

Running head: RESTORATIVE CIRCLE COACHING MODEL

BRIDGING THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP IN URBAN SCHOOLS: EVALUATING A  
COACHING MODEL TO SUPPORT HIGH QUALITY RESTORATIVE CIRCLES

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## Abstract

The current study introduced *Restore360*, a coaching model that holds promise for the implementation of restorative circles. *Restore360* draws from and integrates features of effective coaching models that support the implementation of evidence-based practices in schools. The core characteristics of *Restore360* are a) a strong focus on teacher-coach collaboration, b) an emphasis on teacher strengths, c) the use of performance feedback, d) teacher access to sustained coaching over the course of a school year, and e) the use of a structured observational tool, *RP-Observe*. The current study examined the acceptability, feasibility, and responsiveness of *Restore360*, as well the coaching model's promise for improving the quality of restorative circles. Coaches ( $N = 3$ ) worked with teachers ( $N = 6$ ) in three urban middle and high schools during a 1-year intervention. A mixed method design was utilized to test the study's hypotheses. Quantitative (e.g., surveys, *RP-Observe*) and qualitative data (e.g., semi-structured interviews) were collected concurrently and the results were triangulated for interpretation purposes. Results suggested that coaches and teachers found *Restore360* to be acceptable and responsive to differentiated student needs, including gender, race/ethnicity, achievement level, and children with special needs. Teachers and coaches reflected positively on teacher and student development throughout the coaching experience. However, the study did not find *Restore360* to have adequate feasibility. Future directions and implications for adoption of the model are discussed.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Barriers to Intervention Implementation.....	1
Predictors of High-Quality Implementation.....	2
Restorative Practices.....	4
Existing Coaching Models.....	7
Acceptability and Feasibility.....	9
Restore360 Coaching Model.....	10
Summary.....	12
METHODS.....	13
DATA ANALYTIC PLAN.....	21
RESULTS.....	24
Examination of individual teachers.....	43
DISCUSSION.....	52
Feasibility of the Coaching Model.....	53
Promoting Teacher and Coach Buy-In to the Intervention.....	55
Potential Moderators of the Coaching Model’s Effectiveness.....	56
Increasing Student Autonomy in Restorative Circles.....	58
Limitations of the Research and Future Directions.....	59
REFERENCES.....	63
APPENDICES.....	69

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## Bridging the Implementation Gap in Urban Schools: Evaluating a Coaching Model to Support High Quality Restorative Circles

### **Introduction**

A growing body of research has sought to address the “implementation gap” that plagues schools trying to implement research-based programs (Fixsen, Blase, Duda, Naoom, & Van Dyke, 2010; Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, Wallace, 2005; McIntosh, Reinke, Herman, 2010). The implementation gap refers to the fact that schools often have difficulties reproducing the results of a program found in more controlled research settings (Goldberg, 2003, p. 304). The science to practice disconnect has real consequences for schools given that research indicates that adhering to the components of a program or intervention is directly related to producing student gains (for a review see Supovitz & Weinbaum, 2008). Teachers’ perceptions of the actual and perceived barriers to and facilitators of program implementation are critically important because teachers are the ones often tasked with carrying out academic and mental health programs in schools (Forman et al., 2013). However, teachers have reported feeling unprepared to address their students’ social, emotional, and behavioral problems (Reinke, Stormont, Herman, Puri, & Goel, 2011; Stormont, Thomas, & Van Garderen, 2012), which may partially explain why teachers have been found to fail in their efforts to implement new interventions in the absence of ongoing support, individualization, and systems change (Fixsen et al., 2005; Noell et al., 2005). This theorizing is consistent with work showing that a lack of confidence, knowledge, training, and skills are key barriers that teachers face when attempting to implement interventions in schools (Stormont, Reinke, Herman, 2011; Stormont, Thomas, & Van Garderen, 2012).

When introductory workshops are provided, teachers often face a lack of continued support following the training (Forman et al., 2013; Reinke et al., 2011). For example, Fixsen and colleagues (2005) have noted that teacher trainings often consist of one-time professional development workshops, but the knowledge conveyed in these workshops seldom translates into skilled implementation in the classroom. Compounding the challenge further, researchers have observed that interventions may be difficult for teachers to adapt to the unique and diverse needs of their classrooms (Reinke et al., 2013). Given the strong link between the fidelity of program delivery and student outcomes, there is a burgeoning area of research on the science of implementation.

### **Predictors of High-Quality Implementation**

To facilitate high fidelity program implementation, researchers have recently proposed that teachers receive ongoing, interactive professional development that encourages teachers to reflect on new practices (Darling-Hammond, 2009). Importantly, research has suggested that teacher trainings consisting of didactics, demonstrations, practice, and feedback have minimal impact on teacher practices unless they are accompanied by classroom coaching, consultation, or ongoing assistance (Cappella, Hamre, Kim, Henry, Frazier, Atkins, Schoenwald, 2012; Forman, et al., 2009; Ransford, Greenberg, Domitrovich, Small, & Jobson, 2009). One study showed that when teachers are provided with additional intervention support, such as consultation or coaching, they were found to be up to 13 times more likely to implement an intervention compared to those who did not receive any additional intervention support (Driscoll et al., 2011). Additionally, teachers demonstrate higher levels of implementation dosage and quality when an intervention is supported with coaching (Ransford et al., 2009). Gravois (2012) has noted that coaching or consultation offers “the greatest chance of addressing a stubbornly intractable

problem – the challenge to translate researched knowledge of teaching and learning into practical application by the classroom teacher” (p. 86). Taken together, these results underscore the importance of incorporating innovative and intensive approaches to closing the “science to practice gap” so that schools are better equipped to address their students’ academic, social, and emotional problems.

A special issue on improving student outcomes using interventions in schools through collaboration was recently published in *Psychology in the Schools* in response to growing interest in the topic (Stormont, Thomas, & Van Garderen, 2012). The issue reviewed seven program models that used collaboration to facilitate interventions in schools (Stormont, Thomas, & Van Garderen, 2012). The issue editors concluded that sustained and ongoing assistance through professional development and onsite support are key to ensure that interventions are implemented the way that they are intended (Stormont et al., 2012). For example, one of the articles featured a collaborative intervention model to support early education teachers in their classroom management skills, including strategies for building teacher–child relationship skills and parent– teacher collaboration called The Incredible Years Teachers Classroom Management Program (IY TCM). Teachers are trained over six full days on how to use the structured curriculum of IY TCM. Between training sessions, teachers meet with IY TCM coaches to support implementation in which coaches assist teachers in flexibly implementing the curriculum. Recently, researchers conducted a large-scale group randomized trial to evaluate the efficacy of IY TCM and found that teachers who developed behavior support plans for students in collaboration with IY TCM coaches, compared to a control group without coach support, had significant improvement in the following areas: teacher-reported disruptive behavior, observed disruptive behaviors, teacher-reported prosocial behavior, and observed reprimands with the



students (Reinke et al., 2014). The editors highlight the value of both *structure* (e.g., using curriculum to learn new skills) and *flexibility* (e.g., allowing for adaptation of the curriculum) within collaborative relationships in order for teachers to “acquire, generalize, and sustain their use of new skills” (Stormont, Thomas, & Van Garderen, 2012, p. 400). Thus, both structure and flexibility may be two key characteristics of good coaching programs.

The current study examines the implementation of a specific type of implementation support (i.e., coaching) in relation to an approach to building community in schools (restorative practices). Coaching refers to ongoing consultant support for teachers who are integrating new practices within classrooms (Stormont & Reinke, 2012). Restorative Practices (RP) is a school-wide program, which aims to transform how students and teachers interact with one another. RP aims to build community by emphasizing repairing the harm done to relationships within a classroom setting rather than relying exclusively on offender punishment (Costello, Wachtel, & Wachtel, 2010).

In the following sections, I review a) the RP programming and relevant empirical studies of its implementation and effectiveness, b) the need to support teachers in implementing high quality restorative circles, and c) accrued knowledge about prior coaching models. Additionally, I identify gaps in the coaching and program implementation literatures and discuss how the current study begins to fill those gaps.

### **Restorative Practices.**

Restorative Practices (RP) in schools arose from the restorative justice movement in which offenders and victims come together to repair the harm that was done following a crime (McCluskey, Lloyd, Kane, Riddell, Stead, & Weedon, 2008). In schools, RP seek to resolve and repair relationships in a school community, promote accountability for one’s actions, instill

empathy, encourage an equitable process, and create opportunities for reflection and change (McClusky et al., 2008; Shift, 2013). Schools have employed a number of RP techniques ranging from preventative practices that occur before an incident of rule-breaking or conflict to intervention practices that occur after an incident of rule-breaking or conflict (Morrison, 2007). Preventative practices are thought to have a cumulative positive impact on schools by building community (McCold & Wachtel, 2001).

Importantly, RP offer schools an alternative to the current use of punitive disciplinary practices, such as out-of-school suspensions. As an alternative to out-of-school suspensions, RP hold great potential for schools because students are less likely to graduate high school and less likely to enroll in post-secondary education with each additional suspension received in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade (Balfanz, Byrnes, & Fox, 2015). Even when students face a single suspension, the associated risk of high school drop-out doubles (Balfanz et al., 2015). The potential benefit of RP is especially pronounced for schools with a high proportion of students of color, who have been found to suffer from disproportionately high suspension and expulsion rates. Indeed, Black students are suspended at a rate three times higher than White students. (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014). Therefore, schools are seeking RP alternatives to minimize such practices and thereby reduce the racial discipline gap.

### **Restorative Circles**

In a report on Restorative Justice in U.S. Schools (2016), the most common RP implementation practice according to survey respondents in schools tends to be the use of restorative circles (Guckenburg, Hurley, Persson, Fronius, Petrosino, 2016). A restorative circle is a classroom arrangement in which students and their teacher sit together and discuss topics related to central issues in their lives. The goal of restorative circles is to build community within

classrooms by allowing participants to express themselves in a relatively nonhierarchical setting. Participants in circles speak one at a time using a “talking piece” in order to give each individual the opportunity to express themselves. Teachers consciously play the role of a facilitator rather than a presenter to give participants greater autonomy in defining the trajectory of the dialogue. This is a clear departure from the traditional hierarchical classroom structure. Teachers or other implementers of restorative circles may struggle with this format, which is one argument for the need for coaching to support teachers in their implementation of restorative circles. The ultimate goal of circles is to create an open, trusting environment that facilitates positive relationships among students and between students and their teachers. In support of this goal, one recent study found that the implementation of restorative circles was linked to respectful teacher-student relationships and results suggested they have promise in narrowing the racial discipline gap (Gregory, Clawson, Davis, & Gerewitz, 2015).

An additional benefit of restorative circles is that other curriculum can be incorporated into the circle process. For example, the Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility has integrated a social and emotional skill-building curriculum into the circle process. For example, in one lesson plan designed by the Morningside Center, students are asked to think about a time when they were angry and identify any feelings or unmet needs underneath the anger. By passing around the talking piece around the circle, students share their thoughts and feelings about the topic. Since teachers have reported feeling unprepared to address their students’ social, emotional, and behavioral problems (Stormont, Thomas, & Van Garderen, 2012; Reinke et al., 2011), a coach may be needed to assist with navigating this component of the intervention. Additionally, further evidence suggests that teachers may benefit from coaching following training in restorative circles. Specifically, in the absence of coaching support, 29.4%

of teachers did not implement one restorative circle in their classroom a year after receiving the training to do so (Korth, 2016). Taken together, it appears that coaching may help teachers tailor and navigate the unique structure of restorative circles and engage with social and emotional material that may arise during a restorative circle. RP training programs, such as the International Institute for Restorative Practices' SaferSanerSchools program, include teacher consultation spread across a school year. As of yet, however, a structured RP coaching model has yet to be written and systematically examined and disseminated. In the next section, I review several existing coaching models and highlight aspects of each that are germane to the current model.

### **Existing Coaching Models**

Researchers have begun to develop and evaluate coaching models that increase intervention fidelity, improve teacher practice, and ultimately improve student outcomes (Reinke, Stormont, Webster-Stratton, Newcomer, & Herman, 2012; Becker, Bradshaw, Domitrovich, & Ialongo, 2013). For example, The Classroom Check-Up (CCU) is a class-wide intervention that has been found to increase teacher praise and decrease disruptive student behavior (Reinke, Lewis-Palmer, & Merrell, 2008). Several aspects of the CCU demonstrate the importance of coaching in program implementation. The CCU utilizes a coaching model to support a teacher in his or her implementation and to encourage intervention adherence over a sustained period of time. The coaching model emphasizes class-wide change and incorporates strategies to elicit teacher behavioral change. Specifically, the CCU involves the following steps: “(1) assessing the classroom, (2) providing the teacher with feedback, (3) developing a menu of interventions, (4) choosing the intervention collaboratively with the teacher, and (5) having the teacher self-monitor implementation of the intervention” (p. 3). Additionally, the CCU provides teachers with daily visual performance feedback, which consists of graphically illustrated data of

targeted behaviors. Receiving performance feedback led to increased use of intervention strategies among teachers (Reinke, Lewis-Palmer, & Merrell, 2008), suggesting its crucial role in achieving program fidelity. The CCU coach provides personalized feedback to teachers on the behaviors observed in classrooms, seeking to emphasize teachers' strengths (Reinke, Lewis-Palmer, & Merrell, 2008). This allows the coach to serve differentiated teacher and student needs. Overall, the CCU is an excellent example of a coaching model that uses a) performance feedback, b) emphasizes teacher strengths, and c) serves differentiated teacher and student needs in order to encourage program fidelity.

Another class-wide intervention that uses a coaching model, My Teaching Partner – Secondary (MTP-S), has been shown to positively affect the nature of teacher-student interactions, leading to improvements in student academic achievement (Allen, Pianta, Gregory, Mikami, & Lun, 2011). MTP-S targets teacher-student interactions and emphasizes developmentally appropriate instructional practices (Pianta et al., 2003). For an entire school year, a coach is paired with an individual teacher to observe the teacher's interactions with students and to collaboratively discuss specific areas of improvement related to teacher behaviors and classroom processes (Pianta et al., 2003). This collaborative coaching and individualized feedback allows teachers to apply newly acquired skills to the classroom (Pianta et al., 2003). Notably, teachers and coaches in MTP-S are trained to utilize an empirically validated, observational tool called the Classroom Assessment Scoring System – Secondary (CLASS-S), which provides a framework for assessing classroom quality and a shared vocabulary for collaboration between the teacher and coach (Pianta et al., 2008). Specifically, the CLASS-S identifies Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support as the three key domains of teaching quality. Within each domain are more specific behavioral indicators related

to the quality of teacher-student interactions (Hamre & Pianta, 2010). Teachers and coaches in MTP-S address each domain, but are responsive to the individual needs of teachers and their classrooms (Hamre & Pianta, 2010). Research indicates that successful coaches often modify their strategy in response to teacher intervention quality (Becker et al., 2013). In practice this means that more or less time may be spent on a certain part of the curriculum depending on teacher strengths, weaknesses, and interests in order to individualize the materials to a specific teacher (Hamre & Pianta, 2010).

Both MTP-S and CCU have resulted in positive changes in teacher practices. This suggests their approach to coaching is worth replicating. Drawing on these programs' characteristics, a coaching model of restorative circles needs to a) use performance feedback, b) emphasize teacher strengths, c) maintain flexibility in order to serve differentiated teacher and student needs, and d) include an observational instrument.

### **Acceptability and Feasibility**

Coaching models also need to be acceptable and feasible to its users and other relevant stakeholders. Acceptability is defined as the perception that an intervention is satisfactory and is assessed through gathering the stakeholders' impressions of the intervention via surveys or interviews (Forman, 2015). Feasibility is defined as the extent to which an intervention can be realized within a specific setting and is assessed through surveys and administrative data and documents (Forman, 2015). Evidence-based interventions administered through randomized control trials have been criticized due to their inability to be replicated outside of tightly controlled research settings (Forman, 2015). Assessing the acceptability and feasibility of an intervention is important to ensure that the intervention is relevant to specific types of clients, available resources, staff capabilities, and/or organization structure (Forman, 2015). Recognizing

the importance of feasibility and acceptability, funding institutions such as the Institute of Education Sciences have required applicants to include measures that address usability (i.e., acceptability), feasibility, and student outcomes. Whereas the Institute of Education Sciences (2013) proposes that acceptability addresses the individual user's abilities, they suggest feasibility addresses supports and constraints within the user's setting. Overall, incorporating measures of acceptability and feasibility into intervention assessments appears to be increasingly common practice given researchers need to demonstrate the intervention will be utilized in authentic educational settings.

### **The Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility**

The coaching model considered in the current paper is called *Restore360* and was developed as part of a collaboration between Rutgers University and The Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility. The Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility offers a variety of programs seeking to improve students' social, emotional, and academic learning in New York City schools. *Restore360* is one of Morningside's key programs that offers training and coaching to school staff in facilitating restorative interventions, including community building circles. Morningside Center contracts with districts to provide training and coaching to teachers for a set number of days per school year. The Morningside Center has been using a coaching model, but sought to manualize and refine their coaching process, as well as integrate the use of an observational tool. The coaching model was updated with the support of the William T. Grant Foundation and in partnership with Dr. Anne Gregory and myself.

### **The Current Restore360 Coaching model**

Dr. Anne Gregory, Tom Roderick, and I gathered iterative feedback from three Morningside Center coaches who piloted the new coaching model in three schools with a total of

six teachers during the 2014-2015 school year. The three Morningside Center coaches were new to the current adaptation of *Restore360*. Discussions, interviews, observations, and survey data were used to improve and finalize the coaching model<sup>1</sup> (See Appendix A for the table of contents of the coaching manual).

The coach-teacher relationship begins with the coach modeling, co-facilitating, or participating in a restorative circle with the teacher and their students. After the circle takes place, the teacher and coach de-brief. The post-circle meetings consist of individualized feedback, self-assessment, and goal setting. As an observational protocol, *RP-Observe* serves to guide performance feedback, and is therefore a critical companion to the coaching model. *RP-Observe* was designed to be used while observing restorative circles and helps the teacher and coach identify areas of strength (glow) and needed improvement (grow). *RP-Observe* aims to provide a common language for coaches and teachers that captures restorative processes of risk-taking, disclosure, and acceptance. The four main dimensions of *RP-Observe* are Circle Structure, Support, and Student Voice.<sup>2</sup> Within each dimension are more specific behavioral indicators related to the quality of classroom instruction and support (Gregory, Korth, Clawson, Davis, Gerewitz, Schotland, 2014). *RP-Observe* has demonstrated high content validity, as all dimensions were rated as important for a well-functioning restorative circle (Gregory, 2013). Inter-rater reliability indicated that the dimensions (with the exception of “autonomy”) could be reliably coded, with intra-class correlations ranging from .51-.82 (Gregory, 2013). Convergent validity was established utilizing a sample of videorecorded restorative circles ( $n = 15$ ), and

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<sup>1</sup> Due to copyright, *Restore360* will not be included in its entirety.

<sup>2</sup> *RP-Observe* has since been updated from the 2014 version. The updated version includes the dimensions - Safety, Belonging, Student Voice, and Opportunity for Learning. The citation for the updated version is as follows: Gregory, A., Korth, J., Clawson, K., Davis, A., Gerewitz, J., Green, C., Schotland, M. & Roderick, T. (2016). *RP-Observe Manual*, v4. Unpublished manual. Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.



surveys from teachers ( $n = 12$ ) and their students ( $n = 159$ ) from a diverse population (Gregory, 2013). The dimensions measured in *RP-Observe* correlate with scales assessing similar domains (Gregory, 2013).

The *Restore360* coaching model draws from and builds on several of the key principles emphasized in the aforementioned coaching models. The core characteristics of *Restore360* are a) a strong focus on teacher-coach collaboration, b) an emphasis on teacher strengths, c) the use of performance feedback, d) teacher access to sustained coaching over the course of a school year, and e) the use of a structured observational tool, *RP-Observe*. These core components serve as the foundation of the coaching model for restorative practices – which will be referred to as “restorative coaching.” To my knowledge, the current study is the first manualized restorative coaching model and the first attempt to develop and integrate an observational tool into a restorative coaching model. Staff developers (i.e., coaches) from Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility piloted the model in three schools. I assessed the feasibility and acceptability of the model for teacher use, and the degree to which the coaching is responsive to differentiated student and teacher needs.

## **Summary**

Teachers are tasked with implementing interventions in schools to address a variety of existing problems (Elias et al., 2003), but often feel that they lack the confidence, knowledge, training, or skills to do so (Stormont, Reinke, Herman, 2011; Stormont, Thomas, & Van Garderen, 2012). Coaching is one form of support that can assist teachers in acquiring the skills necessary to successfully implement interventions. Prior research suggests that coaching models benefit from being acceptable, feasible, and able to serve differentiated teacher and student needs. These qualities are theorized to contribute to student outcomes. With respect to the current

project, coaching may help teachers learn the unique structure of restorative circles and better engage with social and emotional material that may arise during a restorative circle. However, researchers have yet to develop, refine, and disseminate a structured RP coaching model. I seek to fill this gap by examining a new coaching model to support the implementation of restorative circles. The research questions are as follows:

R1: To what extent was the restorative circle coaching model acceptable?

R2: To what extent was the coaching model feasible?

R3: To what degree was the coaching model responsive to differentiated a) teacher and b) student needs?

R4: To what degree was the coaching model discussed in terms of promoting a) teacher and b) student development?

Based on teacher and coach reports, I anticipate that the coaching model will be experienced as acceptable (Hypothesis 1), feasible (Hypothesis 2), and responsive to student (Hypothesis 3a) and teacher needs (Hypothesis 3b). Additionally, based on teacher and coach reports and observer ratings, I anticipate that teacher (Hypothesis 4a) and student (Hypothesis 4b) development will be observed by an outside coder and reported by teachers and coaches. The criteria for establishing support for these hypotheses are described in more detail below.

## Methods

### Participants

Three staff developers and seven teachers in three urban NYC schools were recruited and introduced to the *RP-Observe* and the *Restore360* coaching model. However, one teacher dropped out of the study due to health concerns. No individual or classroom level demographic data was collected on this teacher. In the first school, a total of 685 students were enrolled in grade 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>. In the school, 75% of students were eligible for a free lunch, 32% were

eligible for special education, and 6% were English Language Learners. The school did not use metal detectors and uniforms were not required. In the second school, a total of 1,093 students were enrolled in grade 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>. In the school, 75% were eligible for a free lunch, 24% were eligible for special education, and 5% were English Language Learners. The school used metal detectors and uniforms were not required. In the third school, a total of 618 students were enrolled in grade 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>. In the school, 91% were eligible for a free lunch, 29% were eligible for special education, and 12% were English Language Learners. The school did not use metal detectors and uniforms were not required.

The six teachers had diverse backgrounds – varying in gender, race, years of classroom teaching experience, and years of prior experience facilitating restorative circles. Specifically, five of the teachers identified as female, while one of the teachers identified as male. Additionally, two of the teachers identified as Black or African American and four of the teachers identified as White or Caucasian. Teachers had 3 to 20 years of classroom teaching experience. Two teachers were completely new to facilitating restorative circles, while others had up to seven years of restorative circle keeping experience (Purposeful sampling was utilized in order to pilot the coaching model with teachers who had varying levels of circle facilitation experience). All six teachers attended a 25-hour Introduction to Restorative Circles program conducted by the Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility prior to their participation in the study. Although none of the teachers previously had exposure in the *Restore360* coaching model, three of the teachers had varying levels of exposures to their coaches during the previous year to support their implementation of restorative circles (Teachers 1, 2, and 4).

The three coaches had diverse backgrounds – varying in gender, race, years of classroom teaching experience, years of prior facilitating restorative circles, and social and emotional learning experiences. Specifically, two of the staff developers identified as female, while one identified as male. Additionally, one of the staff developers identified as Asian American and two of the staff developers identified as White or Caucasian. Coaches had 0 to 20 years of classroom teaching experience and 2 to 5 years of restorative circle keeping experience using the current format. One coach had twenty years of restorative circle keeping experience using slightly different restorative circle formats. Another coach had an extensive range of professional roles in education, including classroom teacher, supervisor, assistant principal, assistant director of special education, director of student support services, and member of community school board. Coaches discussed having experience leading Restorative Circle/Practices workshops, teaching social and emotional learning workshops, and facilitating international workshops focused on communication skills, conflict transformation, power dynamics, and problem-solving. Coaches all had experience working with both general education students and special education students in varying grades and academic levels.

The student composition of teachers' circles had considerable variability – ranging in size, ability level, grade level, race/ethnicity, and gender. Specifically, students ( $N=118$ ) were identified as Black or African American (44%), Hispanic or Latino (37%), Two or more races (11%), Asian (3%), or White or Caucasian (3%). Additionally, students were identified as female (40%) or male (60%). Furthermore, two of the classrooms were described as below average (i.e., special education students or collaborative team teaching class), one classroom was described as average to below average (i.e., general education and special education students), and three classrooms were described as average (i.e., general education students).

## Measures

**Acceptability.** In this study, acceptability is defined as the perception that the coaching model is satisfactory in the eyes of the teacher and coach based on their comfort with and liking of the coaching model. Each teacher and coach completed an online feedback survey after a coaching session and provided feedback on acceptability of the coaching model. Survey scale items of acceptability from the teacher and coach perspective (See Appendix B) were used along with open-ended responses acquired from a 30-minute interview (See Appendix C). The teacher and coach versions of the Acceptability survey scales were adapted from MTP-S coach support scales (Shargo, 2010). Specifically, teachers provided their perceptions of the acceptability of the coaching model by responding to the following six statements: “The pre-circle and/or post-circle coaching sessions were worth the time they took,” “I felt I was supported by my coach during the sessions,” “After concluding the sessions, I felt frustrated,” “I gained a better understanding of *RP-Observe* during the sessions,” “The session felt productive,” and “I enjoyed talking with my coach.” The coach version of the Acceptability survey required the coaches to provide their perceptions of the acceptability of the coaching model by responding to the following six statements: “The pre-circle and/or post-circle coaching sessions were worth the time they took,” “I felt I was supportive of the circle keeper during the session(s),” “After concluding the sessions, I felt frustrated,” “I gained a better understanding of *RP-Observe* during the sessions,” and “The session felt productive,” and “I enjoyed talking with the circle keeper.” Teachers and coaches responded using a 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 4 (*Strongly Agree*) likert-type scale. The third item was reverse coded. Higher ratings indicated more support.

Teachers and coaches also completed a 30 to 60-minute semi-structured interview (see Appendix C) to provide feedback on the acceptability of the coaching model. The interview

protocol included the following acceptability questions: “Did you find the coaching sessions provided a useful structure for promoting growth over time?” “What has been the most rewarding and challenging aspect of the coaching sessions?” “Were there moments when the collaboration faltered or went very well?” “Did you feel that anything was lacking in the current coaching model?”

**Feasibility.** In this study, feasibility is defined as the extent to which the coaching model is perceived to be implementable without significant barriers or constraints. Feasibility was assessed using data that was collected during the 30 to 60 minutes semi-structured interview. The interview protocol did not specifically ask any questions directly related to the feasibility of the intervention. However, transcripts of the interviews were manually coded to determine the extent to which the teachers and coaches discussed factors related to real or perceived barriers to implementation including things such as scheduling conflicts and teacher workload.

**Responsiveness to differentiated student needs.** In this study, responsiveness to differentiated student needs is defined as the extent to which teachers and coaches report that they used the coaching model to address the unique needs of their students including differences in culture, gender, race, and/or achievement levels. Teachers or coaches that reported that the coaching model was adapted to meet students’ specific needs provided evidence that the model can be responsive to issues pertaining to student diversity. When teachers and coaches completed the 30 to 60-minute semi-structured interview (see Appendix C), they had the opportunity to describe the extent to which the coaching model was responsive to a teacher’s or classroom’s unique set of needs. The interview protocol included the following questions for teachers and coaches: “During coaching sessions, did you discuss circle curriculum and how it related to your

students' diverse backgrounds (ELL, gender, race/ethnicity, achievement level, children with special needs)?" and "Did you help to adapt curriculum to meet students' specific needs?"

**Responsiveness to differentiated teacher needs.** In this study, responsiveness to differentiated teacher needs is defined as the extent to which teachers and coaches report that the model is flexible enough to accommodate teachers' unique backgrounds including years of teaching experience, restorative circle keeping experience, and cultural backgrounds. Responsiveness to differentiated teacher needs was assessed using data that was collected from the 30 to 60 minutes semi-structured interview. The interview protocol did not include any questions directly related to responsiveness to differentiated teacher needs. However, transcripts of the interviews were manually coded to determine the extent to which the teachers and coaches discussed factors related to responsiveness to differentiated teacher needs.

**Observed and perceived positive student development.** In this study, positive student development is defined as both observable and reported student growth through participating in restorative circles. Specifically, perceived student growth was conceptualized as coach or teacher reflections of students' positive psychological or behavioral change over time. In addition, using *RP-Observe*, I evaluated the quality of teachers' restorative circles at baseline and one additional time throughout the school year in order to detect shifts in observable student commitment as participants in the circle. Open-ended responses were collected during a 30 to 60-minute interview in response to questions related to shifts in circle quality. Specifically, the interview protocol included the following questions for teachers and coaches (see Appendix C), "Can you describe any changes over time in your circles or your students?" Furthermore, the interview protocol asked teachers and coaches, "Over time, have the circles in any way contributed to developing a sense of shared community and values in your classroom?" and "Have they helped

students learn SEL skills and if so which ones? Preventing discipline problems? Resolving conflict?”

**Observed and perceived positive teacher development.** In this study, positive teacher development is defined as positive psychological or behavioral teacher growth through participating in the coaching sessions. I conducted first-hand observations of the teachers’ restorative circles using *RP-Observe* and interview data to assess positive teacher development. Teachers were assessed using the following RP-Observe dimensions, including Circle Structure, Adult-Student Respect and Responsiveness, Student-Student Respect and Responsiveness, Autonomy, Relevancy, and Risk-Taking. The interview protocol included the following question for teachers, “Can you describe any changes over time in the coaching process, your relationship with your coach, or your circles?”

## **Procedures**

Following Institutional Review Board approval from both Rutgers University and the district under study, teachers in the three participating schools participated in a workshop designed and facilitated by The Morningside Center for Teaching Responsibility in collaboration with the Rutgers Team (see Appendix D for workshop agenda). Teachers were provided an overview to Morningside Center’s approach to Restorative Practices and to the *Restore360* coaching model. Teachers also were introduced to *RP-Observe* and collaborated with staff developers in order to identify two dimensions to focus on in their first coaching sessions using the model – one area of strength and one area of improvement. All teachers were told the coaches would work with them on Circle Structure as a start to the coaching. At the end of the workshop, teachers and coaches were asked to voluntarily consent for participation in the study. All three coaches and all seven teachers who attended the training consented to participate. Each



teacher received *Restore360* coaching services, in which teachers interacted with a coach over the course of one academic year. Each coach was assigned to two or three teachers at the same school. There was no coach attrition throughout the study. After the one teacher dropped out of the study during the intervention due to health concerns, each coach had only two teachers assigned to him or her. Complete data was unable to be obtained on this teacher.

Teachers were expected to meet with their coach eight times over the course of the year following the implementation of a restorative circle. Ultimately, teachers participated in three to ten coaching sessions across the school year. During each coaching session, coaches provided specific verbal feedback on areas of strength (e.g., “glows”) and weakness (“grows”), following the *RP-Observe* protocol. Teachers and Coaches were able to collaboratively problem-solve areas of weakness. Monthly conference calls among coaches, the Rutgers team, and the Morningside program developers were used to increase treatment fidelity and consistency of the coaches.

I observed each of the teachers’ restorative circles at two time points during the year and coded the circles using the *RP-Observe* coding system. I had previously been trained to be a reliable coder using the *RP-Observe* system whereby I obtained 80% agreement on a set of training clips that had been master coded. Additionally, teachers and coaches were asked to complete a brief survey after a coaching session to assess the acceptability of the coaching model. Lastly, all six teachers and three coaches participated in a 30 to 60-minute interview after the coaching had been completed (see Appendix E for a research activities timeline).

## **Data Analytic Plan**

I used a mixed method, multi-informant approach to triangulate on my primary research questions related to the acceptability, feasibility, and responsiveness of the restorative circle implementation coaching model. Triangulation refers to a mixed-method evaluation design aimed at assessing the same conceptual phenomenon (Greene & McClintock, 1985). The use of multiple perspectives that converge and corroborate one another serve to minimize bias and improve the trustworthiness of the findings (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). An additional strength of mixed methods designs is the ability to elaborate, enhance, or clarify the results from one method to another method (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). Importantly, the evaluator is expected to sensibly interpret results that are convergent, inconsistent, or contradictory (Mathison, 1988). In this study, the qualitative semi-structured interview data is used to elaborate or enhance the quantitative survey data and observational coding data from *RP-Observe*. The interview data may reveal themes or rich descriptions about why, for example, teachers might report that they did not find the coaching model to be acceptable. Both the teacher and the coach perspectives bear on the research questions and thus allow for convergent and/or divergent findings to emerge. Overall, I used a mixed methods approach to test the aforementioned research questions by relying on triangulation and complementarity across data sources.

**Semi-structured interview coding.** Nine 30 to 60-minute audio-recorded interviews (three coaches, six teachers) were transcribed. In collaboration with Dr. Gregory, I developed a coding manual to facilitate reliable coding of the interviews (see Appendix F for the coding manual). The coding manual contains a check-list of core components of *Restore360*, including a) a strong focus on teacher-coach collaboration, b) an emphasis on teacher strengths, c) the use of performance feedback, d) teacher access to sustained coaching over the course of a school year, and e) the use of *RP-Observe*. Coders were able to check “present” or “absent” on each of

the five core components of the coaching model using the teacher interviews. Additionally, the coding manual contains six global codes to address hypotheses from the coach and the teacher perspective (Acceptability, Feasibility, Student Responsiveness, Teacher Responsiveness, Student Development, and Teacher Development). A global code refers to a single code that is assigned to an entire interview record that indicates the extent to which each coding category is endorsed by the interviewee. The extent to which each global code was endorsed was rated on a 3-pt scale (none = 0, mixed or low = 1, high = 2) or a 2-pt scale (present = 1 or absent = 0). An independent coder and I coded the interviews according to this protocol. Percent agreement was calculated between the two coders' codes to offer evidence of the credibility and trustworthiness of the coding—a conceptualization of reliability typical of qualitative analysis with small samples (Patton, 2002). The percent agreement between an independent coder and me was calculated across codes, including Acceptability (75%), Feasibility (92%), Student Responsiveness (83%), Student Development (92%), and Teacher Development (75%). Percent agreement was not calculated for the teacher responsiveness code due to missing data and was therefore dropped from the analysis entirely. Percent agreement was also calculated for the core components of the coaching model, including a strong focus on teacher-coach collaboration (92%), an emphasis on teacher strengths or “glows” (92%), the use of behaviorally-based performance feedback (100%), sustained coaching over the course of a school year (100%), and the use of a structured observational tool, *RP-Observe* (100%). After coding, coders spoke to agree on a set of master codes.

**Acceptability scale.** In addition to the qualitative interviews that were collected, a 6-item Post Coaching Session survey was also analyzed. After reverse coding the third item, an average

of the 6 items was calculated for each teacher and coach ( $\alpha = 0.69$ ; although the alpha is slightly low, it is within the acceptable range; George & Mallery, 2003).

***RP-Observe coding.*** As stated above, *RP-Observe* was designed to be used while observing restorative circles and serves as an indication of circle quality. *RP-Observe* codes (Circle Agreements, Adult-Student Respect and Responsiveness, Student-Student Respect and Responsiveness, Relevancy, Student Ownership, Risk Taking, and Student Circle Commitment) are assigned as low (1, 2), mid (3, 4, 5), or high (6, 7). The Student Commitment code captures the students' focus and enthusiasm for the circle process (Gregory et al., 2014). Student development over time is defined by improvement by a full coding point on the Student Commitment Code. Teacher development over time is defined as improvement by a full coding point on the majority of the six remaining codes. Coding scores were also examined in a bar graph (time 1, time 2) to illustrate patterns of development over time.

**Triangulation.** In order to triangulate on the research questions of interest, visuals were provided in order to display convergence and divergence across multiple informants. The "+" symbol was used to indicate that the informant's responses support a hypothesis. The "-" symbol was used to indicate that the informant's responses do not support a hypothesis. For coding responses, a "+" symbol was applied when a response receives the highest global score (2) and a "-" symbol was applied when a response receives the lower two scores (0, 1). For the survey responses, a "+" symbol was applied when the informant receives a "3" or 4, indicating "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" on the Coaching Acceptability Scale and a "-" symbol was applied when the informant receives a "1" or "2," indicating "strongly disagree" or "somewhat disagree" on the Coaching Acceptability Scale. For the *RP-Observe* observational coding, a "+"

symbol was applied when four or more codes improve by a full point from baseline to the final observation. A “-” symbol was applied when three or fewer codes improve.

Six tables (one for each global interview code) were constructed in order to display the patterns of convergence and divergence across coaches and teachers. Evidence to support hypothesis 1 was defined as 3 or more “+” symbols, indicating that the coaching model was perceived to be acceptable (3) or highly acceptable (4). Evidence contrary to the hypothesis was defined as 2 or fewer “+” symbols, indicating that the coaching model was perceived to have mixed acceptability (2), or no acceptability (1, 0). Evidence to support hypothesis 2 was defined as 2 or more “+” symbols, indicating that the coaching was perceived to be feasible for the teachers. Evidence contrary to the hypothesis was defined as 1 or fewer “+” symbols, indicating that the coaching model was perceived to have low feasibility (1), or is not feasible (1, 0). Evidence to support hypothesis 3a and 3b was defined as 2 “+” symbols, indicating that the coaching model was perceived to be responsive to differentiated teacher and student needs. Evidence contrary to the hypothesis was defined as 1 or fewer “+” symbols, indicating that the coaching model was perceived to be somewhat responsive (1), or is not responsive (0). Lastly, evidence to support hypothesis 4a and 4b was defined as 2 or more “+” symbols, indicating that the coaching model was perceived to demonstrate promise for promoting student and teacher development. Evidence contrary to the hypothesis was defined as 1 or fewer “+” symbols, indicating that the coaching model was perceived to result in minimal development (1), or no development (0).

## **Results**

As a first step before testing the primary hypotheses, I sought to verify that the five core components of the coaching model were present by coding the coach and teacher interviews.

Complete data was not available for one teacher who dropped out of the study due to health concerns. As previously noted, the presence or absence of the following five components was assessed: A strong focus on teacher-coach collaboration, an emphasis on teacher strengths or “glows,” the use of behaviorally-based performance feedback, sustained coaching over the course of a school year, and the use of a structured observational tool, *RP-Observe*. Results indicated that all five of the core coaching components of *Restore360* were present for five of the six teachers. Teacher 4 and her coach indicated that *RP-Observe* was not used in the coaching. Teacher 4’s interview suggested that all other core coaching components were in place. However, in a separate interview, Teacher 4’s coach suggested that the coaching did *not* have a strong focus on collaboration. Implications for Teacher 4 are discussed below.

*Research Question 1:* To address the research question, “To what extent was the coaching model acceptable?,” coaches and teachers commented on various aspects of the coaching program, including their collaboration with their coach, *RP-Observe*, and the glow and grow structure in a semi-structured interview. These acceptability characteristics were codified as *Highly Acceptable*, *Mixed Acceptability*, and *Not Acceptable*. Ratings on teacher and coach interviews and surveys showed that a majority of teacher/coach dyads experienced the coaching as acceptable or highly acceptable. This is shown in Table 1, which indicates that the acceptability proportion reflecting the triangulation of findings across methods and informants was sufficiently high for all but one teacher whose unique case is discussed in greater detail below. Overall, there was considerable convergence across method and informant. Importantly, 91.7% of all responses from respondents (i.e., eleven out of twelve responses from teachers and coaches) found the coaching model to be acceptable (3) or highly acceptable (4). The high mean

on the acceptability scale for both teachers and coaches also show a general positive experience with the coaching model ( $M = 3.68$ ;  $SD = 0.34$ ;  $Min: 2.83$   $Max: 4.00$ ).

Table 1

<i>Acceptability of Coaching Model</i>						
Teacher ID	Teacher Interview	Coach Interview	Teacher Survey	Coach Survey	Acceptability Proportion	Interpretation of Results
Teacher 1	+	+	+	+	4/4	Highly Acceptable
Teacher 2	+	+	+	+	4/4	Highly Acceptable
Teacher 3	+	+	+	+	4/4	Highly Acceptable
Teacher 4	-	-	-	+	1/4	Not Acceptable
Teacher 5	+	+	+	+	4/4	Highly Acceptable
Teacher 6	+	-	+	+	3/4	Acceptable

*Note.* Three or more “+” symbols indicates that the coaching model is acceptable (3) or highly acceptable (4). Evidence contrary to the hypothesis will be defined as 2 or fewer “+” symbols, indicating that the coaching model has mixed acceptability (2), or is not acceptable (1, 0).

Drawing on the interview data helps elucidate why most coach and teacher dyads found the coaching model to be acceptable. Teacher 2 received a “+” on the teacher survey due to her highly positive comments of the coaching experience. The following excerpt from Teacher 2’s interview focuses on the collaboration within the coach-teacher relationship:

*The most rewarding aspect has probably been to have the change to pick [my coach]’s brain actually. And just collaborate with her, but also take what she knows and it’s something I know. Whether it’s a reading that’s really good for this particular situation or a strategy or just learning from her modeling – even to her general attitude about how we treat children, you know. I feel like I have incorporated a lot of that into myself as an educator and there’s a bit of transference that’s been very helpful. So that has been a benefit – I mean in a lot of ways she has been more of a mentor.*

Teacher 2 commented that she found her coach to be acceptable for a variety of reasons – her coach provided her with curriculum and specific strategies to use while conducting circles.

Additionally, her coach modeled her own personal approach and style to conducting circles, as

well as shared some of her general philosophies on how to interact with children. Taken together, it seems that coaches serve multiple functions for teachers. Similarly, Teacher 5 received a “+” on the teacher survey due to her comments suggesting a highly acceptable coaching experience. Below is a quote from Teacher 5’s interview commenting on the use of *RP-Observe* within the coaching model:

*And for me, having something concrete makes it easier because I don’t want you to tell me how it felt like. I need you to tell me specifics. Specifically, point out times when maybe I did something well, maybe I didn’t do something well.*

Teacher 5 indicated that the specific behavioral indicators found in *RP-Observe* allowed her to better improve her practice in comparison to receiving impressionistic feedback. Teacher 5 also expressed that she found value in the imbedded “glow” and “grow” structure of the coaching sessions.

As mentioned above, one of the six teachers, Teacher 4, indicated that she did not find the model acceptable. Teacher 4 received a “-” on the teacher survey due to her comments of various aspects of the coaching model lacking acceptability. Specifically, Teacher 4 commented that she did not find *RP-Observe* to be a useful component in the coaching model:

*Initially, I was going to say I think [RP-Observe] is a good idea, but knowing myself and like teachers – We are given a million rubrics and in this school anyhow we have a coach that comes in once a week to observe our classes and then gives us feedback and is always like you know – I feel like maybe if it was something more like this, it may be one more thing that a teacher takes and is like, really? Like now I’m being judged on this. Maybe keeping it...and it might depend on the teacher. I would probably do better with something informal...*



Teacher 4's quote suggests that she felt overwhelmed with the number of structured rubrics that she was required to follow as a teacher and frustrated that *RP-Observe* would add to this stress due to increased scrutiny from her coach. Teacher 4 expressed that she would prefer if the coaching sessions were more unstructured and informal. Furthermore, Teacher 4 noted that she did not need a lot of support due to her previous year of training, coaching, and conducting circles. Teacher 4 stated:

*It's my second year of doing circles and I think that's why [my coach] and I don't hook up that much because I went through the full week training at [organization]. It was [organization] that did it, it wasn't [my coach]. And then I went for a full week of training and all last year and he came and sat with me and now this year is sort of like, 'you know what you are doing kind of thing.' So, that's why it's like this.*

Teacher 4's reaction suggests that familiarity with and past experience receiving coaching and conducting circles may diminish the perceived acceptability – and indeed usefulness – of a coaching model using *RP-Observe*.

*Research Question 2:* To address the research question, “To what extent was the coaching model feasible?”, teachers and coaches commented on scheduling conflicts and more generally on their teaching workload. These feasibility characteristics were codified as *Highly Feasible*, *Low Feasibility*, and *Not Feasible*. Ratings on teacher and coach interviews and surveys showed that the majority teacher/coach dyads experienced the coaching model as having low feasibility. This is shown in Table 2, which indicates that the feasibility proportion reflecting the triangulation of findings across informants was lower than expected for all but one teacher/coach dyad. Interestingly, there was considerable divergence across informants, with coaches tending to view the model as being more feasible compared to teachers.

Table 2

*Feasibility of Coaching Model*

Teacher ID	Teacher Interview	Coach Interview	Feasibility Proportion	Interpretation of Results
Teacher 1	-	+	1/2	Low Feasibility
Teacher 2	-	+	1/2	Low Feasibility
Teacher 3	-	-	0/2	Low Feasibility
Teacher 4	-	-	0/2	Not Feasible
Teacher 5	+	+	2/2	Feasible
Teacher 6	-	+	1/2	Low Feasibility

*Note.* Two “+” symbols indicates that the coaching model is feasible. Evidence contrary to the hypothesis will be defined as 1 or fewer “+” symbols, indicating that the coaching model has low feasibility (1), or is not feasible (0).

Drawing on the interview data helps clarify why most coaches and teacher dyads found the coaching model to have low feasibility. Teacher 3 received a “-” on the teacher survey, as her responses suggested that the model demonstrated low feasibility:

*The only thing that I can think of that was particular to my situation, but it was hard to meet with my coach. Because so much happens in circles – it’s very hard a week later to remember the things that happened and the best thing – the only thing that could have happened that would have made a difference is for me to get to talk to him immediately after. Because I know I forgot about half of the things – even if I write stuff down, there was a lot that was sort of just gone.*

Teachers 3 suggested that her inability to meet with her coach following a circle was a barrier to the feasibility of the coaching model. Teacher 3 indicated that regular meeting times that occur on the same day, if not immediately after a circle is important for debriefing.

Similarly, Teacher 1 received a “-” on the teacher survey due to his comments suggesting that the coaching model had low feasibility. Specifically, he commented on the barriers surrounding accessing curriculum for restorative circles:

*And so like when you are looking to plan from one year to the next – sure you’ve got the big book and you’ve got the little book of stories and all the stuff that came in our circles boxes. But, there’s no larger curriculum, there’s no...I don’t think there is enough guidance for teachers who are novice and uncomfortable or just busy and aren’t spending their extra time thinking about how to plan the next circle.*

Teacher 1 expressed a desire for a more comprehensive curriculum to assist in the implementation of restorative circles, which presents an opportunity for coaches to make the coaching model more feasible for teachers.

In contrast, the following excerpt is an example of a feasible coaching experience response commenting on the consistency and timing of the coaching:

*And most of the time it was like in and out because usually it would be a forty to forty five minute period and by the time we will get up there it was twenty five to thirty minutes. So, it was very consistent. So, if there was a recommendation that I would make for a coach, you would want the consistency. Ideally, you know, the end of this circle and then as close as possible to that.*

This suggests that perceived feasibility may improve if the coaching is experienced as consistent and timely.

*Research Question 3a:* To address the research question, “To what degree was the coaching model responsive to differentiated student needs?,” coaches and teachers discussed in a semi-structured interview whether or not they adapted the circle process or circle curriculum based on the students’ backgrounds, including gender, race, achievement level, children with special needs. These acceptability characteristics were codified as *Responsive* or *Not Responsive*.

Ratings on teacher and coach interviews and surveys showed that a majority of teacher/coach dyads experienced the coaching as responsive to differentiated student needs. This is shown in Table 3, which indicates that the responsiveness proportion, reflecting the triangulation of findings across informants, was sufficiently high for all but one teacher/coach dyad. One teacher/coach dyad did not discuss whether or not the coaching model was responsive during their interviews and as a result was coded as missing data. Overall, there was considerable convergence across informants. Taken together, 75.0% of all responses from respondents (i.e., nine out of twelve responses from teachers and coaches) found the coaching model to be responsive.

Table 3

*Responsiveness of Coaching Model*

Teacher ID	Teacher Interview	Coach Interview	Feasibility Proportion	Interpretation of Results
Teacher 1	-	+	1/2	Somewhat Responsive
Teacher 2	+	+	2/2	Responsive
Teacher 3	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not coded/Missing data
Teacher 4	+	+	2/2	Responsive
Teacher 5	+	+	2/2	Responsive
Teacher 6	+	+	2/2	Responsive

*Note.* Two “+” symbols indicate that the coaching model is responsive. Evidence contrary to the hypothesis will be defined as 1 or fewer “+” symbols, indicating that the coaching model is somewhat responsive (1), or is not responsive (0).

The interview data reflects the extent to which coach and teacher dyads found the coaching model to be responsive to differentiated student needs. The following excerpt is an example provided by Teacher 6 who received a “+” and found the coaching model to be responsive to her students’ needs commenting on adapting curriculum with her coach:

*We would use the curriculum and think about, analyze -- like how we looked at the students within our special population. And like I said we basically had the classes –*

*special needs students. So, if you wanted to bring them together, just the curriculum, we looked on their functionalities, and we tried to adapt the student's curriculum to both the student's needs.*

Similarly, Teacher 4 received a “+” and commented on supplementing her curriculum to address the race/ethnicity of her students:

*Yes, everything. Yeah. It was a good mix. There are some things that I feel that – so our school – I mean most city schools are very mixed especially in the [NYC location]. There are a lot of things that are geared towards I guess more African American stuff as well and you see my population is more Spanish um so I think there was one or two – Again it was curriculum from a while ago that I think was some of that, but [my coach] came in and actually did the thing about the Baltimore riots.*

In contrast, Teacher 1 received a “-” and explained that he and his coach did not utilize the coaching sessions to adapt curriculum based on the students’ backgrounds, including gender, race, achievement level, children with special needs. Teacher 1 stated:

*Not particularly. I feel like – not to say that we are ignoring it - any differences but, I would say that an operating assumption is that some of their personal experiences is - just as, you know, me coming from a small town in the Midwest – I might not have had the same experiences as them growing up in urban New York but like, the emotions are the same, you know, and so I think that is at the root of it.*

Teacher 1 did not feel the need to use the coaching session to adapt the curriculum to his students’ unique backgrounds. Teacher 1 appeared to suggest that a broader common humanity that informs circles is more important than explicitly addressing his students’ diverse backgrounds.

*Research Question 3b:* The research question, “To what degree was the coaching model responsive to differentiated teacher needs?” could not be analyzed due to the lack of responses in the teacher and coach interviews. In other words, the coders were unable to find instances when the coaches or teachers addressed whether they adapted the coaching model to serve differentiated teacher needs. That said, one instance was found from a coach speaking about adapting the coaching model to fit the experience level of Teacher 4:

*So, again, there is a good example where the coach has to assess where their teacher is, respect their experience, their growth. I mean she was doing circles in every single one of her classes. And so, again, I made a decision that I am not going to beat that drum, but I am going to beat other drums, but I am going to beat other drums as I indicated to you previously on certain issues. And so, you have to – that’s why in coaching, you can’t use the same jacket and put it on every person that jacket. It’s a different jacket, it’s a different coat, it’s a different hat that you have to put on them depending on where they are.*

Coach 2 explained how he adapted his coaching style to meet the needs of Teacher 4, an experienced circle facilitator and teacher. He indicated that with an experienced teacher who was regularly conducting circles, he provided her with more autonomy over the circle process, choosing only to intervene on rare occasion.

*Research Question 4a.* To address the research question, “To what degree was the coaching model discussed in terms of promoting teacher development?”, coaches and teachers commented on various ways they believed they grew from participating in the coaching program. The teacher development characteristics were codified as *Positive Development*, *Minimal Development*, and *No Development*. Observer-rated *RP-Observe* coding and ratings on teacher

and coach interviews showed that a majority of teacher/coach dyads benefitted from the coaching as it contributed to their development as circle keepers. This is shown in Table 4, which indicates that the “growth proportion” reflecting the triangulation of findings across methods and informants was sufficiently high for 4 of the 6 teachers.

Table 4

*Reports of Teacher Development*

Teacher ID	Teacher Interview	Coach Interview	RP-Observe	Growth Proportion	Interpretation of Results
Teacher 1	+	+	-	2/3	Positive Development
Teacher 2	-	-	+	1/3	Minimal Development
Teacher 3	-	-	+	1/3	Minimal Development
Teacher 4	+	+	-	2/3	Positive Development
Teacher 5	+	+	-	2/3	Positive Development
Teacher 6	+	-	+	2/3	Positive Development

*Note.* Evidence to support hypothesis 4b will be defined as 2 or more “+” symbols, indicating that the coaching model demonstrated promise for promoting teacher development. Evidence contrary to the hypothesis will be defined as 1 or fewer “+” symbols, indicating minimal development (1), or no development (0).

Drawing on the interview data helps elucidate why most coach and teacher dyads found the coaching model to contribute to their development as circle keepers. The following excerpt is an example of Teacher 1 who received a “+” on the teacher survey due to his reflections of growing throughout the coaching process:

*So for an example, just thinking about the way that I am holding myself—the cadence of my speech, um thinking about the way that I describe things, so I often become very conversational and sort of fast talking and so I would slow myself down intentionally to try to like cue the students to slow down. Or, I did some openings and closings like bringing in a chime and then just like listening to it until you couldn’t hear it anymore. Or just like focusing on stillness or quiet in a way that I think was meditative or calming.*

*As much as I think that having a circle is like holding the space, I think that's really improved my practice.*

The aforementioned quote by Teacher 1 spoke to his development in terms of the presentation of the circle content in a slower, more intentional way. He also noted that he began incorporating opening and closing ceremonies more regularly into his circles, which are considered important in a restorative circle's structure. During the interviews, a coach described Teacher 2's development in terms of the teacher becoming more confident to alter circle curriculum to better accommodate student needs during a circle:

*I definitely think she gained confidence in being a circle keeper and feeling like also she was able to deviate from whatever plan she would come up with.*

Additionally, below is an example of "minimal development" reported by Teacher 3:

*Yeah, so that's what I didn't get to because I felt like...partially this is my own fault...I need to be sort of stronger...as I become a more experienced teacher, I need to be like this is happening in the world and this is really important and we need to do that instead of learning about Russia in the 1800s today. And I'm still struggling with that because of the high stakes test and I feel like I know intellectually that circles will help them focus on content more. I know that is true, but it's still really hard for me in the moment when they don't know this content...to take that break. And it's something that I am working on myself, so in thinking about meaningful world events like the things that the kids really did need space to talk about, I didn't do as much. However, in terms of relevancy, I did think a lot about in these circles in the spring – the community-building piece. So, I was trying to make it relevant to what I saw that they needed, even if it wasn't everything that they needed.*



Teacher 3 and her coach suggested that the pressures of standardized testing for novice teachers can impede progress when facilitating restorative circles. With the press for student performance on standardized testing, this particular teacher found it difficult to deviate from her academic curriculum to focus on meaningful world events –a focus that she acknowledges may have ultimately benefitted her students.

*RP-Observe* coding details graphed below may provide additional insights into the specific dimensions in which teachers developed over time. As previously stated, *RP-Observe* was created to be used while observing restorative circles and serves as an indication of circle quality. *RP-Observe* codes (Circle Structure, Adult-Student Respect and Responsiveness, Student-Student Respect and Responsiveness, Relevancy, Student Ownership, Risk Taking) are coded as either low (1, 2), mid (3, 4, 5), or high (6, 7). Teacher development over time was defined as improvement by a full coding point on four or more of the six codes. For example, the aforementioned teacher development triangulated charts indicated that Teacher 1 received a “-” in the *RP-Observe* category, suggesting that Teacher 1’s scores did not improve in 4 or more dimensions. Figure 1 below shows that at T1 (time 1), Circle Structure was observed in the mid-range and at T2 (time 2) Circle Structure was observed in the mid-range. At T1, Adult-Student Respect and Responsiveness was observed in the mid-range and at T2, Adult-Student Respect and Responsiveness was observed in the mid-range. At T1, Student-Student Respect and Responsiveness was observed in the mid-range and at T2, Student-Student Respect and Responsiveness in the mid-range. At T1, Relevancy was observed in the high-range and at T2, Relevancy was observed in the high-range. At T1, Autonomy was observed in the mid-range and at T2, Autonomy was observed in the mid-range. At T2, Risk-Taking was observed in the high-

range and at T2, Risk-Taking was observed in the high range. Therefore, it seems that many of Teacher 1's codes remained stable.

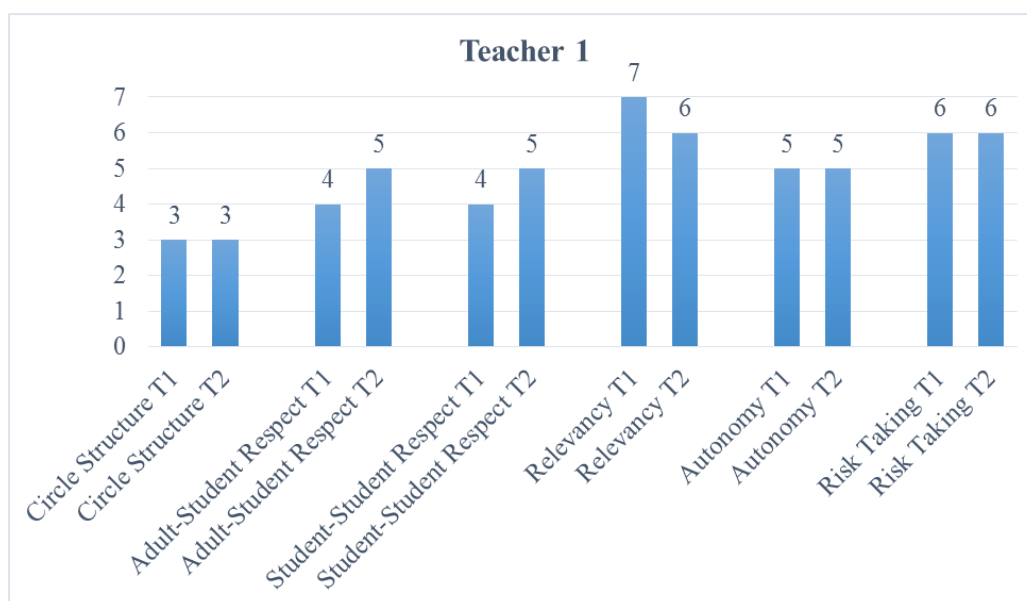


Figure 1. *RP-Observe* ratings for Teacher 1 at time 1 and time 2

Triangulated charts indicated that Teacher 2 received a “+” in the *RP-Observe* category, suggesting that Teacher 2's scores improved a full-point in 4 or more dimensions. As reported in Figure 2 below, the *RP-Observe* coding showed the greatest change from T1 to T2 on the Adult-Student Respect and Responsiveness dimension. This suggests that teacher 2 was observed as demonstrating improved empathetic and encouraging responses to her students.

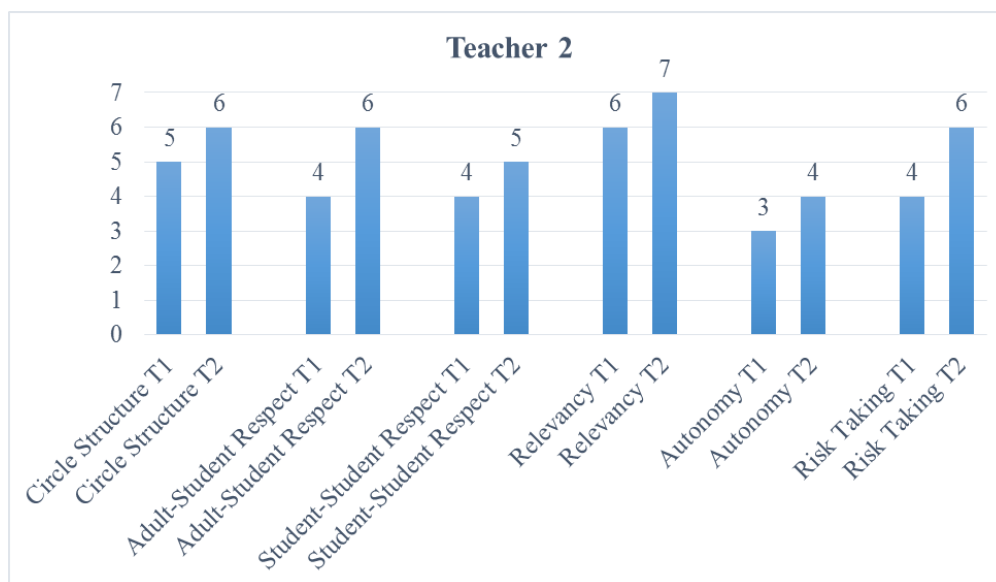


Figure 2. *RP-Observe* ratings for Teacher 2 at time 1 and time 2

Triangulated charts indicated that Teacher 3 received a “+” in the *RP-Observe* category, suggesting that Teacher 3’s scores improved a full-point in 4 or more dimensions. As reported in Figure 3 below, Teacher 3’s greatest change was in two of the student voice dimensions—Relevancy and Risk Taking. Specifically, it suggests that the teacher improved in selecting topics that were more relevant to the lives of her students and that her students disclosed more personal information from the first to the second circle.

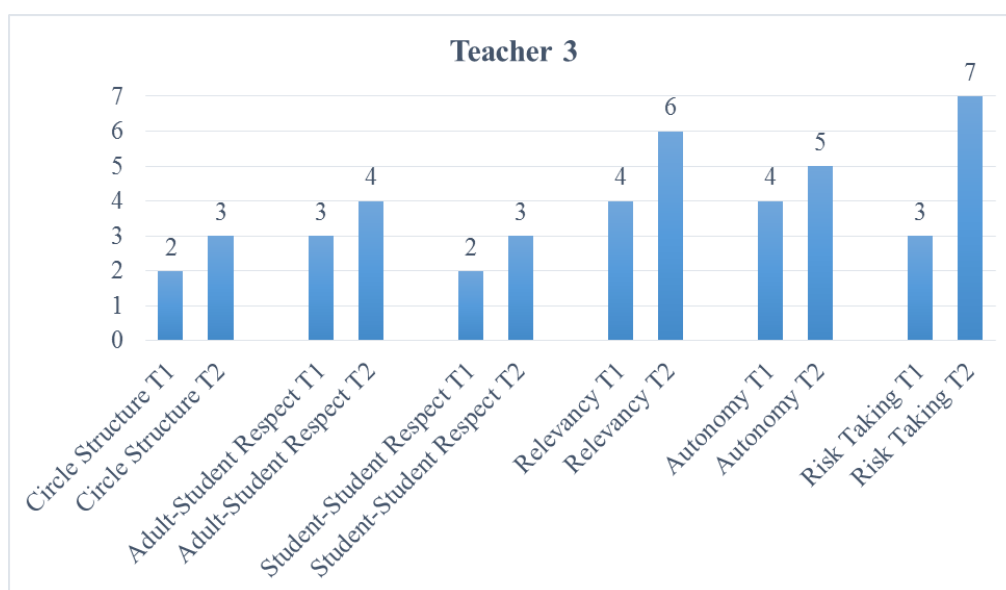


Figure 3. *RP-Observe* ratings for Teacher 3 at time 1 and time 2

Triangulated charts indicated that Teacher 4 received a “-” in the *RP-Observe* category, suggesting that Teacher 4’s scores did not improve a full-point in 4 or more dimensions. As reported in Figure 4 below, Teacher 4 declined in the Circle Structure dimension and Teacher 4’s greatest improvement was in the Autonomy dimension, indicating that the circle process was more student-driven or student-led. In addition, teacher 4 took more of a role as an ally than an authority figure from the first to the second circle.

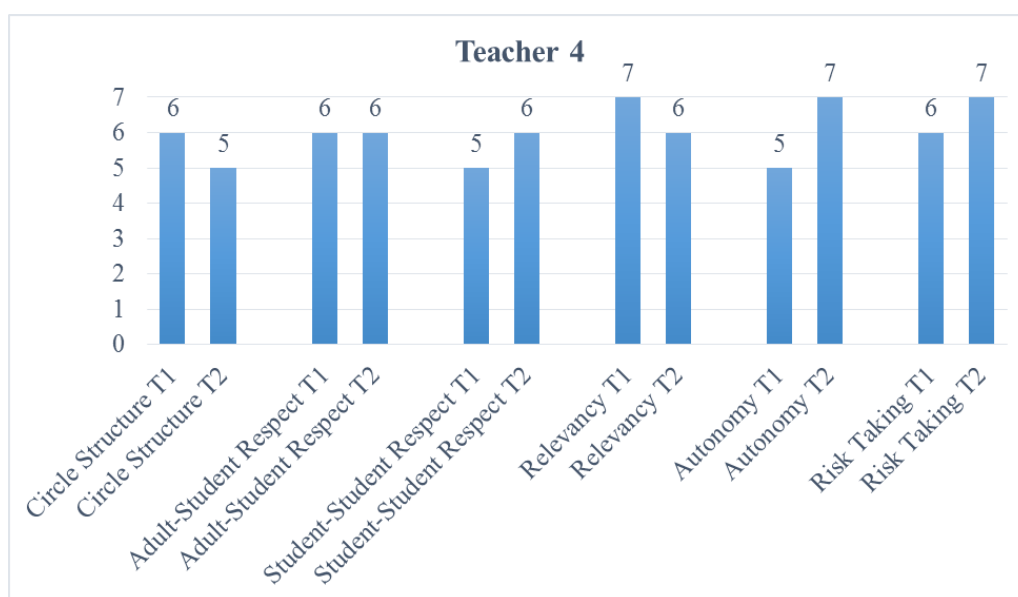


Figure 4. *RP-Observe* ratings for Teacher 4 at time 1 and time 2

Triangulated charts indicated that Teacher 5 received a “-” in the *RP-Observe* category, suggesting that Teacher 5’s scores did not improve a full-point in 4 or more dimensions. As reported in Figure 5 below, Teacher 5 had variable change with some dimensions improving (e.g., Circle Structure, Adult-Student Respect and Responsiveness, Autonomy) and other dimensions weakening (e.g., Student to Student Respect and Responsiveness, Relevancy, Risk Taking).

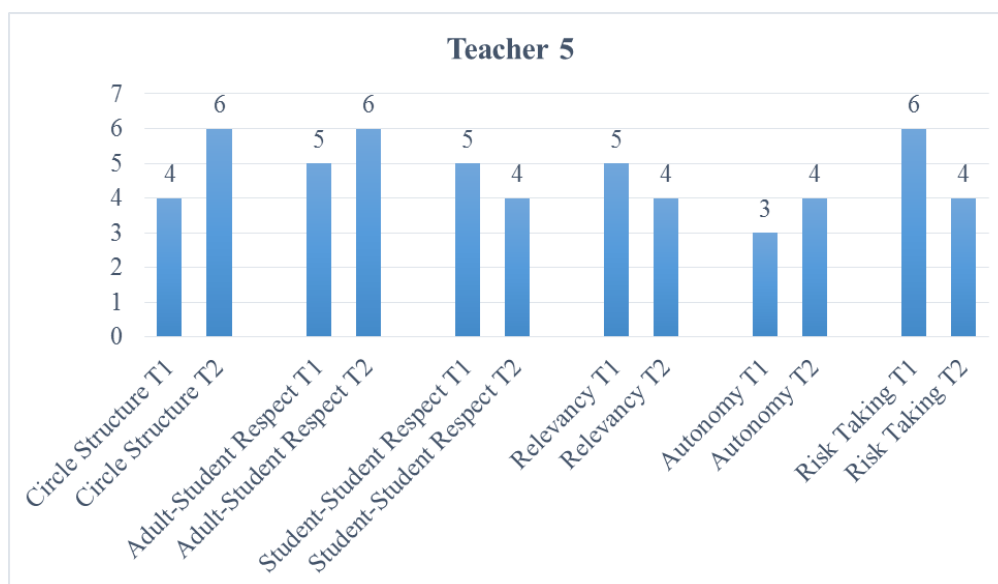


Figure 5. *RP-Observe* ratings for Teacher 5 at time 1 and time 2

Triangulated charts indicated that Teacher 6 received a “+” in the *RP-Observe* category, suggesting that Teacher 6’s scores improved a full-point in 4 or more dimensions. Interestingly, there was a full four-point increase on the Relevancy dimension (see Figure 6 below). During the first circle observation, the content focused on “getting to know one another” activities and during the second circle observation, the content focused on conflict and how to resolve it peacefully. During the first circle observation, students complained about the content, stating that they felt it was childish, immature, and expressed a desire for more interesting topics with which they can relate. Later, the observer note in 2<sup>nd</sup> observation, Teacher 6 selected content that appeared to engaged the students (e.g., a story about a young man who regulated his temper) and she related the material to the students’ own personal lives. The circle content potentially developed connections amongst the students in the classroom.

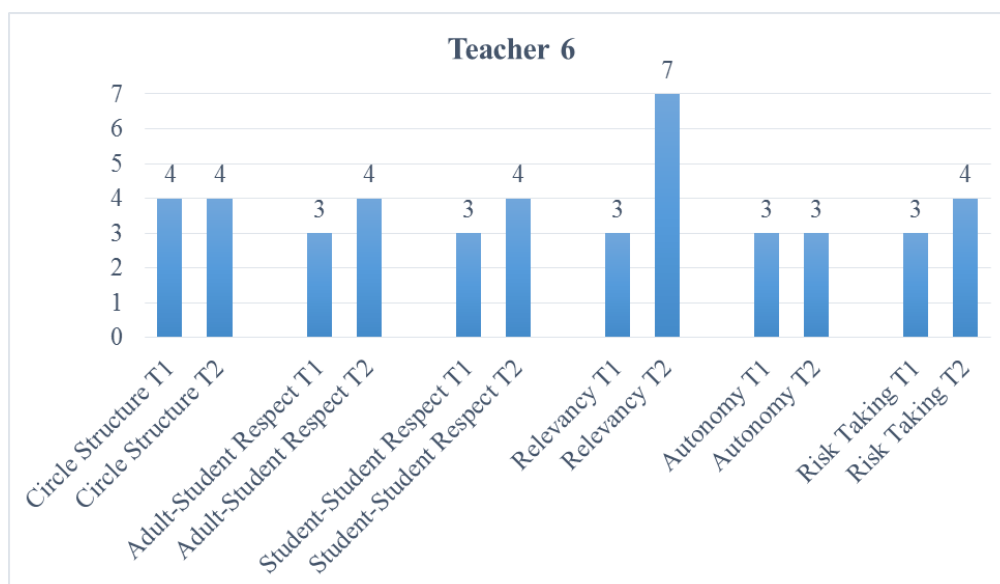


Figure 6. *RP-Observe* ratings for Teacher 6 at time 1 and time 2

*Research Question 4b.* To address the research question, “To what degree was the coaching model discussed in terms of demonstrating promise for promoting student development?”, coaches and teachers commented on various aspects of their students’ development through participation in restorative circles and the coaching program. Student Development was codified as *Positive Development*, *Minimal Development*, and *No Development*. Student Development is defined on the *RP-Observe* category as improvement by one full-coding point on the Student Commitment dimension. Ratings on teacher and coach interviews, surveys, and *RP-Observe* showed that a majority of responders experienced student development in restorative circles on a variety of dimensions (See Table 5). The “growth proportion” reflects triangulated findings across methods and informants for all but one teacher. Eighty-three percent of the teachers were rated on at least two of the three indicators as students having developed through the community-building circles:

Table 5

*Reports of Student Development*

Teacher ID	Teacher Interview	Coach Interview	RP-Observe	Growth Proportion	Interpretation of Results
Teacher 1	+	-	-	1/3	Minimal Development
Teacher 2	+	+	+	3/3	Positive Development
Teacher 3	+	-	+	2/3	Positive Development
Teacher 4	+	+	-	2/3	Positive Development
Teacher 5	+	+	-	2/3	Positive Development
Teacher 6	+	+	+	3/3	Positive Development

*Note.* Evidence to support hypothesis 4b will be defined as 2 or more “+” symbols, indicating that the coaching model demonstrated promise for promoting student development. Evidence contrary to the hypothesis will be defined as 1 or fewer “+” symbols, indicating minimal development (1), or no development (0).

The interview data provides additional information of how teachers and coaches described student development. The following excerpt is an example provided by Teacher 1 who commented on his students growing more comfortable opening up to each other and taking risks while participating in circles over time. Teacher 1 received a “+” on the teacher survey due to this reflection of student development, but received a “-” based on coach and *RP-Observe* findings:

*But in terms of risk-taking, I would also say that was an area of growth. There were some things that came out – I think you were at one of them – like at either ‘your authentic self’ or like somebody talked about their sexuality, somebody talked about um just like different struggles they had in elementary school or middle school like one girl talked about how she didn’t like her dreads – just like basically being black – she felt not as happy with her appearance.*

Similarly, Teacher 5 commented on her students’ development throughout the circle process, including increased participation and improved relationships between students in the circles over time:

*Yeah, but like – a lot of students who weren't as vocal now are really vocal. They like circles and they ask for them and they want that space and one of the biggest things that I wanted to do with them is to build a community and they had a community, but I wanted to strengthen that. You know what I mean. And, I feel like they definitely have come a long way this year. You know like – I mean I had two students who didn't – I have classes from last year – they were transfer kids. And, I like the way, despite how hard they were on them, especially in the beginning, they took them under their wings.*

Teacher 5's remarks regarding her goals to build a supportive community in her classroom were reflected in her students' becoming more welcoming over time to new students. *RP-Observe* coding results from the time 1 to time 2 offer additional insights into the specific ways in which teachers experienced development over time. The *RP-Observe* data, specifically the Student Commitment Code, indicated that Teacher 2, Teacher 3, and Teacher 6 increased one or two points from time 1 to time 2, which Teacher 1, Teacher 4, and Teacher 5 remained stable or decreased a point.

### **A closer examination of individual teachers**

Taken together, the results reported above and summarized below in Table 6 reflect a rich and complex teacher experience with the coaching model. Thus, I more closely examine several individual teacher profiles in an attempt to glean insights from their unique experiences with the coaching model.



Table 6

<i>Summary</i>					
Teacher ID	Acceptability	Feasibility	Responsive	Student Development	Teacher Development
Teacher 1	+	-	-	-	+
Teacher 2	+	-	+	+	-
Teacher 3	+	-	999	+	-
Teacher 4	-	-	+	+	+
Teacher 5	+	+	+	+	+
Teacher 6	+	-	+	+	+

When observing patterns across hypotheses (see Table 6), it can be seen that Teacher 5 is the only participant to receive all “+” signs. Specifically, Teacher 5 found the model to be acceptable, feasible, and responsive to student needs. Additionally, Teacher 5 and her coach indicated that both she and her students had grown throughout the coaching experience. Teacher 5 has been a classroom teacher for six years and has taught at her current school for two years. Teacher 5 has been facilitating restorative circles for seven years, but has not received prior, sustained coaching for restorative circles. Importantly, Teacher 5 differed from the other teachers in one important way: In the interview, she indicated that she wanted to make a transition from her career as a teacher to a restorative justice coordinator. Thus, her commitment to the intervention in general and to the coaching experience in particular may have contributed to her positive scores associated with every hypothesis. Teacher 5 appreciated the structure that *RP-Observe* brought to the coaching sessions and felt a strong connection with her coach, as reflected in the following interview quote:

*I can say that probably that my relationship with her has strengthened – like the faith that she has in me and my abilities when it comes to doing anything – any sort of like leadership roles in the school surrounding discipline or like the whole circle thing, she wants me to do. She pushes and advocates for me with the principal. To be more involved*

*in workshops or things of that nature. So, I feel like her faith and her belief in me and my abilities has strengthened.*

Teacher 5 commented that her coach advocated for her with the principal and encouraged her to continue to receive professional development in the domain of restorative circles. With respect to the content that Teacher 5 valued in her restorative circles, she emphasized relevancy and relationship building:

*I mean they like it and especially students with disabilities. They strive to find – to build relationships. The only way that they are going to do things academically is if they have a relationship with you because they could care less about content especially if it is not relevant to their everyday lives. And so if they have a relationship with you, they are going to want to come to your class. They are going to want to do the work that you give them because you are giving it to them. So I feel like doing those circles and building that sense of community – I want those kids to be able to rely on one another and I want them to push each other and I want them to be able to call someone out when that person is not acting like a member of the community. I think that they do that now.*

Teacher 5 views building relationships through restorative circles as key to having her students attend class and engage with the academic material. Additionally, she views building community in her classroom as a tool that her students can use to support one another, but also to hold one another accountable for inappropriate behavior. These views demonstrate the value this teacher places onto this intervention. Teachers may maximize the coaching experience if they feel strongly that the intervention can improve engagement with academic material and decrease externalizing behaviors in the classroom.

Furthermore, additional interview transcript data revealed that Teacher 5 felt like she wished that she could have spent more time on circle autonomy. Specifically, she wished that her students had the opportunity to run their own circles. To that end, Teacher 5 indicated that she and her coach had reflected on developing student circle keepers:

*Yeah, we talked about it, but I don't think that it got to a point where we could have done it just because the inconsistency sometimes with the circles. And like everything else that was going on, but it was definitely something that I wanted to do.*

This quote suggests that to successfully transition to student led circles, a certain level of consistency must be maintained with students. Developing student circle keepers in order to enhance circle autonomy in circles appears to require an additional investment of time from a teacher. In particular, a tradeoff appears to exist between circle structure and autonomy. In order to minimize this apparent tradeoff, it is advisable for potential student circle keepers to undergo some level of training.

Similar to Teacher 5, Teachers 2 and 6 indicated that they found the model to be acceptable (“+”) and responsive to student needs (“+”) and indicated that they (“+”) and their students (“+”) had grown throughout the coaching experience (see Table 6). However, they both indicated that the coaching model had low feasibility (“-”). Teacher 6 is an experienced teacher who has taught for 16 years in total and 4 years at her current school. Teacher 6 has never had any previous experience facilitating restorative circles and has not received any coaching pertaining to restorative circles prior to her coaching experience. Teacher 6 found her coach to take a strengths-based approach with her (one of the core components of the coaching model):

*There was one circle, and I didn't feel good about it and I would beat myself up – and [my coach] was able to find glow in that circle where I thought there was none. And I*

*just hugged her and I was like, 'Thank you, [coach],' because I was like really beating myself like, 'Oh, no. This did not go well.' And you know she just made me feel like, yes, you know, it takes time, you are doing well, like it's okay, it's okay continue so the kids we did and, you know, we're helping them. So, she brought and helped brighten my spirit and she wanted me to, you know, allowed me to see that I was helping them. And you know what, the last circle that we did they were like, are we going to do circles again?*

Teacher 6's coach provided encouragement during a moment when Teacher 6 felt discouraged. This encouragement along with the identification of her strengths allowed the teacher to continue with the intervention. By continuing with the intervention despite obstacles, Teacher 6 observed a clear shift in her students' commitment to and enthusiasm for the intervention. Teacher 6 also found *RP-Observe* to be a particularly useful component of the coaching model:

*Yes, because I knew exactly what I need to work on and, you know, what I was able to do. So, I liked that because [my coach] was specific like okay, so the next step that we'll work on will be – she would write it down and then I'll make a copy. And you know while I worked on or prepared the next circle, I would look at her suggestion as to what I should implement into my circle.*

*RP-Observe* allowed Teacher 6 and her coach to focus on one dimension at a time to help focus the coaching sessions and her circles. However, Teacher 6 perceived time to be a barrier in facilitating restorative circles and engaging in the coaching process. Teacher 6 found the coaching model to have minimal feasibility, indicating that coordinating her schedule and her coach's schedule was a particularly difficult part of the coaching process. She suggested structural changes in the school day that would occur once a week in order to accommodate restorative circles and coaching:

*We need like a certain period of or maybe a couple of hours so we can accommodate circles within a day so we can accommodate circles because everybody is doing whatever they need to do academically. Do you know they are getting ready to rate students' performances, so everyone's like, 'Oh, we don't have time for this.' So, we need to make time for the advisory period. And our principal was speaking about that because he believes in circles, so he was thinking about just adjusting the school days so we can incorporate a time period when we can do circles.*

Teacher 6 commented on the broader pressures that teachers are under in relation to standardized testing and stated that space must be created in a teacher's schedule in order to increase the feasibility of the intervention. She suggested *at least* a couple of hours per week to allow for restorative circles, restorative circle preparation, and restorative coaching. Teacher 2 also commented on feasibility issues with the coaching model:

*And I don't know – we never have enough time and because of funding or whatever there's not always a consistent pattern to our – sometimes it will be every week, sometimes it will be every two weeks, sometimes it will be once a month...*

Teacher 2 stated that the lack of consistency in the timing of the coaching was the most challenging aspect of the coaching process. Based on the reflections of Teachers 2 and 6, it seems that teachers and schools are frequently confronted with difficult decisions about how to allocate scarce time and resources. Despite her concerns about the feasibility of the coaching model, Teacher 2 did indicate that the coaching sessions helped to bring attention to the intervention:

*Having the coaching sessions definitely helped. Sometimes when you're a full time teacher, at least for my situation, and trying to do something extra, there's barely any*

*time in the day to plan and flesh out a circle the way that it needs to be. And, so I feel really lucky because not only was [my coach] a body to look at this as a planning time, but she was also a well-informed body, you know, and very resourceful and knowledgeable person to bounce ideas off of. So, I guess I'm trying to say that it was helpful because it both forced attention to the circle that was much needed. I don't know that I would always – I definitely winged a circle before, you know [laughter]. It's just not as beneficial for kids.*

Teacher 2 described her coach as being both informative and effective in pulling her attention towards circle planning and reflection. Teacher 2 reflected on her own development throughout the coaching process:

*The relationship with the students has definitely improved and that's definitely one of my favorite things about circles is what it does to the teacher-student relationships. So that's definitely developed and increased. My relationship like with [my coach] has definitely gotten stronger and so has my confidence in my ability to do it without her, which is kind of ironic or the way it's supposed to be [laughter].*

Teacher 2's quote indicates that she felt more confident and autonomous after the coaching process, qualities that she can leverage as she continues to build a positive classroom climate for her students.

Interestingly, Teacher 4 did not find the coaching model to be acceptable (“-”) or feasible (“-”), but she reflected positively on the responsiveness of the model (“+”), personal development (“+”), and student development (“+”) throughout the coaching process (See Table 6). Teacher 4 is an experienced teacher who has taught for 20 years and has been teaching for 8 years at her current school. She has been facilitating restorative circles for two years and has

received prior coaching during the previous academic year. Teacher 4 estimated that she had facilitated 60 or more restorative circles across her classes for the 2014-2015 academic year. Teacher 4 did not find *RP-Observe* to be a useful component in the coaching process and noted that she did not need a lot of support due to her previous year of training, coaching, and conducting circles. This suggests that the coaching model which includes *RP-Observe* may be most effective with and embraced by teachers who have limited experience with restorative circles as compared to teachers who are more experienced with restorative circles. Novice restorative circle keepers, unlike experienced ones, are less likely to have adopted and refined their own style of implementing restorative circles, potentially rendering them more amenable to a formal coaching model. However, Teacher 4 and her coach did comment on her student's development through the circle process, particularly in regards to circle autonomy. Teacher 4's goal was to transfer the power of leading circles from herself to her students during this year. Teacher 4 largely accomplished this goal. Specifically, she solicited student input when determining each and every restorative circle topic and allowed a student to become the circle keeper or facilitator. Teacher 4's coach noted clear development in this domain, but also noted the challenges that this presented:

*Yeah, we did. Again, it was the kind of thing that I had to be sensitive to what she was trying to do, but I also wanted her to know that if you maintain the structure what you want is down to comes to fruition. She was also at the same time letting go, letting go off the keeper's hat. So, it was like being - but then they haven't been trained. Or experienced in, but I have been trained. Teacher 4, you know, has been trained. So, that was the – the letting go part and giving a ton away doesn't abrogate your responsibility*

*as the leader of the class or let it spin out of control. And also because some of the issues were – I mean they were very hot headed.*

Teacher 4's coach described an issue that presents a clear opportunity for intervention with an experienced circle keeper. It seems that as Teacher 4 let go of her control of the circle, issues arose related to the circle structure. Teacher 4's coach offered a suggestion for intervention with Teacher 4:

*That's where, you know, the keeper of the circle is the one who ask the students to come in. And that sense you have to give them a mini training. You have to train them. And I in my senses, I don't think Teacher 4 has had a conversation with the students, you know, sit down for ten to fifteen minutes, 'That's how you are going to do it.' The feeling was I can understand why she did this was he's experienced in it. He's experienced in watching me being the keeper. But my suggestion would be no. You have to sit down that person and give them as many lessons or two or three as the time goes by as they do one and then debrief them, but I never got a chance to talk to her about that. That's one of the things that I would discuss with her if I had a chance.*

Teacher 4's coach referenced a developmental process of restorative circles in which teachers become coaches to their students when the students are given more autonomy in a circle. Teacher 4's coach suggested that teachers plan with the student or students that will be leading a circle prior to a circle begins and that they debrief with them after the circle is finished. It seems that Teacher 4's coach believes that by providing more support for the student who is taking charge, the circle will maintain more of its structure. The added attention and training given to student circle keepers may also instill in them a greater sense of responsibility and commitment to the group, which in turn may increase the seriousness and diligence with which they approach the



whole circle process. Additionally, Teacher 4's coach suggested that there will be times in the circle when a teacher will need to intervene when sensitive topics are being discussed (e.g., a rape that occurred in the news) or if students begin to excessively talk out of turn. Taken together, it seems that enhancing student autonomy in restorative circles is a developmental process that will require coach support.

### Discussion

The present study examined the acceptability, feasibility, and responsiveness of the *Restore360* Coaching model. I hypothesized that the majority of teacher and coach dyads would find the coaching model to be acceptable, feasible, and responsive to differentiated student needs. Additionally, I hypothesized that data from teacher reports, coach reports, and observer ratings would suggest that teachers grew in their skills as circle keepers and students benefited in terms of their social and emotional learning engagement in the circles. Triangulated data supported three of the four hypotheses. Specifically, semi-structured interviews, survey results, and *RP-Observe* observational data, showed that the majority of teacher-coach dyads found the coaching model to be acceptable and responsive to differentiated student needs. Furthermore, teachers and coaches reflected on teacher and student development throughout the coaching process. The core characteristics of *Restore360* including a) a strong focus on teacher-coach collaboration, b) an emphasis on teacher strengths, c) the use of performance feedback, d) teacher access to sustained coaching over the course of a school year, and e) the use of a structured observational tool, *RP-Observe*, were found to be implemented. This is the first RP coaching model with these important characteristics to have high acceptability with teachers. Furthermore, I observed that coaches were successful in developing trust, fostering open communication, and providing instrumental support to help teachers learn to facilitate SEL-

oriented, community building circles (a process that may raise some discomfort in teachers who are used to delivering lessons from the front of the room). However, the majority of the teacher-coach dyads (especially teachers) found the coaching model to be lacking in feasibility. Thus, future research is needed to understand how to improve the perceived and actual feasibility of restorative coaching models. Overall, the present study highlights the promise and potential pitfalls of introducing and successfully sustaining a restorative coaching model.

### **Feasibility of the Coaching Model**

Explaining the disconnect between teacher and coach perceptions of feasibility will be an important avenue for future research. It may be the case that the burden of implementing the coaching model disproportionately falls on teachers, thus amplifying teachers' sensitivity to the model's feasibility. If this is true, there may be value in identifying ways for coaches to ease some of the implementation burden experienced by teachers. At the very least, both teachers and coaches would likely benefit from active perspective-taking. For example, by taking the perspective of the teacher, a coach may be better able to understand the unique challenges and opportunities that the teacher faces and better tailor their coaching to the teacher's needs as a result. Teachers reported three main barriers to the feasibility of the coaching model – namely, general stress associated with the external pressures of the teaching profession, lack of consistency in coaching meetings, and lack of access to a more comprehensive circle curriculum.

Based on the perspectives of Teachers 2 and 6, it seems that teachers and schools frequently make difficult decisions about how to allocate scarce time and resources, which may limit the perceived feasibility of the coaching model especially when the ultimate decision about how to allocate time and resources is not made by the teachers themselves. Some teachers may feel that the coaching model cannot be realistically implemented in a stressful environment characterized

by challenging academic standards, lack of administration support, and other unmet social-emotional student needs. These external factors have been found to affect teachers' ability to successfully implement intervention programs (Becker et al., 2013). Therefore, coaching models should seek to assess and address both perceived internal barriers to implementing the coaching model (e.g., confidence, psychological state, buy-in), as well as perceived external barriers to implementing the coaching model (e.g., administrative support, pressures of testing, physical meeting space).

Another crucial factor that may limit the effectiveness and perceived feasibility of coaching models is time. Indeed, timing constraints have been identified as a key barrier to consistent coaching of early career teachers in urban schools (Shernoff, Lakind, Frazier, & Jakobsons, 2015). Consistent with Shernoff et al.'s (2015) findings, Teachers 2 and 6 commented on the difficulties of coordinating consistent meeting times with their coaches. Both teachers and coaches recommended that coaching sessions take place on a more consistent basis that would ideally take place immediately following a circle to ensure timely feedback. This suggests that coaches need to be more flexible in accommodating teachers' busy schedules. However, this may not be possible due to contracts with outside RP training vendors that only allow for a specified amount of time allocated per school. Emphasizing the importance of consistent, predictable, and timely coaching sessions to the teacher and coach appears to be crucial. Shernoff et al. (2015) have made strides in addressing these issues by recommending increased flexibility in coach schedules, harnessing administrative support for coach consultation during the school day, and utilizing technology to reduce the impact of timing barriers.

Teacher 1 identified the lack of access to an extended curriculum to be a barrier to carrying out restorative circles. Teachers have a very demanding job. Therefore, coaching is

likely to be better received to the extent curriculum can be clearly organized and streamlined so as to not waste teachers' limited time and cognitive capacity. Teacher 1 acknowledged receiving curriculum when he was first trained in restorative circles, but that the curriculum did not extend beyond his first year of facilitating restorative circles. Teacher 1 suggested that a central filing system organized by circle theme (e.g., diversity, anger, religion) would aid in his implementation of restorative circles. This presents an opportunity for coaches and organizations to provide more extensive circle curriculum in a more organized and easily retrievable way. Coaches and teachers often describe planning a circle as a back and forth that occurs via email or in person. Therefore, a central filing system with restorative circle curriculum content (especially for the advanced circle keeper) could expedite and enrich these exchanges allowing for more focused conversations surrounding circle curriculum. A more systematic development and cataloguing of circle curriculum would also benefit future generations of coaches and teachers, especially in schools with high teacher and/or coach turnover. Preventing the loss of institutional knowledge (i.e., brain drain) should be a top priority and effectively building, cataloguing, and refining circle curriculum will help in this regard.

### **Promoting Teacher and Coach Buy-In to the Intervention**

Coaches may need to gauge teachers' views of the intervention prior to beginning the coaching process in order to maximize the potential benefits of the coaching model. Addressing teacher views of the potential benefits and drawbacks of the intervention early on in the coaching relationship may contribute to the teacher ultimately finding the coaching model to be more acceptable, feasible, and responsive. Teacher 5 was the only teacher who was found to have received all "+" signs, indicating she found the model to be acceptable, feasible, and responsive to her students' differentiated needs and reflected on personal and student development

throughout the process. She reflected on building relationships through restorative circles as key to having her students both attend class and actively engage with academic material. These views demonstrate that this teacher buys into the benefits of restorative circles. Teachers are more likely to maximize the value of the coaching experience if they feel strongly that the intervention can improve engagement with academic material and decrease externalizing behaviors in the classroom.

Principal lack of buy-in has been described as a key barrier to the implementation of classroom based interventions (Forman, Olin, Hoagwood, Crowe, & Saka, 2009; Wanless et al., 2012) and is therefore important in ensuring the success of a classroom based intervention. Specifically, Teacher 5 commented that her coach advocated on her behalf with the principal, which contributed to Teacher 5's strong relationship with her coach and presumably to the principal's buy-in as well. Strengthening administrative support for teachers appears to contribute to increased feasibility and commitment to the coaching model.

### **Potential Moderators of the Coaching Model's Effectiveness**

The study findings hint that years of teaching experience and prior coaching experience may moderate the coaching model's effectiveness. Specifically, it seems like teachers who both have some proficiency in instructional delivery/classroom management *and* who are new to coaching might be the ideal candidates to target for the coaching model. New or novice teachers may not be adequately equipped to participate in the coaching process or restorative circles. In particular, Teacher 3, commented that she did not accomplish what she wanted to with respect to the coaching process due to the pressures of working in a high stakes testing environment. She elaborated that as she becomes a more experienced teacher, she hopes to be able to better focus on relevant events in her students' lives through restorative circles. Therefore, more experienced

teachers who have already mastered the basics of teaching and classroom management may be better suited to learn (and eventually master) the nuances associated with running restorative circles through participating in the coaching model. Coaches should maintain awareness that novice teachers may need more remedial help with the daily functioning of their classrooms prior to active engagement in the coaching model.

Additionally, teachers who have *less* experience with coaching may be more receptive to *RP-Observe* and the coaching model. Teacher 4, who had experienced a previous year of training, coaching, and conducting circles, did not find *RP-Observe* and the coaching model to be acceptable. Teacher 4 stated that she preferred a more unstructured, informal experience with her coach. This suggests that further research is needed on how to adapt the coaching model when the teacher has had extensive experience facilitating circles and receiving coaching in the past. For example, there may be value in allowing teachers with substantial experience running circles to focus on an alternative dimension for growth rather than Circle Structure to begin the coaching process. In the current study, all of the teachers focused on the Circle Structure dimension during their first coaching session as specified by *Restore360*. After the first session, teachers and coaches are allowed to focus on any dimension that may be improved (“grow”). It is possible that Teacher 4 felt put-off by the first coaching session, as it was not tailored to her interest in enhancing student Autonomy in her circles and may have overlapped too much with the coaching she received over the previous year. Teacher 4’s coach reported that Teacher 4 could have used more support and guidance in transferring the circle power to her students. Teacher 4 suggested that she felt that one year of coaching is plenty if the teacher implements circles in his/her classes on at least a weekly basis. If teachers are not consistently implementing circles in their classrooms, additional coaching may be beneficial.

Taken together, these results suggest that the coaching model may need to be adjusted based on the teaching experience, restorative circle keeping experience, and prior coaching experience. As previously discussed, research demonstrates that successful coaches often modify their strategy in response to teacher intervention quality (Becker et al., 2013). This presents an opportunity to adapt the coaching model to unique teacher needs and may partially explain the discrepancies in the perceived acceptability of the coaching model observed in the present study. Overall, a screening process to identify teachers who may be the most receptive to and successful in implementing the coaching model could be a useful tool.

### **Increasing Student Autonomy in Restorative Circles**

Another important factor that emerged in the current study is the extent to which student autonomy is promoted in restorative circles. All but one of the circles that were observed were rated in the mid-range on the autonomy dimension using *RP-Observe*, which suggests that reaching the high-range on the autonomy dimension is rare. Autonomy is an important dimension in circles, as it allows students to take ownership of the experience and find their own voice in the circle process. Increased student autonomy in circles may also lead students to set positive peer norms. Teacher 4 was able to successfully integrate a student circle keeper into her restorative circles, whereas Teacher 5 expressed a desire to develop student keepers, but was not able to do so during the academic year. Teachers who allow a student circle keeper in the classroom transfer some of the responsibility of the restorative process from the teacher to the students. Prior to introducing a student circle keeper, Teacher 4 had her students create a list of potential restorative circle topics and then had them vote on the finalized list of topics that would be covered during the academic year. This suggests that an important first step in creating an environment for greater student autonomy is to allow students to select the topics that are

covered in circles. Having students select the content for a circle that they may potentially facilitate could increase their comfort with and willingness to lead a restorative circle.

Understanding how best to promote and implement student autonomy as well as how to train students to be effective circle keepers is particularly important given the potential pitfalls of providing students with more autonomy in restorative circles and in classrooms more generally.

Importantly, coaches noted that there appeared to be an inherent tradeoff between student autonomy and circle structure such that the more autonomy students are given, the less structured (and perhaps ineffective) the circle becomes. Providing students with adequate training has the potential to minimize these effects. In providing students with training to facilitate circles, the teacher then becomes the coach.

### **Limitations of the Research and Future Directions**

There are several limitations to the study that are important to consider. The generalizability of the findings from the current study is limited due to the small sample of coaches ( $n = 3$ ) and teachers ( $n = 6$ ) at three urban schools. For example, the coaches in this study had extensive experience in education, facilitating restorative circle trainings, and leading social and emotional workshops. It is possible that this may not be normative of a typical coaching experience. Additionally, three of the teachers had prior relationships with their coaches that varied in length, which may have affected the findings reported in this study. Future researchers should account for the level of prior exposure that teachers have to their coaches in order to better understand the effectiveness of the coaching. Given the small sample size and the inconsistent prior exposure, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions regarding the present hypotheses. However, despite these limitations, the current study revealed detailed descriptions



of coach and teacher experiences with the *Restore360* coaching model and provide opportunities to generate hypotheses for future research studies.

I used a mixed method, multi-informant approach to triangulate on my primary research questions related to the implementation of the coaching model. Perspectives of coaches, teachers, and observations were weighted equally in determining the outcome of each hypothesis. However, assigning equal weight to each reporter may not have been appropriate. For example, the teacher perspective may be more important in determining the feasibility of the coaching model, as teachers' perceptions of the actual and perceived barriers to and facilitators of program implementation are theorized to be of critical importance because teachers are the ones carrying the intervention (Forman et al., 2013). Additionally, the coach perspective may be more important in determining teacher development because they may have a more objective perspective.

Additionally, in constructing the results tables, arbitrary cut-off values were utilized to test the hypotheses. A more rigorous investigation would have included a larger sample and theoretically based or empirically derived cut-off criteria for testing the hypotheses. A larger sample would also allow for a more detailed analysis of the ideal dosage of coaching (five versus ten coaching sessions, for example). This knowledge could shed some light on the optimal duration and intensity of coaching needed to produce effective restorative circles. Furthermore, teachers could be tracked longitudinally to determine whether the teachers sustain high quality circles after coaching ends. The longer and more reliably teachers are able to sustain high quality circles after coaching ends, the more economical it becomes for schools and other organizations to invest in coaching.

The use of two coders served to minimize research bias and enhance the trustworthiness and convergence of the findings. Despite this strength, it is possible that the findings reflect the coders' unique interpretations of the data instead of the actual views of coaches and teachers. Furthermore, there was relatively low percent agreement on two of the interview codes (acceptability and teacher development), which reached only 75% agreement. Eighty percent agreement is typically considered adequate for coders. That said, given the small number of responses per code ( $n = 9$ , 12 responses per code), this may be an acceptable percentage agreement. Additionally, the qualitative acceptability code had almost no variability and perhaps it was not sensitive enough to capture more mixed views of the coaching model.

Lastly, the effectiveness of the coaching model could be observed indirectly by examining the students themselves. Student outcomes linked to restorative coaching and high-quality restorative circle keeping could be examined for change. Social and emotional learning indicators could be tracked over time. This could be done both within restorative circles and in other contexts (e.g., other classroom time, lunch time) to see if the social and emotional skills generalize from circles to other environments. Additionally, student attendance, student grades, and discipline referrals could be evaluated to detect gains in other student outcomes.

### **Conclusion**

The present study offered new insights related to the *Restore360* coaching model and community-building restorative circles. The core characteristics of *Restore360*, including a) a strong focus on teacher-coach collaboration, b) an emphasis on teacher strengths, c) the use of performance feedback, d) teacher access to sustained coaching over the course of a school year, and e) the use of a structured observational tool, *RP-Observe*, were largely found to be

implemented across teachers. Drawing on the results of semi-structured interviews, surveys, and *RP-Observe* observational data, I found that the majority of teacher-coach dyads perceived *Restore360* to be acceptable and responsive to differentiated student needs. Teacher-coach dyads also reflected on teacher and student positive development throughout the coaching process which is one of the goals of *Restore360*. However, the data did not support the hypothesis that the coaching model was adequately feasible. Coaches need to be prepared to creatively problem-solve issues pertaining to feasibility. Furthermore, teachers that are more experienced may be able to take on the additional demands of a coaching model. A screening tool can provide schools and organizations with more information regarding a teacher's readiness to participate in the coaching model. Overall, there are many avenues for future research into these topics and my hope is that the current study will offer guidance to researchers who are interested in pursuing this important work. *Restore360* coaching appears to be an acceptable and promising coaching model to increase the skills of teachers as RP circle keepers. However, as the coaching is disseminated to support the implementation of RP, new creative strategies to increase its feasibility in busy, resource-limited urban schools is needed.

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## Appendix A



**Morningside Center** for Teaching Social Responsibility

# Restore360 Coaching

## A Handbook for Staff Developers



Tom Roderick, Anne Gregory, and Clarissa Green

*Restore360 Coaching*  
*A Handbook for Staff Developers*  
Tom Roderick, Anne Gregory, and Clarissa Green

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## Contents

Introduction and Acknowledgments .....	iv
Chapter 1: Overview .....	1
Chapter 2: The Initial Meeting with a Teacher.....	9
Chapter 3: The Staff Developer as Participant in Circles.....	15
Chapter 4: Meetings for Debriefing and Planning .....	23
Appendices.....	29-61
<b>Appendix A</b> .....	29
RP-Observe: A Framework for High Quality Restorative Circles	
<b>Appendix B</b> .....	37
RP-Observe Observation Form	
<b>Appendix C</b> .....	38
Restore360 Coaching One-Page Handout	
<b>Appendix D</b> .....	39
Agenda for Workshop to Introduce Restore360 Coaching to Teachers	
<b>Appendix E</b> .....	41
Restore360 Coaching Model Overview	
<b>Appendix F</b> .....	44
Examples of Structured Feedback during the Coaching Debrief	
<b>Appendix G</b> .....	47
Transcription of a Debrief Coaching Session	
<b>Appendix H</b> .....	49
Staff Developer Tips	
<b>Appendix I</b> .....	51
Group-Building Activities to Foster Student Engagement	

Appendix B  
Post Coaching Session Survey for Coaches

Coach Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Circle Keeper Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Pre-circle coaching session:**

1. Name of circle keeper who is involved in coaching:
2. Did you meet with the circle keeper in advance of an observed circle?  
☐ Yes  
☐ No

3. Comments on your pre-planning meeting

**Restorative circle observations:**

13. Date of the circle observed:
14. Time/period of circle:
15. Space used during the Circle (e.g., teacher's classroom):
16. Comments about the space or circle set up:
17. What was your role during the circle (participant observer? Co-circle keeper? Circle Keeper?)?
18. How many adults were present in the circle?
19. What were the roles of the adults present in the circle?
20. How many students present in the circle?
21. Circle content (generally what was discussed or material covered (leave out all student names):
22. Circle Set-Up:
  - ☐ Students were sitting or standing in a circle.
  - ☐ Obstacles and barriers, such as desks, were removed from the inside of the circle to promote connection.
  - ☐ Centerpiece was in place.
  - ☐ Talking piece was present.
  - ☐ Circle agreements were established.
  - ☐ Opening ceremony occurred.
  - ☐ Closing ceremony occurred.

**Post-circle coaching session:**

23. Did you have a meeting after the circle?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

24. If so, how long after the circle (in hours or days)?

25. Did you provide feedback based on observed behaviors?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

26. If so, can you offer an example here:

27. To what degree did behavior feedback relate to *RP-Observe*?

28. Did you provide feedback based on pre-selected glow and grows?

29. From your perspective, to what degree were you in agreement with the circle keeper that the glow was a glow:

- ☐ Strongly Disagree (1)  
☐ Somewhat Disagree (2)  
☐ Somewhat Agree (3)  
☐ Strongly Agree (4)

Comments:

30. From your perspective, to what degree were you in agreement with the circle keeper that the grow was a grow:

- ☐ Strongly Disagree (1)  
☐ Somewhat Disagree (2)  
☐ Somewhat Agree (3)  
☐ Strongly Agree (4)

Comments:

31. Did you select a Grow and Glow for next time?

32. If so, what were they:

33. Overall, what was a strength of the coaching session(s)?

34. What were obstacles to the coaching process?

35. How can the process be improved for next time?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

**36.** Please indicate with an “X” how much you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly agree
<b>A) The pre-circle and/or post circle coaching sessions were worth the time they took.</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>B) I felt I was supportive of the circle keeper during the session(s).</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>C) After concluding the coaching session(s), I felt frustrated.</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>D) I gained a better understanding of the <i>RP-Observe</i> during the coaching session(s).</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>E) The session(s) felt productive.</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>F) I enjoyed talking with the circle keeper.</b>	1	2	3	4

**37.** Any other comments?



### Post Coaching Session Survey for Teachers

Name\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Pre-circle coaching session:**

1. Did you meet with the circle keeper in advance of an observed circle?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. Comments on your pre-planning meeting

#### **Restorative circle observations:**

3. Date of the circle observed:

4. Time/period of circle:

5. Space used during the Circle (e.g., my classroom, auditorium):

6. Comments about the space or circle set up:

7. What was your role during the circle (participant observer? Co-circle keeper? Circle Keeper?)?

8. How many adults were present in the circle?

9. What were the roles of the adults present in the circle?

10. How many students present in the circle?

11. Circle content (generally what was discussed or material covered (leave out all student names):

12. Circle Set-Up:

☐ Students were sitting or standing in a circle.

☐ Obstacles and barriers, such as desks, were removed from the inside of the circle to promote connection.

☐ Centerpiece was in place.

☐ Talking piece was present.

☐ Circle agreements were established.

☐ Opening ceremony occurred.

☐ Closing ceremony occurred.

13. Comments about circle set up:

**Post-circle coaching session:**

14. Did you have a meeting after the circle?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

15. If so, how long after the circle (in hours or days)?

16. Were you provided with feedback based on your students' observed behaviors in the circle?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

17. If so, can you offer an example of the feedback (your coach gave) based on observable behaviors?

18. We used the glow and grow format

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

19. We used to *RP-Observe* dimensions as part of glow and grow

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

20. From your perspective, to what degree were you in agreement with your coach that the glow was a glow:

- ☐ Strongly Disagree (1)  
☐ Somewhat Disagree (2)  
☐ Somewhat Agree (3)  
☐ Strongly Agree (4)

21. Comments:

22. From your perspective, to what degree were you in agreement with your coach that the grow was a grow:

- ☐ Strongly Disagree (1)  
☐ Somewhat Disagree (2)  
☐ Somewhat Agree (3)  
☐ Strongly Agree (4)

23. Comments:

24. Did you select a Grow and Glow for next time?

25. If so, what were they:

26. Overall, what was a strength of the coaching session(s)?

27. What were obstacles to the coaching process?

28. How can the process be improved for next time?

☐ Yes

☐ No

29. Please indicate with an “X” how much you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly agree
A) The pre-circle and/or post circle coaching sessions were worth the time they took.	1	2	3	4
B) I felt I was supported by my coach during the session(s).	1	2	3	4
C) After concluding the coaching session(s), I felt frustrated.	1	2	3	4
D) I gained a better understanding of the <i>RP-Observe</i> during the coaching session(s).	1	2	3	4
E) The session(s) felt productive.	1	2	3	4
F) I enjoyed talking with my coach.	1	2	3	4

30. Any other comments?

## Appendix C

### Individual Interview Questions for Coaches

#### *Timeline of Coaching Process*

- When did the coaching sessions begin?
- Did you use the glow and grow format with \_\_\_\_\_?
- What were the glows and grow of each session?

#### *Developmental Changes in the Coaching Process*

- Can you describe any changes over time in the coaching process, your relationship with \_\_\_\_\_, her/his circles, or her/his students?
- Were there moments when the collaboration went very well?
- Were there moments when collaboration faltered? Or where you did not see eye-to-eye?
- During coaching sessions, did you discuss circle curriculum and how it related to your students' diverse backgrounds (ELL, gender, race/ethnicity, achievement level, children with special needs)? Did you help you to adapt curriculum to meet students' specific needs?

#### *Perceived benefits and challenges of the program*

- How do you feel the coaching sessions influenced \_\_\_\_\_'s ability to lead Restorative Circles over the course of the year?
- What has been the most rewarding/challenging aspect of the coaching sessions?

#### *Perspectives on the content of the program*

- Did you find the use of glows and grows provided a useful structure for promoting \_\_\_\_\_'s growth over time?
- What do you wish you were able to spend more time on during the coaching sessions?
- What content from *RP-Observe* do you wish you spent more or less time on?
- Was there anything that you were you not able to accomplish?
- Have the circles helped students learn SEL skills and if so which ones? Preventing discipline problems? Resolving conflict?

#### *Future Directions*

- Did you feel that anything was lacking in the current coaching model?
- What advice do you have for scaling up the coaching process at this school?
  - How about the use of restorative circles? Restorative conferences?
  - What needs to be in place to encourage an overall shift in school climate?

#### *Coach Learning and Development*

- How effective do you feel as a coach? What do you perceive as your strengths and weaknesses?
- What knowledge - that you gained through the program process – would you pass onto to colleagues of yours in the future

## Individual Interview Questions for Teachers

### *Timeline of Coaching Process*

- Number of coaching sessions (when and for how long)
- Glow and grow of each session (give specific example of change)
- *RP-Observe* dimensions covered in each session
- What were you not able to accomplish?
- Were there moments when collaboration faltered?
- Were there moments when the collaboration went very well?
- Can you describe any changes over time in the coaching process, your relationship with the coach, your circles, or your students (e.g., risk taking in front of coach, feeling more open to feedback, coach being more direct and pointing out more grows, etc.)?

### *Perceived benefits and challenges*

- How do you feel the coaching sessions influenced your ability to lead Restorative Circles over the course of the year? Did you notice any impacts on your instructional practices?
- Please describe a specific change you have made in leading circles.
- What has been the most rewarding/challenging aspect of the coaching sessions?

### *Perspectives on the content of the program*

- What do you wish you were able to spend more time on during the coaching sessions?
- What content from *RP-Observe* do you wish you spent more or less time on?
- Did you find the use of glows and grows provided a useful structure for promoting your growth over time?
- What was your experience with behaviorally based feedback (e.g., I noticed that many side conversations began when you asked a question about x, why do you think that happened?) in this coaching model versus impressionist feedback (e.g., the circle felt chaotic)?
- During coaching sessions, did you discuss circle curriculum and how it related to your students' diverse backgrounds (ELL, gender, race/ethnicity, achievement level, children with special needs)? Did your coach help you to adapt curriculum to meet your students' specific needs?

### *Circle Keeper Self-Efficacy*

- How effective do you feel as a circle keeper?
- How capable do you feel about being able to pass on knowledge you gained through the program process to colleagues of yours in the future? Could you see yourself as a coach next year?
- Some people say that teachers simply need to develop trusting collaborative relationships with a staff developer or coach in order to encourage growth AND others would say it takes more than building rapport and requires structured processes (performance feedback, use of a framework, or *RP-Observe*) in order to maximize growth..Do you feel like this structured processes contributed to your growth as a circle keeper?

*Sense of community and shared values*

- Do you find circles valuable for students and classroom and if so how?
- Have the circles in any way contributed to developing a sense of shared community and values in your classroom? Have they helped students learn SEL skills and if so which ones? Preventing discipline problems? Resolving conflict?
- Do you feel more connected with your students?

## Appendix D


**Morningside Center** for Teaching Social Responsibility

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**Restorative Practices  
School Faculty Coaching Project**
**Initial Workshop with School Faculty**

November 4, 2014: 4:30-7:30

**Objectives**

Participants will

- review the goals of the project and what's involved in their participation
- get an overview of Morningside Center's approach to Restorative Practices
- get an overview of the coaching model we'll be piloting with them
- study the dimensions of RP-Observe
- do a self-assessment of their strengths and areas for improvement on the dimensions of RP-Observe
- agree on the dimension(s) they want to focus on in their coaching
- agree on a schedule for the coaching and research activities

**Key activities**

Participants will

- imagine they've been charged with developing a rubric for Restorative Circles facilitation and generate the dimensions of the rubric they would create
- reflect on their previous experiences with coaching and identify ingredients for an effective coaching relationship
- study brief summaries of the dimensions of RP-Observe, compare them with the dimensions they envisioned, and discuss
- select a "glow" and "grow" approach to coaching using RP-Observe dimensions as they view other educators keeping circle
- self-assess on RP-Observe dimensions and select a glow and grow dimension for themselves.

## **Agenda**

### **Dinner and Welcome (30 minutes) 4:30-5:00**

### **Gathering: Name, how long you've been implementing circles (if you have done so), successes and challenges: 5-5:15**

Name, amount of time using circles, one thorn and one rose about implementing or participating in circles

### **Review objectives and agenda: 5:15-5:25**

- Goals of the project
- Objectives and agenda for today's session
- Participant expectations and hopes for the session
- Morningside Center's approach to Restorative Practices
- Distribute Restore 360 handout and review it briefly
- Discuss

### **Restorative Circles: Generating Dimensions for High-Quality Facilitation: 5:25-5:35**

- Draw a large circle on piece of chart paper
- Write "Restorative Circle" in the middle
- Ask the group to free associate
  - What goes inside the Circle, i.e. is a quality or behavior of a well-facilitated Circle
  - What goes outside the Circle, i.e. is a quality or behavior we don't want in a Circle
- Stand back, observe what's in the Circle and what's outside the Circle, and discuss

### **Experiences with coaching and ingredients for an effective coaching relationship: 5:35-5:45**

- Hand out 3 by 5 cards and reflecting on past experience being coached
- Write down qualities of an effective coach/coaching experience/coaching interaction on one side of the card and qualities of ineffective coaching experience on the other side of the card.
- Go around the circle sharing coaching qualities from their cards.

### **RP-Observe and integration into a coaching model: 5:45-6:20**

- (10) Intro: A brief overview of its origins and purpose and how we'll be using it in our coaching process
- (5) Reading: Distribute a handout with the dimensions
- (10) Group Discussion: Compare the list with the dimensions generated in the circle exercise above and discuss.
- (20) Jigsaw: Distribute the RP-Observe manual
- Using a jigsaw cooperative learning activity, have participants divide up the dimensions. Each person studies one or two and presents those dimensions to the group.



**The RP-Coach Model: 6:20-6:30**

- Distribute handout describing the model
- Review it and discuss

**Practice in applying RP-Observe and selecting grow and glow dimensions: 6:30-7:05**

- View the Oakland Clip.
- Using the dimension sheet identify which dimensions were present.
- Watch Tch 117 and identify a glow dimension and a grow dimension for that teacher (handout transcripts of clips)
- If time, watch Tch 115 and identify a glow dimension and a grow dimension for that teacher (handout transcripts of clips)

**Reflecting on practice/Self-assessment: 7:05-7:15**

- Teachers individually assess themselves along the RP-Observe dimensions—not giving themselves numerical ratings but simply noting which dimensions they feel are their strong points and which they struggle with, would like to improve.
- They select a grow and glow dimension

**Next steps 7:15-7:25**

- The staff developers meet with the people they'll be coaching. Depending on the group, discussion could include:
  - Each participant and their staff developer agree on two dimensions to focus on in their first coaching session. One will be a “glow” dimension and the other, a “grow.” For the first session, one dimension must be Circles Structure.
  - They agree on a schedule for the coaching and research activities

**Reflection and Closing: Connections: 7:25-7:30**

- Staff developer sets timer and those moved to speak share a reflection on the session. Silence is fine, too.



Appendix F

# RP-Coaching Coding Manual



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June 29, 2016

### *Directions on how to use the manual*

Global codes in this manual will be based on a three point scale (none = 0, mixed = 1, high = 2). A global code refers to a single code that is assigned to an entire interview record that indicates the extent to which each coding category is endorsed by the interviewee. So, a coder would read the interview as a whole and average the responses prior to assigning a code. Please refer to this manual prior to assigning a code, as it provides descriptions of the codes and examples of potential coding responses.

### *Coach interviews vs. teacher interviews*

One global code will be assigned for each category for teacher interviews. Two global codes will be assigned for each category for coach interviews (one global code per teacher). Interviews with coaches are divided into two parts where they are asked to comment on each teacher individually.

### *Coding manual focus*

It should be emphasized that the codes refer to teacher and coach experiences with the *Restore360* coaching model, not the intervention of restorative practices. However, there is inevitable overlap between these two processes.

### *Coding check-list*

Lastly, in addition to global codes, you will complete a checklist to assess if the core components of the coaching model were in place. Responses for each component will be noted in the checklist. In the case that an interview does not provide data for a certain code, you would indicate this by assigning a 99. It is expected that this will happen on rare occasions.

### *Additional Steps*

Please highlight sections of dialogue and then, make a notation about which code or core component the quote justifies. Global codes and justifications for the global codes will be written on the coding sheet

**Core components Checklist:****Restore360 Core Components Checklist**

- ☐ Coaching sessions have a strong focus on collaboration
- ☐ Use of “glows” or teacher strengths during performance feedback
- ☐ Use of behaviorally-based performance feedback
- ☐ Sustained coaching over the course of the school year
- ☐ RP-Observe dimensions are used

**Core components Descriptions:**

- ☐ **Coaching sessions have a strong focus on collaboration**
  - a. The teacher or coach references discuss collaboration broadly or provides an example of collaboration
  - b. Sample Yes Response: “We were like...we were just in the office and we had a bunch of good ideas and it was like yeah I think that will go well, I think this will go well and it did. Leading up to it we had sort of...we had some interesting readings going into it and the students rose to the challenge cause we were talking about the drug of acceptance and approval.”
- ☐ **Use of “glows” and “grow” format during performance feedback**
  - a. The teacher or coach references the use of “glows” or teacher strengths during the interview
- ☐ **Use of behaviorally-based performance feedback**
  - a. The teacher or coach discuss specific behaviors that occur in a circle
  - b. Sample Yes Response: “Whereas, this year I tried to focus on – and I think you’ve seen this – where if she said, ‘I think it went really well today!’ And I would say, ‘what are some of the indicators that bring you to that conclusion?’ And then she would list them and only then would I say, ‘yeah I agree.’ “
  - c. Sample No Response: Coach and Teacher discuss impressions of the circle process without linking them to specific teacher or student behaviors.
- ☐ **Sustained coaching over the course of the school year**
  - a. To endorse this item, coach and teacher would need to be meeting on at least a monthly basis
- ☐ **RP-Observe dimensions are used**
  - a. RP-Observe or one of it’s dimensions must be referenced once during the interview
  - b. Sample Yes Response: “So we didn’t use it at first, but then after we met up at Morningside Center - she brought it along - we would like look through the different sections and try to pick out what I wanted to focus on”

### **Code 1: To what extent was the coaching model acceptable?**

*Acceptability is defined as the perception that an intervention is satisfactory and is assessed through gathering the stakeholders' impressions of the intervention via surveys or interviews (Forman, 2015).*

#### Interview Questions that Address this Code:

- Did you find the coaching sessions provided a useful structure for promoting growth over time?
- What has been the most rewarding and challenging aspect of the coaching sessions?
- Were there moments when the collaboration faltered or went very well?
- Did you feel that anything was lacking in the current coaching model?

#### Coding Scheme:

(0) No clear mention of positive coaching experiences or negative mention of his or her coaching experience

(1) Mixed acceptability – The teacher or coach present positive and negative aspects of the coaching experience.

(2) Highly positive coaching experience – The teacher or coach presents one or more details about how the coaching experience was beneficial for him or her/or for their students

#### Sample 0 Response:

- “I know that we had to focus on the circle structure at the very beginning, but I didn’t really feel that it was super useful”

#### Sample 1 Response:

- My coach is great and had a lot to share, but sometimes I’m not sure if he really understood my students.

#### Sample 2 Responses:

- “[RP-Observe] I think it is a useful way to look at things” “So especially for people new to the process like giving them a framework to use is valuable.”
- “Mmhm...Whenever I asked her for something – like I had an idea – she would always send me something back to work with even if we didn’t get a chance to sit down and plan a circle. She would be like look at this lesson, look at this lesson. Here’s a reading I like, you know. She would give me at least the shell of ideas.”
- “She definitely encouraged it cause I would be like...I would tell her about how something went if she hadn’t been there or if she was there she would be like, ‘yeah that went really well.’ I would be like ‘yeah, but I feel like we tend to stop early’ and she would be like what can you do to build off of it next time? And that’s how it planned out.”
- “Oh yeah! She’s fantastic”
- “And so [my coach] helped me take a step back essentially and see what would be useful rather than just feeling frustrated.”

**Code 2: To what extent was the coaching model feasible (time needed to commit, training, etc.)?**

*Feasibility is defined as the extent to which an intervention can be realized within a specific setting and is assessed through surveys and administrative data and documents (Forman, 2015).*

Interview Questions that address this Code:

- No explicit interview questions address this code

Coding Scheme:

(0) Teacher or coach reports that it was not possible for the coaching to occur due to time or other constraints

(1) Mixed feasibility – The teacher or coach report time or other constraints that make it difficult for the coaching sessions to occur (e.g., somewhat doable, with some constraints).

(2) Highly feasible – The teacher or coach report that there were no or does not mention any constraints to conducting the coaching sessions

Sample 0 Response:

- “But, there’s no larger curriculum, there’s no...I don’t think there is enough guidance for teachers who are novice and uncomfortable or just busy and aren’t spending their extra time thinking about how to plan the next circle.”

Sample 1 Responses:

- “It is tough to find time, but I would say that on average it’s 20-25 minutes.”
- “We always get along. Like she and I have a very easy relationship. Um... there are times that we she was busy or I was busy we didn’t collaborate as well as we could have.”
- “I love planning my circles and I try to make them as deep and thoughtful as possible – but sometimes I don’t have time – you know [laughter]. I just – like give me some quick questions I can ask for a go around this topic and one reading and we’ll be done you know [laughter].”

**Code 3: To what degree did the coaches or teachers report implementing the coaching model or RP-Observe in a manner than was responsive to the particular needs of the students?** This could include cultural considerations, achievement levels, gender etc. This code captures if coaching is addressing issues pertaining to student diversity.

Interview Questions that address this Code:

- During coaching sessions, did you discuss circle curriculum and how it related to your students' diverse backgrounds (ELL, gender, race/ethnicity, achievement level, children with special needs)?
- Did you help to adapt curriculum to meet students' specific needs?"

Coding Scheme:

(0) Not Responsive - The teacher or coach reported that the model was not able to accommodate students from differing backgrounds or that they did not feel it was necessary to do so

(1) Responsive – The teacher or coach reported that the model was able to be adapted to students from different backgrounds

(999) Was not discussed

Sample 0 Response:

- “Not particularly. I feel like – not to say that we are ignoring it - any differences but, I would say that an operating assumption is that some of their personal experiences is - just as, you know, me coming from a small town in the Midwest – I might not have had the same experiences as them growing up in urban New York but like, the emotions are the same, you know, and so I think that is at the root of it.”



**Code 4: To what degree was the coaching model (coaches, RP-Observe, timing) responsive to differentiated teacher needs?** This could include novice vs. veteran circle keepers, cultural considerations, etc.

Interview Questions that address this Code:

- No questions specifically address this code

Coding Scheme:

(0) Not Flexible - The teacher or coach reported that the model was not able to accommodate teachers from differing ethnic backgrounds/experience levels (years teaching, years implementing restorative circles, etc.) or that they did not feel it was necessary to do so

(1) Flexible – The teacher or coach reported that the model was able to be adapted to teachers from different backgrounds

Sample 0 Response:

- “Teacher: I know that we had to focus on the circle structure at the very beginning, but I didn’t really feel that it was super useful [bell rings].

I: So you felt like there was a little too much emphasis on the circle structure.

Teacher: A little bit. Just because I did the summer training program and I had been leading circles for 2 years. So it wasn’t that I needed help on the structure, but it was like those little suggestions about like how to hold it rather than sort of a checklist of did you do these things? “

**Code 5: To what degree did the coach or teacher reflect on positive student outcomes through circles?**

Interview Questions that address this Code:

- Can you describe any changes over time in your circles or your students?
- Over time, have the circles in any way contributed to developing a sense of shared community and values in your classroom?
- Have they helped students learn SEL skills and if so which ones? Preventing discipline problems? Resolving conflict?"

Coding Scheme:

(0) No development occurred – Teacher or coach reported that no development occurred or that the experience harmed development

(1) Minimal/Some positive development occurred – Teacher or coach reported vague description of student development that occurred/Teacher or coach reported mixed results

(2) Positive development occurred – The teacher or coach presents one or more details about how the coaching experience was linked to positive student development

Sample 1 Response:

- “But, if I had to guess anecdotally I would say at least that it helps affect behavioral outcomes. Being able to get students comfortable listening to each other and trying to understand how other people are feeling is something you have to do all the time, but circles are a particularly focused way to do that. But you just can’t do the circles, you know.”

Sample 2 Response:

- “But in terms of risk-taking, I would also say that was an area of growth. There were some things that came out – I think you were at one of them – like at either your authentic self or like somebody talked about their sexuality, somebody talked about um just like different struggles they had in elementary school or middle school like one girl talked about how she didn’t like her dreads – just like basically being black – she felt not as happy with her appearance. So, I would say that the risk-taking was bigger on the girls’ part.”

**Code 6: To what degree did the coach or teacher reflect on positive teacher or self-development through circles?**

Interview Questions that address this Code:

- Can you describe any changes over time in the coaching process, your relationship with \_\_\_\_\_, her/his circles?

Coding Scheme:

(0) No development occurred – Teacher or coach reported that no development occurred or that the experience harmed teacher development

(1) Minimal/Some positive development occurred – Teacher or coach reported vague description of teacher or personal development that occurred/Teacher or coach reported mixed results

(2) Positive development occurred – The teacher or coach presents one or more details about how the coaching experience was linked to positive teacher development

Sample 1 Response:

- “I definitely think she gained confidence in being a circle keeper...”

Sample 2 Response:

- “So for an example, just thinking about the way that I am holding myself –the cadence of my speech, um thinking about the way that I describe things, so I often become very conversational and sort of fast talking and so I would slow myself down intentionally to try to like cue the students to slow down. Or, I did some openings and closings like bringing in a chime and then just like listening to it until you couldn’t hear it anymore. Or just like focusing on stillness or quiet in a way that I think was meditative or calming. As much as I think that having a circle is like holding the space, I think that’s really improved my practice.”
- “I definitely think she gained confidence in being a circle keeper and feeling like also she was able to deviate from whatever plan she would come up with.”