice in-service teachers as they enter the classroom. This is an important area of curriculum development not just for our College, but others as well. Integrating restorative justice into the teacher
preparation curriculum as Dr. Butler has proposed could greatly benefit our students at all levels. The idea of guiding prospective teacher educators to develop restorative justice curriculum that will give teacher candidates early ongoing training is intriguing. I see this having a national impact as Dr. Butler’s doctoral students use this curriculum in the teacher education programs in which they are placed post graduate school. With this in mind, I cannot say enough, how eager I am to see the results of Dr. Butler’s summit and even more interested to learn about how we can infuse restorative justice here in our very own College.

Dr. Butler is an outstanding teacher and excellent citizen of the College of Education. I have no doubt she will uphold her responsibilities as a grantee, including being an excellent steward of UNC Charlotte funds. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Ellen McIntyre, Dean
College of Education
December 28, 2015

Dr. Bettie Ray Butler
UNC Charlotte
College of Education
9201 University City Boulevard
Charlotte, North Carolina 28223-0001

Dear Bettie,

I have just finished reading Closing the School Discipline Gap and wanted to thank you and your students for adding this book to my professional library.

I am so excited to continue working with your Urban Education doctoral students to continue to support Turning Point Academy. As a new semester begins in January, please let me know the best way to stay connected with you and your amazing students.

Thanks again for reaching out to me. I look forward to our continued conversations and partnership.

Sincerely,

Ann Clark
Superintendent
Project Narrative

The **purpose** of this research is to reform teacher education curriculum by proposing that a restorative philosophy be integrated into teacher preparation programs. The **specific aim**, or larger goal, of this project is to provide pre-service teachers with a better understanding of how to reduce racial and socioeconomic disparities in school discipline by effectively implementing culturally responsive restorative practices in urban classrooms. To achieve this goal, this project uses a combination of community co-teaching and active (experiential) learning to expose prospective teacher educators, urban education doctoral students enrolled in EDCI 8320: *Social Deviance, Delinquency, and Education* (Curriculum and Instruction), to theory, research, and practice on successful evidenced-based restorative interventions and strategies most effective with students from culturally diverse backgrounds. By adopting this pedagogical approach, prospective educators will learn how to design culturally responsive restorative justice (RJ) courses. All enrolled students will have a unique opportunity to present their proposed courses, along with, their recommendations for best practices in school discipline to an audience of state and local educational stakeholders directly involved in making curriculum decisions concerning teacher preparation programs. The dissemination of recommendations for policy and practice will be highlighted during a Summit on *Restorative Justice in Urban Education* hosted by the PI and participating doctoral students.

This project aligns with the broader mission of UNC Charlotte (UNCC) to create meaningful collaborations with community leaders and to promote and sustain a robust intellectual environment that values cultural diversity. In like manner, this project also advances the diversity initiatives of the College of Education which focuses on preparing teacher
candidates to teach in increasingly diverse schools by providing culturally relevant instruction that places special emphasis on equity and inclusion.

**Objectives.** The objectives of this project are:

1) *Expose teacher educators to restorative philosophies.* This will be accomplished by assigning interdisciplinary readings that introduce students to the fundamental principles of restorative justice as explained in criminology and education disciplines.

2) *Engage community leaders who have a record of success implementing RJ practices in urban classrooms.* This will be accomplished by having Brian Bulluck (a local community leader, Behavioral Modification Technician at a local disciplinary alternative school, and author of the *The ABC’s of Classroom Management*) co-teach four (4) of the sixteen (16) lessons for EDCI 8320. Bulluck will present evidence-based restorative strategies and interventions that he has personally developed and found significant and positive effects among students of color.

3) *Observe and participate in RJ processes.* In collaboration with the Victor-Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP; a community-based organization in Charlotte that provides training on how to implement restorative practices using mediation and reconciliation) and Race Matters for Juvenile Justice (RMJJ; a programmatic initiative in Charlotte to reduce disproportionality in the juvenile justice system), enrolled students will have an opportunity to experience, firsthand, the interplay of RJ processes.
4) **Plan and develop RJ courses for preservice teachers.** The instructor will assist enrolled students in designing culturally responsive RJ courses for teacher preparation programs.

**Research questions.** The research questions to be addressed are:

1) Do principals and in-service teachers feel that early ongoing exposure to culturally responsive restorative practices will help reduce office referrals for school suspensions?

2) Do school board members feel that integrating a district-wide restorative approach to school discipline reform will help to reduce school suspensions in urban school districts?

3) Do deans of colleges of education feel that integrating a restorative philosophy in the teacher education curriculum will help teacher candidates improve classroom management skills that reduce the number of disciplinary incidences?

**Rationale**

Charlotte, North Carolina is the latest city to propose the use of a moratorium for out-of-school suspensions in response to the ubiquitous and pervasive inequities in school discipline. In April 2016, WBTV news dedicated a 1-hour segment to investigate the racial divide with respect to school punishment in NC schools. Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS), one of the largest urban school districts in the state, reportedly issued 22,196 short-term school suspensions, of which 12,461 were for Black male students compared to 1,159 for White males (WBTV, 2016). While CMS is working aggressively to respond to the discipline crisis; paradoxically, the District
currently has no viable alternative for school suspension in place. Given the timeliness of this topic, there is a great need and high demand for a study such as the one proposed here.

Furthermore, since a large percentage of CMS teachers are also UNCC graduates, it seems intuitive that the two institutions would partner together with the community to help mitigate the discipline crisis. The principal investigator (PI) is presently collaborating with selected CMS school board representatives on related matters (redesigning disciplinary alternative education) and has found the Board to be extremely receptive towards innovative and progressive initiatives that identify alternatives to school suspensions.

**Impact**

Participants in the proposed Summit will be asked to complete a pre- and post-test questionnaire on their feelings and understandings of RJ. Participant responses will be analyzed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The findings of this study will inform RJ initiatives both at the policy level and in practice. This study will impact UNCC teaching and learning at the doctoral level by using pedagogical ingenuity (community co-teaching and active learning) to shape how prospective teacher educators design curriculum. Additionally, this study will also create meaningful community partnerships that develop collaborative, co-constructed initiatives that work to narrow discipline disparities locally. With further refinements, this local initiative (established from this project) has the potential to reform curricula in teacher preparation programs across U.S. colleges and universities, as well as, to create a model of engagement through school/university/community partnerships that could be implemented nationally to reduce suspensions in urban schools/districts.
Literature Review

The overrepresentation of students of color for exclusionary discipline has been a topic of contention for nearly four decades. With the publication of the CDF (Children’s Defense Fund) report in 1975, it was determined that Black students, in comparison to Whites, were three times more likely to be suspended for committing the same or similar offense. While a significant number of students, overall, faced exclusionary consequences for nondangerous and nonviolent infractions; the consequences for each violation varied across race and class and were inconsistently and arbitrarily applied. This provided clear evidence of racial and socioeconomic disproportionality in the administration of school discipline.

Today the discipline problem has worsened; impacting millions of students annually. Even though Black students comprise only 15.5% of the national student enrollment, approximately 39.3% of all out-of-school suspensions are meted out to African Americans (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). With this in consideration, practitioners, policymakers, and researchers alike are making a concerted effort to understand how to reduce disparities in school discipline. A national call to proactively redesign and reform school discipline policy has been issued.

School Discipline Reform: The Need for Change

Nationwide, more than 2.8 million K-12 students (unduplicated) are suspended out-of-school at least once per academic school year (OCR, 2016). This number typically doubles (5.6 million) if calculating suspensions (duplicated) instead of students. Because, on average, most suspensions range between 2-3 days; each year an estimated 11.2 million days of instruction time is lost (Losen, 2015).
Looking closely at racial patterns in achievement, research suggests that classroom time missed as a result of disciplinary action further exacerbates negative academic and life outcomes, particularly for students of color (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Lewis, Butler, Bonner, Joubert, 2010). Intuitively, if a student is not in school they are not learning the essential skills necessary for success in a highly competitive, global market. Hence, it is plausible to conclude that extended time away from the instructional environment places a student at significant risk for long-term academic, social, and emotional (and perhaps, psychological) instability. These risks are known correlates of criminal behaviors. And herein lies the guiding logic behind the school-to-prison pipeline; a hypothesized framework which links the actions of schools (the subjective application of exclusionary discipline) with the subsequent involvement of youth in the juvenile/criminal justice systems (Krezmien, Leone, & Wilson, 2014).

Considering the theoretical parallels between the achievement gap (or the ‘opportunity gap’), the discipline gap, and disproportionate minority contact in the justice system, the U.S. Department of Education (2014) encouraged educators to use out-of-school suspensions only as a “last resort.” The urgency to advance school discipline reform efforts, by identifying viable evidence-based solutions that work to remedy excessive school exclusion, has been attributed to this national call for a moratorium on out-of-school suspensions.

The Promise of Restorative Justice: A Viable, Evidence-Based Solution

Schools around the globe (i.e., Australia, New Zealand, and Japan) have recently begun to adopt restorative justice (RJ) practices. This is in part due to the wide use of RJ as a promising alternative to suspension (Skiba & Losen, 2016). Using a three-tiered approach, RJ focuses on prevention (Tier 1), intervention (Tier 2), and reentry (Tier 3) as a method to improve school climate and reduce disparities in school discipline. By establishing a sense of community (Tier
1), building relationships through group mediation (Tier 2), and creating assimilative spaces whereby students can successfully reintegrate back into the classroom after having committed an infraction (Tier 3); RJ shows great potential to drastically reduce problem behaviors so that every student can learn, fully engage in a rigorous curriculum, and feel safe, nurtured, and welcome (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

Despite its infancy, RJ is now gaining tremendous momentum in the U.S. (i.e., Colorado, California, and Minnesota) as a result of empirical investigations of its impact. Currently, there is a growing body of evidence that suggests schools which implement RJ significantly improve both academic and discipline-based outcomes. For example, in Oakland, California RJ schools made notable gains in attendance, achievement, and graduation rates; all the while reducing the discipline gap (Jain, Bassey, Brown, & Kalra, 2014). Within a 3-year period, schools in Oakland that practiced RJ experienced a cumulative reduction in chronic absenteeism (dropped 24% compared to 62.3% increase for non-RJ schools), growth in reading proficiency (percent change of roughly 135%), and increases in four-year graduation rates (cumulative increase of 60%, compared to 7% for non-RJ schools). During the same period, the percent of students who were suspended over time fell substantially (decreasing from 34% to 14%) and the suspension rate for subjective offenses (disruption/defiance) committed by Black students declined considerably (dropping from a rate of 7.4 to 4.7) within a single academic school year.

Implementing Restorative Justice in Urban Classrooms: Challenges of Training

Notwithstanding the positive impact of RJ on student achievement and school discipline in U.S. schools; the implementation of restorative practices has not been without criticism. Several teachers have expressed a feeling of ill preparedness as it relates to effectively implementing culturally responsive RJ in urban classrooms. Perhaps, the most common
challenge facing educators has been their limited degree of training. A survey of over 200 staff respondents at RJ schools in Oakland maintained that teachers felt that they could benefit immensely from additional help, ongoing training, and early exposure to restorative practices (Jain, et al., 2014). If educators understood how to infuse a restorative philosophy within their curriculum, in lieu of implementing RJ as an add-on (as is often prescribed) to an already overloaded schedule, it is possible that this approach could have an even greater, more sustainable, long-term impact on narrowing the discipline gap and improving academic and life outcomes.

At the present most, if not all, RJ training is exclusively delivered through professional development (PD) workshops. Unfortunately, this training occurs only after teachers have entered the profession. While PDs are a great avenue for additional help and ongoing training; alone, they insufficiently prepare educators to implement RJ with fidelity, therefore making it near impossible to fully realize its potential to reduce suspensions and improve academic performance. What educators need is systematic early exposure to restorative philosophy that exposes them to restorative theory, research, and practice. A RJ curriculum in higher education has much to offer in this respect.

To date, few- if any, research has considered if early exposure to culturally responsive restorative practices has utility for practitioners and policymakers; moreover, whether academic administrators would have an interest in establishing a RJ curriculum in their teacher preparation programs. Given the timeliness of the topic; these questions warrant further exploration. It is the intention of this proposal to address this void in the literature.
Methods

Data Collection

This study seeks to collect quantitative and qualitative data using a pilot survey instrument designed by the PI and participating doctoral students. This scale will quantify the respondents’ perceptions of, and competence in, education-based restorative practices and philosophies to determine ‘openness’ to RJ as an alternative discipline strategy (no such scale presently exists). This scale will feature a series of demographic questions; followed by a 15-item questionnaire - featuring 10, 5-scale likert attitude/belief/knowledge questions (quantitative, 1-Strongly Disagree, 5-Stongly agree) and 5 open-ended questions (qualitative) - with regard to RJ and school discipline.

Data Evaluation (Analysis)

Survey responses will be analyzed using pre- and post-test techniques. A combination of descriptive (cross tabulations/t-tests, quantitative) and interpretive (thematic coding, qualitative) analyses will be used to measure how respondents feel (perceptions) and what respondents know (competence) about RJ as an alternative disciplinary approach- prior to attending the Summit (pre-test). Immediately following the Summit, participants will be administered a post-test, using the same survey given during the pre-test, to determine measurable gains in openness to RJ as an alternative to suspension. Pre- and post-tests will be designed separately to capture the responses of three distinct subgroups: a) practitioners (principals and in-service teachers); b) policymakers (school board members); and c) academic administrators (university deans).

Knowledge Dissemination

Results from this study will be distributed in a variety of ways. First, the information gathered from the surveys will be compiled and converted into a call-to-action report and
subsequently distributed to all Summit attendees. Next, following the Summit, the main conclusions drawn from the study will be presented in a strategic briefing to CMS School Board Representatives. Additionally, the project findings will be presented to the campus community during one of the workshops sponsored by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), or a comparable affiliate (if no platform is provided by CTL). Last, the context of the study, and all associated resulting implications, will be prepared for publication and disseminated in mid- to high-impact urban education academic journals.

**Human Subjects**

The PI plans to complete and submit the required Human Subjects Protocol. It is understood that no research activities can commence until final IRB approval is granted.

**Extramural Funding**

No extramural funding is being sought concurrently with this proposal.

**Timeline**

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References


Skiba, R. & Losen, D. (2016). From reaction to prevention: Turning the page on school
