

Restorative Justice Explained

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Maisha T. Winn explains in *Justice on Both Sides* that restorative justice is “the purposeful attempt to disrupt cycles of injustice and inequality” (2017, 7). Restoring justice in education is a process that applies to interactions such as discipline, but also to how school environments establish, or limit, opportunity, growth, equity, and respect for students. As Dr. Winn describes, educators can build capacity for this work through shifts in how they think, engage with, and teach young people, “establishing a mind-set or paradigm that views all children as valuable and worthy of affirming practices” (2017, 7). The following are some interpretations of these shifts within school library practice.

HISTORY MATTERS

School librarians seek and develop knowledge of the communities they serve, using multiple sources for information, including students and their families and quantitative resources, such as local and national census or surveys (Winn 2018; Cooke 2017).

As part of this process, librarians “need to engage in honest, critical reflection that challenges them to see how their positionality and intersectionality influence their students in both positive and negative ways” in order to build culturally responsive teaching and engagement with students (Cooke 2017, 127).

RACE MATTERS

School librarians develop collections with current, authentic stories and information sources by and about diverse persons and underrepresented groups and advocate for the need for such materials (Naidoo 2014; ALSC 2015).

Materials demonstrate nuance, not stereotyped notions, of race and culture (Naidoo 2014).

Librarians actively share these resources throughout the school year in instruction, programs, and promotion of materials with children and teachers.

JUSTICE MATTERS

School librarians promote intellectual freedom and students' academic and personal development as confident, independent learners and readers by providing equitable, convenient access and formats of information and library services (ALA 2014).

Librarians demonstrate for students and fellow educators non-domination and the absence of judgment or assumption regarding young people's needs, interests, and desires (Cooke 2017).

LANGUAGE MATTERS

School librarians are intentional in their use of language in speaking to and about students, their families, and members of the community. Recognizing the harm inflicted by deficit thinking, they avoid labeling students in speech, discourse, and other communications. Librarians recognize the power of language to teach all children about themselves, their peers, and people in the world. Mindful use of language communicates to students positive and important messages about belonging and humanity.



Works Cited

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