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Powerful Peers: Resident Advisors' Experience With Restorative Practices In College Residence Hall Settings

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POWERFUL PEERS: RESIDENT ADVISORS' EXPERIENCE WITH RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN COLLEGE RESIDENCE HALL SETTINGS

A Dissertation Presented

by

Patience E. Whitworth

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the implementation of Restorative Practices (Costello, Wachtel, & Wachtel, 2009) in a residential life program at a small public university. Narrative inquiry is used to explore the perspectives of eleven resident advisors (RAs) who have been trained in Restorative Practices (RP) and are using them in their residential communities. Participants were interviewed three times over the course of one academic year. The study illuminates the RAs’ perspectives, growth and experiences with RP over that year. The findings demonstrate that RP may not only provide a structure for RAs to succeed within their challenging position, but may also encourage growth in a RAs’ leadership capacity and abilities. This research also addresses how RAs conceptualize their position and role, including how they negotiate their dual, and sometime conflicting, roles of serving simultaneously as an authority figure and peer within the residence hall community, and how RAs benefit from and are challenged by implementing RP in their hall.

In addition to examining the RA role specifically, the study also addresses how RP can serve as a theoretical framework for preparing RAs for their work in residence halls and for supporting them throughout the year. Further, the research suggests that RP, as a framework for the RAs’ work in the residence halls, can potentially transform the residential experience for both the residents and the RA. The result may be the creation of the kind of community experience that the research has shown contributes to the retention of students. Finally, this study concludes with identifying some of the issues that are important for Residential Life departments in a process of successfully implementing RP in college residential settings.

Keywords: Residential Life, Restorative Practices, Leadership, Resident Advisor
DEDICATION

Frankie Hart Elledge
1926-2009

My Grandmother, whose love of learning

I will always carry with me.
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Since my first year as an undergraduate student at The Ohio State University, I have listened to Dr. Mabel Freeman’s sage advice (eventually). I owe my career in higher education to her mentorship. I pursued this degree because Dr. Mabel Freeman encouraged me to “move it along”. Our shared commitment to scholarship, leadership, and service will always drive my career.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

When first-year students arrive on campuses, one of the first people they meet is their Residential Advisor (RA). RAs welcome students to campus, work to create a sense of community in residence halls, and serve as a near-peer role model for students’ within the residential community (Blimling, 2003). RAs work to create experiences for undergraduate students that have been shown to be very influential in providing students with a strong start in college through building community and encouraging to develop a connection to the institution and their peers within their community (A. W. Astin, 1999; Tinto, 1994). Tinto and Astin engaged in large-scale quantitative research projects to better understand the college experience. Credited with developing student persistence theory, their work informs the practice and structure of student affairs work and the work of the Resident Advisors. Tinto’s (1994) research on student retention emphasized the importance of students building a strong sense of connection to the campus community, while Astin’s (1999) research found that students who live on campus have higher persistence rates, more satisfaction with their college experience, and are more likely to be a campus leader. Thus, the college residential experience is foundational in many college students’ experiences in college.

The role of the RA is to increase students’ sense of connection to the University through programing, community building activities, and supporting the student’s overall health and wellness. RAs also have a visible presence in the community as resources and may regularly monitor the halls to encourage and foster healthy and safe behavior (Residential Life, 2014b). Being an RA is a significant college leadership opportunity
that provides students who are RAs with the opportunity to become engaged leaders within their community and directly contribute to the success of their peers.

1.1. Dual Roles

The RA position has been described as having several roles within the community. Wachtel, Wachtel, and Miller (2012) have described the RA position as managing a dual role within the community which focuses on creating community among students and holding peers in their residential community accountable for the university’s policies and procedures. Blimling (2003) further breaks down these dual roles into distinct functions for an RA: student, administrator, role model, teacher, and counselor. These descriptions of the role emphasize the complexity and importance of the RA role within residential communities.

At Mountain University (pseudonym) (MU), where this study takes place, the RA job description reads:

As the heart of the residential community, the Resident Advisor (RA) position provides residents with peer leadership that allows for the healthy facilitation of community. RAs at [MU] develop critical skills to play an active and intentional role in fostering an inclusive, safe, and healthy atmosphere conducive to learning for a diverse student body (Residential Life, 2014b).

To create this community, RA’s encourage involvement in positive school experiences (e.g. service learning, clubs and organizations) rather than negative experiences such as high risk drinking. RAs serve as peer mentors in residential communities to guide students toward academic and personal success (Blimling, 2003). RAs’ focused attention on residential students provides an opportunity to positively influence students’ lives and to develop healthy attitudes and behaviors during college life.
RAs focus on community development as well as the education and enforcement of University policies. This perception of a dual role can produce a barrier to creating meaningful relationships with residents (Wachtel et al., 2012). In other words, a tension between those dual roles emerges for the RA in terms of how they are perceived by the students they serve and how they, themselves, perceive their roles. In this study, I focused on how Restorative Practices (RP) may not only provide a structure to deal with these two roles but may also encourage growth in a RAs’ definition of leadership.

1.2. Restorative Practices

At MU, Residential Life staff use a whole array of theory-based approaches in building community for their student. Specifically, residence halls at MU house approximately 5000 primarily first and second year students. The residential life department employees 65 staff members and 130 RAs to support the quality of the residential experience. MU was one of the first residential life departments to train the staff in RP (Wachtel et al., 2012). RAs are introduced to RP as a framework for creating community through building individual relationships and resolving conflict by repairing harm (Miller & DePaul, 2014). RP establishes a framework for an individual to hold authority in a way that emphasizes explicit communication and fair process (Costello, Wachtel, & Wachtel, 2009; Wachtel et al., 2012).

The fundamental premise of restorative practices is that people are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes when those in authority do things with them, rather than to them, or for them (Wachtel et al., 2012, p. 15).

The use of RP creates an environment of participatory decision making and learning which is well suited for residential communities. RP provides a framework that can
enhance RAs’ skills in building community within the residence hall and a way for RAs to provide effective leadership to the residential community (Wachtel et al., 2012).

In addition, RP is a framework that allows RAs to explore their view of leadership and authority. RP emphasizes holding authority with their community rather than to or for the community. This framework challenges the traditional discursive dichotomy for leadership that is rooted in the industrial model of leadership which views leaders as powerful and followers as passive (Collinson, 2005; Northouse, 2009). RP is a relational framework for leadership that focuses on leaders offering high levels of support and high expectations for the community. Within RP framework, leadership is focused on building and restoring community to ensure that the community is functioning at its highest capacity (Costello et al., 2009). RP is a new approach to community development in college residential communities. This study contributes to the literature of RP, generally, and specifically on the use of RP to shape the RA role and practice in higher education, as well as an examination of the RA’s experiences with the framework.

1.3. Research problem

This mixed methods study, set within a small public research institution, sought to understand RAs’ experiences with RP. Specifically, I explored ways that developmental theory can enhance how RAs enact RP.

Additional research questions are:

- In what ways can developmental theory illuminate how restorative practices are implemented on college campuses?
- How does RP intersect with and effect how RAs manage their dual roles as an authority figure and peer in the residential community?
In this study, I engaged in the method of narrative inquiry by interviewing eleven RAs over one academic year. This method of data collection allowed me to solicit stories and reflections to better understand the meaning making of RAs who have been trained in restorative practices. I also use a developmental inventory to provide an additional perspective on participants’ development and narrative.

The interviews focused on participants’ experiences with RP and how the participants made meaning of their roles as RAs. This study explored the application of RP as a structure and RP’s effect on the role of the RA in college residential communities. The results from this study can be used to inform the training and supervision of RAs and to illuminate the potential of RP in college residential settings (see figure 1.1).

**Figure 1:** Data was collected at three time periods during one academic year. The findings of the study can inform the structure, training, and supervision of resident advisors.

### 1.4. Significance

The findings in this study can inform the training, structure, and supervision of resident advisors. This research describes how the use of RP as a community development model within residential life can transform the residential experience both
for RAs and residents. This paper provides a theory driven exploration of RP, which can provide the structure and skills that allow RAs and residential communities to develop and engage in a restorative process, which results in stronger leadership skills and strengthened community. This paper will demonstrate how RAs benefit and are challenged by implementing RP and describe the structure necessary to support this change. The audience of this research is practitioners in college residential life departments and leaders of divisions of student affairs.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This narrative inquiry study, set within a small public research institution, has focused on RAs’ experience with RP. Specifically, I explored ways that developmental theory can enhance understanding about how RAs engage with RP and the application of RP as a theory and set of practices that enhance the role of the RA in college residential communities. This chapter opens with an examination of relevant literature about student persistence. Next, the theory and processes of restorative practices will be presented. Then human developmental theories are considered in light of their capacity to illuminate how RAs engage and enact the theory and practices of RP. Finally, a conceptual framework will be presented to guide the inquiry into RAs’ experiences with RP.

2.1. Persistence theory

One of the largest predictors of students’ retention and persistence at a university is their sense of integration to the campus community (Tinto, 1998). Colleges and universities focus on students’ integration and connection within the first year of college. Half of all students who eventually leave college, leave during or after their first year (Tinto, 1998). The first-to-second year retention rate is operationalized as a measure of effectiveness for a university. Low retention rates are costly to both the institution that must replace the revenue of the student and to the student who may have taken student loans to attend and will not be leaving college with the degree that means increased earning potential to repay the loans (Bowen, Chingos, & McPherson, 2009; Tinto, 1994). The students’ experience in the college residential environment has been shown to be very influential in providing students with a strong start in college through building
community and encouraging involvement in meaningful educational activities and student organizations (A. W. Astin, 1999; Tinto, 1994).

Student persistence theory informs the emphasis on the work of student affairs in a college residential setting. In other words, what persistence theory illuminates is the value of intentionally focusing on enhancing students’ experiences inside and outside of the classroom. Tinto’s (1994) research on student retention emphasized the importance of students building a strong sense of connection to the campus community. Tinto’s (1975) original theory emerged from a longitudinal quantitative research study at the University of Syracuse that focused on students reasons for leaving college and tested a theory that Tinto focused on with the hypothesis being that lack of integration into the social system of college would result in low commitment to college and increase the likelihood of a student dropping out. Alexander Astin established the Cooperative Institutional Research Project (CIRP) to study student persistence. CIRP is a national research institution that conducts quantitative studies at hundreds of universities. Astin’s (1977) book, Four Critical Years is widely influential on the field’s understanding of college student persistence and the importance of students’ connection to faculty and the role of peer influence.

2.2. Role of the Resident Advisor

A critical experience for students is often living in a residence hall. Students who live in residence halls persist at higher rates, are more likely to become a student leader, and are more likely to report being satisfied with their college experiences (A. W. Astin, 1999). Student Affairs divisions across the country invest highly in the residential experience to enhance these positive experiences. The RA role within college residence
halls has been significantly shaped by persistence literature. RA’s are charged with creating a safe environment where residential students develop a strong sense of connection to their peers and their institution. This is accomplished through programing, community building activities, and supporting the student’s overall health and wellness (Blimling, 2003). RAs also have a visible presence in the community and serve as a resource to residential students.

RAs are uniquely positioned to be the ‘front line’ for influencing student persistence. RAs have a front row seat from which to observe students social adaptation and connection to the institution (Shim & Ryan, 2012). RAs are often best positioned to intervene when they are concerned about a student’s success at the University and may serve as a resource to a first-year student who is seeking help (A. W. Astin, 1999). As noted above, RAs have a challenging dual role of creating community and holding peers accountable for the University’s policies and procedures (Blimling, 2003; Wachtel et al., 2012). This dual role can put RAs in a challenging situation and can be perceived as a barrier to creating relationships with their residents (Wachtel et al., 2012).

The RA’s role in the residential community is to create community and to encourage involvement in positive school experiences (e.g. service learning, clubs and organizations) rather than negative experiences associated with, for example, alcohol use. RAs serve as peer mentors in residential communities to guide first-year students toward academic and personal success in their first-year (Blimling, 2003). Given that a peer mentoring relationship is often mutually beneficial to the mentor and the mentee (Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005), RAs’ focused attention on first-year students provides an opportunity to positively influence students’ lives and to
develop healthy attitudes and behaviors during college life, while the RA may gain leadership experience.

Thus the RA position offers a great leadership opportunity for an undergraduate student to lead a community, encourage interaction, and discourage destructive behavior. The role of the RA is central to the creation of a positive and engaged community. However, the RA role can be challenging to the individual RAs. As a result of performing RAs job duties RAs can experience isolation from peers, depersonalization, and emotional exhaustion which can lead to low job satisfaction and burn out (Paladino, Murray, Jr., Newgent, & Gohn, 2005). RA training and the environment within the residence halls can influence the degree to which an RA experiences depersonalization within the community (Paladino et al., 2005). RA training and support throughout the academic year was a focus for this study.

2.3. Restorative practices

Restorative Practices draws upon research and practice from education, counseling, criminal justice, social work and organizational management (Wachtel et al., 2012). RP values taking a proactive approach to building community through participatory learning and decision making (Wachtel et al., 2012). RP has its roots in restorative justice; however, the key distinctions between restorative justice and RP is RP’s emphasis on proactive community building and applying the restorative paradigm outside of the criminal justice system (Wachtel et al., 2012). This intentional method of community building is believed to improve individuals’ commitment to the community and provides a basis to address harm.
A key component of RP is the social discipline window, which illustrates how individuals in our society can hold authority (e.g. lead, supervise, manage). The traditional model of holding authority can be seen as falling on a punitive to permissive continuum shown in Figure 2 (Costello et al., 2009).

![Punitive to permissive continuum](image)

*Figure 2: Punitive to permissive continuum described in RP literature as the traditional model for individuals who hold authority (Costello at al., 2009, p. 49)*

This traditional continuum from punitive to permissive is expanded in the RP model. After harm occurs in our society, it is argued that there are two reactions for those in authority: to either punish (punitive) or not punish (permissive) as shown in Figure 1. RP provides a conceptual framework to understand the punitive to permissive continuum within the context of control (limit-setting, discipline) and support (encouragement, nurture) (Costello et al., 2009; Wachtel et al., 2012). RP takes the original continuum and expands it to include two more possible forms of holding authority (restorative and neglectful), which are described in the social discipline window (Figure 3).
Figure 3: Social discipline window describes how individuals with authority use control and support (Costello et al., 2009, p.50; Wachtel et al., 2012, p. 18).

The social discipline window (Figure 2) expands the view of those in authority from being simply punitive (high control and low support; doing things to people) or permissive (low control and high support; doing things for people). In this expanded framework a response that is both low control and low support is identified as neglectful. And finally, a restorative approach to holding authority, exhibits high levels of both control and support. Holding authority in a restorative way is a leadership style that requires a proactive investment of time in building and strengthening relationships and repairing relationships when harm occurs (Miller & DePaul, 2014). Restorative leaders spend time being explicit about the controls in the environment (limits and expectations) while helping to support the community to meet these expectations and community goals (encouragement and nurture). The social discipline window provides those in authority with a lens for reflecting on how they are holding their authority in terms of control and
support (Costello et al., 2009). In addition, RP defines and describes processes for effectively focusing on community building and shared decision-making.

Fair process is another RP framework that provides leaders with three principles for what needs to be included in the decision making process: engagement, explanation, and expectation clarity (Costello et al., 2009; Wachtel et al., 2012). Fair process in a residential community might mean that an RA would engage with the community about how they should address a consistently messy bathroom. Residents might provide ideas about rules, agreements, and processes that would keep the community bathroom cleaner (engagement). The RA might take that input and make a decision about a new rule for bathroom cleanliness and provide explanation about why they have chosen this rule (explanation). Finally, the RA would need to make their new expectations clear given this new rule (e.g. how it should be followed, consequences), which is expectation clarity. Traditionally, and RA would have had a conversation with the community but it might have been a more one directional conversation. The RA may have informed the residence that the bathroom was messy, that they needed to correct for this behavior, and posted signs for to remind residents to clean up after themselves. Use of the fair process is meant to engage the community at a deeper level and promote engagement and buy in.

Another important RP component is the restorative practices continuum. This continuum describes a range of practices, processes, and methods for creating and building community, resolving conflict, and addressing harm.
Figure 4: The restorative practices continuum depicts a range of practices within the restorative practices framework that are used to build and restore relationships and community (Costello et al., 2009, p. 12; Wachtel et al., 2012, p.19).

This RP continuum ranges from using affective statements, typically “I statements,” that focus on an individuals’ feeling regarding a certain behavior (Wachtel et al., 2012). For example, “I feel happy to see how clean the common room is today” or “I feel sad when I heard you got sick in the bathroom last night.” Next on the continuum, affective questions encourage people to reflect on their behavior beyond just asking “why” (Wachtel et al., 2012). Avoiding the “why” question is an important concept within RP theory. Why presumes that the individual being asked knows why they took an action and may solicit a defensive action (Wachtel et al., 2012). Often those who cause harm in a community do not have a reasonable explanation for why they behaved in a harmful way. RP moves a community beyond “why” and uses restorative questions to focus on impact of the decision or action which helps all community members understand the situation in a more constructive way (Costello et al., 2009; Wachtel et al., 2012). An example of affective questions is, “what impact has this incident had on you and others?”

At the other end of the continuum, more formal small and large group settings are used to respond to harm in a community (usually referred to as a “Circle”) in which participants are able to make affective statements and answer affective questions in a formal and
facilitated setting (Wachtel et al., 2012). This intentional focus on making and restoring relationships in the residence hall is consistent with the emphasis on students’ connection to peers and the institution that was discussed earlier with persistence theory.

2.4. Leadership

RP challenges the polarizing view that leaders are separated from followers. Collinson (2005) described this discursive dichotomy as viewing leaders as powerful and followers as passive. This dichotomy is reflective of industrial model of leadership and is pervasive in our discourse around leadership (Collinson, 2005; Northouse, 2009). Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) contrast this discursive dichotomy with relational leadership approaches that focus on inclusiveness, empowerment, and a process orientation. Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, and Osteen (2005) encouraged student affairs professionals to work with students to develop leadership capacity through sustained training that develops a students’ leadership identity rather than short-term generic leadership trainings focused on specific roles or functions. In the context of this study, to introduce a leadership framework to RAs during training would not be sufficient to create the environment necessary to challenge students to reflect and form their leadership identity.

Moving from the industrial model of leadership is imperative as we train leaders who after graduation will need to lead in a complex and diverse society (Komives & Dugan, 2010). Rather than over simplified models of leadership, the social discipline window operationalizes a form of restorative relational leadership that focuses individuals with authority on leading their community through providing high levels of support and control (Costello et al., 2009; Wachtel et al., 2012). Komives et al. (2005)
emphasized that it is not just finding a model of leadership but it is the sustained reflection and training that can transform students’ leadership skills. This study focused on the sustained and systematic approach to implementing RP.

2.5. Development theory

A strong understanding of college student development is critical to creating a college environment. This study drew upon William Perry’s (1970) developmental scheme, Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, Jill Mattuck Tarule’s (1986) *Women’s Ways of Knowing* theory of the development of self, voice, and mind, Marsha Baxter Magolda’s (2004) insights into self-authorship, and Patricia King’s (2010) description of the cognitive domain of development. This study was also informed by Lawrence Kohlberg (1969) and Carol Gilligan’s (1977) moral development theories.

2.5.1. Perry

Perry’s work reflects a worldview that students are in motion actively and developing throughout college (Knefelkamp, 1999). Perry’s (1970) study involved following 31 students from the class of 1958 (27 from Harvard and 4 from Radcliffe). As his research developed, Perry expanded the sample from the original 31 and in total wrote the scheme based upon interviews of 84 students each year, for four years (and a total of 464 interviews) (Perry, 1970).

Perry’s (1970) scheme claims that most students enter college in Dualism. Perry’s first two positions describe an orientation toward a world that is viewed dichotomously (e.g. good and bad, right and wrong). Students’ learning in strict Dualism (position 1) and Multiplicity pre-legitimate (position 2) is closely linked to the individual’s view of
authority. Learning is focused on acquiring quantitative facts from authorities (e.g. faculty) who are experts (Cornfield & Knefelkamp, 1979). Dualism plays out for the student as they focus on knowing the right answers. Students in Dualism do not see their peers as a legitimate source of knowledge (Perry, 1970). Students grow from Dualism to Multiplicity through seeing authority figures or experts having different opinions and they start to recognize that authorities do not hold all of the answers (Perry, 1970). This can be challenging for a student who is seeking clear-cut answers and singular truths.

The growth into Multiplicity is characterized by a growing sense of comfort with uncertainty and the acknowledgement of multiple perspectives. It is important to note that as a student is growing in their understanding of authority and knowledge they still may rely on Dualism to make sense of parts of their worlds. Perry (1970) provides the example of a student who is comfortable with math and science because the way those disciplines are often taught, it is easy for the student to recognize and assume that there are discrete right and wrong answers. However, the same student may be growing a level of comfort with the ambiguity and multiple opinions in the social sciences and pedagogy used in social science classes, particularly discussions with their peers and authority figures in this development.

The next transition to Relativism can be associated with the student seeking to reduce the ambiguity of multiple perspectives by developing complex reasoning and requiring evidence for opinions and ideas to have merit. Relativism is characterized by a very different view of authority and is associated with higher levels of critical thinking. Students are able to acknowledge multiple authorities on a subject and may measure the authorities ideas against each other’s ideas as well as their own. This critical thinking
extends beyond the classroom to all forms of thinking and evaluation (Perry, 1970). The next positions are related to developing commitment to this new relativistic outlook in life but these positions are not as developed in Perry’s 1970 scheme (see figure 2.4), probably because this development occurs largely after the college years.

Figure 5: Perry's schematic representation demonstrates how individuals may move through the nine positions (Perry, 1970, p. 65).

Perry’s (1970) model creates nine positions that individuals move through as they grow in their intellectual and ethical forms of thinking. The term positions is deliberately chosen over stages because Perry believed that students could be in more than one position at a time and may not progress through the positions linearly as a stage model might imply (Knefelkamp, 1999; Perry, 1970). Perry (1970) describes these deviations from the main line of development as “temporizing” (pausing), “retreat” (entrenching often with feelings of anger or hatred) and “escape” (avoidance of personal responsibility) (p. 198). It is also important to note that there is no assumption about the
time a person may spend in each position. The strength of these perspectives allows Perry (1970) to paint a more complex picture of development than a linear or staged model of development. This complex view of development was a very important contribution to the field of psychology.

Perry’s theory informed Cornfield and Knefelkamp (1979) effort to develop an analysis and description of learner characteristics derived from the descriptions and characteristics of the nine positions described in Perry’s Scheme (Perry, 1970, p. xxxi). This operationalizes Perry’s scheme and identifies the student’s view of peers in the learning process, primary intellectual tasks, sources of challenge, and sources of support – all intended as factors, based on the positions, which can be used to inform faculty’s pedagogy. This work could also guide the implementation of restorative practices in residential life, particularly since the initial training should utilize pedagogy that is developmentally appropriate for RAs. The majority of RAs are typically hired in their second year. Based on Perry’s scheme, the majority of the students would probably be in dualistic or early multiplicity positions. Students in these positions may have limited interest in viewing peers as legitimate sources of knowledge, most often looking for a final authority to determine what is the right way. In RA training it would imply the role modeling with peers may be helpful but the trainer will always be looked at as the final determiner of whether RP was applied correctly.

Training for RP often involves role-plays for new residents to start to apply their new skills (Miller & DePaul, 2014). Ambiguity and multiple perspectives on the application of RP may be a challenge for students in Dualism or early Multiplicity to accept (Cornfield & Knefelkamp, 1979). When role-playing difficult scenarios and
conflicts, the RA may be seeking the facilitators’ view on the correct way to address the conflict rather than relying on their own meaning making or feedback from their peers. Additionally, the scripted nature of affective statements may be more comfortable for a new RA because the structure implies a specific and correct way to form a sentence and apply restorative practices. As the RA challenges him or herself to focus on the content of their own and others affect, they may alter the structure of an affective statement to express their affective in a more natural or comfortable way. Later in Multiplicity and Relativism, an RA would be expected to be more nuanced in their synthesis of how events have transpired and may start to recognize multiple methods to successfully apply restorative practices to address the conflict or difficult situation (Cornfield & Knefelkamp, 1979).

RP processes builds relationships so that when harm occurs multiple perspectives can be voiced and heard (Costello et al., 2009). The structures of informal and formal circles are examples of the highly structured environment in which this occurs. Holding multiple perspectives may be affirmed and rewarded for participants. This process may build key scaffolding for one to move into early Multiplicity and the capacity to hold multiple perspectives without looking for a single truth of right vs. wrong or good vs. bad (Dualism).

Perry’s work has been critiqued for its focus on a privileged and homogeneous group of students (Harvard students) who were in the original study. The lack of diversity in race and ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status has been particularly identified as a concern when generalizing the scheme to the “American college student” population (Knefelkamp, 1999). However, subsequent research has expanded the sample
and the scheme has been successfully used with a wide range of students. One of the most notable expansions of Perry’s work has been by Belenky et al. (1986). The authors’ research was focused on creating a developmental model that was based on a sample of women. This model was not intended to build on Perry’s (1970) scheme but rather to expand our knowledge of ethical and intellectual development by including a previously excluded sample, meaning both women and some diversity in terms of race and class. While not seeking to explicitly base their work on the Perry scheme, Belenky et al., (1986) acknowledge the inspiration Perry provided for their work.

2.5.2. Women’s ways of knowing

The authors of *Women’s Ways of Knowing* (WWK) were troubled by the omission of women’s experiences and voices in prior research focusing on intellectual and ethical growth. Belenky et al.’s (1986) work was intended to build a theory of development based upon women’s experiences. The authors interviewed a diverse group of 135 women from different ethnic and social class backgrounds, varying ages, and located throughout the country in rural and urban settings (Belenky et al., 1986). The participants were intentionally selected to be a heterogeneous group of women in order for the researchers “to see the common ground that women share, regardless of background” (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 13). The diversity of the sample was notable for the time because prior research on development had been focused on a more homogeneous group participants, namely white men at highly selective colleges. The research project was supported by the Fund for Improvement for Post Secondary Education (FIPSE) which supported the authors’ ability to do a large scale qualitative project that was informed and inspired by the work of William Perry and Carol Gilligan.
The result is a description of five developmental perspectives or ‘ways of knowing.’

WWK identifies five epistemological perspectives that the women they interviewed expressed in their “development of self, voice, and mind” (Belenky et al., 1986). The first, silence, is characterized by the women’s lack of voice, which is associated with lower levels of confidence. The women are focused on the experience of others and obeying authority. Women grow from this epistemological approach to Received Knowing. In Received Knowing the women view authority as having all of the knowledge and it is passed along (in one direction) to the women. In Received Knowing women are unable to process gray issues or contradictory ideas (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 41). Women who rely on Received Knowing shift out of this epistemology when they start to find failure in authority, especially in male authorities.

Subjective Knowing is associated with greater autonomy and independent thinking and knowledge. A woman starts to understand that she can bring her own experiences to the learning environment and learning is more reciprocal with authorities (content experts) and peers than the more one directional learning of Received Knowing. In Subjective Knowing truths from multiple sources can be held as separate and valuable perspectives and women are able to give their own lived experiences weight when searching for truth and meaning (Belenky et al., 1986).

As a woman grows in her understanding of multiple truths she develops a higher standard of truth, and seeks evidence, and is more critical of truths. This is characterized by procedural knowledge. Belenky et al. (1986) identify two kinds of Procedural Knowing. First, Separate Knowing separates self from reason. The person may focus on
procedures for establishing knowledge or justice and try to make the process as impersonal as possible. The second is Connected Knowing which characterized by a need to understand others’ opinions but not to conform to them. The connected knowers do not remove themselves from the reasoning but they have a more relational approach. Separate Knowing is supported by the traditional pedagogy in education. Belenky et al (1986) acknowledge it was harder to recognize connected knowing due to the socialization and value placed upon Separate Knowing.

The last epistemological perspective in Belenky et al.’s (1986) model, is Constructed Knowing, which is characterized by women continuously re-evaluating their own knowledge and assumptions. Knowledge is understood as being constructed, not given from authority, and not just what one ‘feels’ or ‘intuits’ or reasons. Rather, women start to “use the self as an instrument of understanding” (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 141) in learning and in relationships. This new understanding of knowledge and truth leads the women to be more comfortable with emerging ideas and they may view their role as giving voice to these ideas. One of the primary challenges for women in Constructed Knowing is for the women to be in a context where their voice was not heard. Constructivist women resolved conflict not by looking for the most logical argument but instead focusing on the “each person’s perspective, needs, and goals – and doing the best possible for everyone that is involved” (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 149). This focus on perspective and voice is strongly congruent with the restorative method for resolving and addressing conflict that was discussed earlier in this chapter.

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule interviewed 135 women for their study. This generated over 5000 typed pages of transcripts, which had a unique focus on
women’s experiences from Silence to Constructed Knowing (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1997). This diverse group of participants is the strength of scholarship in WWK and a point of criticism. There has been some criticism that the book represents the view of predominantly white cis gendered women (Goldberger et al., 1998). Much like the work of Perry, since its original publication in 1986, the ‘ways of knowing’ described in WWK have been examined to incorporate the experiences of women from different class, race, gender, and culture (Goldberger, 1996).

The parallels between Perry’s Schema and WWK are worth noting (see table 2.1). The power of WWK is the emphasis on women’s lived experience rather than creating a model primarily on men’s experiences and testing the model on women. WWK has been criticized because of the theory’s limited application to only women (taken even further to only cis gendered white females). Knefelkamp (1999) warns against viewing WWK as development for women and Perry’s Scheme the development of men. Both works have made meaningful contributions to the field and growing knowledge surrounding human ethical and intellectual development. WWK creates a lens on development that intentionally foregrounds women’s experiences within the context of ethical and intellectual development and forms a knowledge based that is gender related not gender specific (Goldberger et al., 1998). WWK expands the understanding of human development and when combined with the work of Perry can provide a deeper understanding of the human developmental experience.
Table 1: Summary of Perry (1970) and Belenky, Clincy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) development models for ethical and intellectual development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Silence</strong></td>
<td>Absences of voice associated with little confidence in own voice. Focus is on the experience and knowledge of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dualism</strong></td>
<td><strong>Received knowledge</strong> Knowledge is passed along from authorities to woman in one direction. Unable to process gray or contradictory ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multiplicity</strong></td>
<td>Truth is no longer absolute and not all opinions are equal. Individual may start to evaluate knowledge more critically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relativism</strong></td>
<td>Ideas, opinions, and decisions are made from a more relativistic and context specific orientation. Ideas and opinions are more critically examined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment to relativism</strong></td>
<td>Continued commitment to engage with the conflicting ideas, opinions, and decisions. Not seeking resolution, but accepting the competition of ideas as part of adult life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WWK potentially provides many helpful insights into the implementation of restorative practices. Most notably the development of a women’s voice to not look for objective truth but to instead see the world through a relational and subjective lens can be particularly helpful when understanding the central principle of restorative practices: that
individuals change their behavior based upon the relationships they have with others (Costello et al., 2009). This relational approach to building community and solving conflict is congruent with the insights that WWK provides.

2.5.3. Growth

Many developmental scholars have focused on growth across the positions or stages. The literature points toward active development rather than a more staged view of development characterized by periods of rest (or flat spaces) between movements to the next stage. This changes the imagery of growth from a staircase to movement up an incline and movement is not always in one direction.

Tarule (1980) describes four parts of a individual’s change in their meaning making structures. First, diffusion occurs when an individual’s prior meaning making structure starts to break down. A person senses that they are actively undergoing change and are motivated to move into this change by the discomfort they are experiencing as their prior meaning making structure is breaking down (Tarule, 1980). A person in diffusion may be seeking a space to be reflective rather than to actively engage in meaning making around this change.

Individuals then move on to dissonance which is when the person is starting to focus more on their meaning making structure and actively seeking new ways to make meaning, (Tarule, 1980). This may be motivated by an individuals desire to engage in reasoning one step beyond their own reasoning structure (Turiel, 1972). Thus, people in dissonance may be actively challenging themselves to think beyond their current meaning making structure.
Next, in *differentiation*, an individual is able to begin to discern aspects of the new mental structure. During *differentiation* there is an increased sense of restoration of balance that was lost in *diffusion* (Tarule, 1980). This balance comes from a new sense of comfort with the new meaning making structure. This can be seen through increased confidence and acceptance of self.

Finally, in *coherence* an individual may experience further application of this meaning making structure but the active work of change is done. A person in *coherence* may feel, as Tarule (1980) states “growth is a fact of life, and not a terribly interesting one at that” (p. 31). An important point in this research is that when a person has fully transitioned to a new structure of meaning making, it changes their outlook on the past and the future. In a way, the new perspective now rewrites the meaning making structures of the past. Thus, an individual would have difficulty reflecting back on a prior structure.

RA’s trained in the framework and theory of RP may undergo a transformation in their meaning making and relational skills. Using Tarule’s (1980) model of transformational change, the RA would first experience *diffusion*. For the RA, this may be characterized by a period of reflection regarding this new and/or intentional communication style. An RA may be challenged by the emphasis on recognizing and expressing their affect. As the RA starts to try out the structure of RP they may see positive results related to affective statements and questions. This affirms the framework of RP but in *dissonance* the RA may recognize this new structure as different from the way they previously would have approached expressing themselves. However, RP could still feel very scripted and understanding their own affect could be a challenge. In
differentiation the RA may be building confidence in their use of RP and be more comfortable with expressing affect. In coherence the RA may fully have integrated RP into their method of communication, building community, and resolving conflict. They may be in a place that they do not “do” RP but “are” restorative in all areas of their life. Differentiating when they are or are not using RP may be more challenging.

2.5.4. Baxter Magolda

Marcia Baxter Magolda has made significant contributions to the developmental theory with her longitudinal study of 101 students who entered college in 1986. Baxter Magolda is still conducting annual interviews with 30 of the participants in her original study (Boes, Baxter Magolda, & Buckley, 2010), now almost 30 years later. Baxter Magolda’s research has been a grounded theory approach to the development of what she calls “self-authorship”.

Baxter Magolda’s (2004) work describes how an individual grows in their own internal validity by developing across three arena’s of epistemology, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Self authorship is reached when “internal authority moves to the foreground to mediate external influences” (Boes et al., 2010, p. 14). Baxter Magolda (2008) describes three elements of self-authorship: trusting the internal voice, building an internal foundation, and securing internal commitments.

2.5.5. Domains of development

Developmental studies have centered their research on the integration of epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal developmental arenas (Baxter Magolda, 2004; Belenky et al., 1986; Perry, 1970). Personal epistemology describes how an individual obtains, makes sense of, and structures knowledge (Boes et al., 2010). In
The authors referred to personal epistemology as mind (Belenky et al., 1986). The interpersonal domain (Perry) or self (WWK) describes the area in which a person develops in their relationship with others. This transition describes relationships with peers where an individual wants to be identified as being exactly like their peers, to a relationship that allows the individual to be more comfortable with themselves in relation to others (Belenky et al., 1986; Perry, 1970). Finally, the intrapersonal domain (Perry) or Voice (WWK) describes how an individual develops emotional maturity and forms and renews a sense of identity (Belenky et al., 1986; Boes et al., 2010; Perry, 1970).

Intrapersonal development often moves from a self that is defined by the external world to a sense of self that is internally defined. This work draws heavily on Eric Erikson (1968) who created a developmental map of identity development. These three domains can be used to guide the understanding of an individual’s development and will be a major means used in this study to illuminate possible developmental insights into the participants’ development as they describe their role as an RA, interaction with peers, and understanding of RP.

At the heart of growth across the positions in Perry’s scheme (1970) or the positions identified by Belenky et al. (1986) is the development of meaning making, which is inherently an epistemological function. There are two perspectives on this growth. The first, is that the domains of development are “equal partners” and tend to play equally important roles in development (Baxter Magolda, 2004; Kegan, 1998). Baxter Magolda describes the three domains as a strand of rope and that the three domains are woven together and it is only when you come close you can see the three strands (King, 2010). Otherwise, the three strands are working together to make the rope...
stronger. Others have suggested that development occurs less uniformly and that one of the domains may lead the way (King, 2010). For example, a student who is very interpersonally skilled may enter a new position with their interpersonal domain leading the way. In other words, more maturity in one domain of development may lead the way for the other domain. This scholarship focusing on the interplay of the three domains of development is informative to developmental studies and can help to illuminate an individual’s understanding of the world around them.

2.5.6. Authority

Authority is described as a construct which an individual draws upon to define self (Perry, 1970). In earlier stages of development this construct is external to oneself (e.g. dualism or Received Knowing). Individuals may experience strong influence from individuals in their world who are deemed to have authority such as faculty or parents (Belenky et al., 1986; Perry, 1970). In later developmental processes, an individual may really wrestle with where authority is located. Often this is after a critical incident where an individual may see two authorities disagree with one another (Perry, 1970). This may cause this individual to be challenged by the fact that there is more than one authority and truth exists within a context. The reaction to this challenge can appear to be anger and frustration toward authority (Belenky et al., 1986; Perry, 1970). In later stages of development, authority is a less salient construct. As an individual’s commitment to relativism grows and develops the individual is more comfortable with evaluating knowledge, authority, and assumptions (Belenky et al., 1986; Perry, 1970). This may result in the concept of authority going away as a means to evaluate knowledge and power.
2.5.7. Kohlberg’s moral development

Kohlberg developed a description of the cognitive structures that guide an individual’s moral development (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). This developmental progression is described by six sequenced stages. While the sequencing of the stages is fixed, Kohlberg’s theory did not posit that all people move through all six stages nor that all people move through all six stages at the same pace. Each stage of Kohlberg’s theory describes a different relationships between self and society’s rules and expectations (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977).

The following is a brief description of Kohlberg’s (1969) theory of moral development. The first level of three levels is pre-conventional and describes an individually focused cognitive structure. Often individuals in level one do not fully understand society’s rules. In stage one, (punishment-and-obedience orientation) and stage two (instrumental relativists orientation) individuals move from their actions being driven by avoiding punishment to action being driven by intentions that satisfies self and occasionally others.

In the second level, conventional, an individual has the perspective that recognizes rules and expectations of others, especially authorities. In stage three, interpersonal concordance, good behavior is driven by the intention of well meaning. And in stage four, “law and order” orientation, an individual is focused on fixed rules that are established by those in authority for the larger society.

In the third level, post-conventional, individuals separate themselves from the rules and expectations of others. In stage five, social contract orientation, actions are in concordance with the standards that have been established by society. In stage six,
universal ethical principle orientation, describes how actions are driven by a self-chosen ethical principles, which are developed through a consistent and logical processes that include the idea of universal good.

Kohlberg developed a semi-structured interview protocol which provides the structure for researchers to evaluate a participants moral development (Rest, Narvaez, Thoma, & Bebeau, 2000). This research has driven the development of the Defining Issues Test (DIT), which is meant to be a pencil and paper measure that allows one to approximate an individual’s moral development. The DIT expanded Kohlberg’s theory from a staged model with rigid steps and progression. The DIT is an instrument that measures more micro level changes expressed in a continuous scale. This validated tool can help researchers show movement in the development of individuals and is used as an alternative to Kohlberg’s semi-structured interview protocol (Kohlberg, 1969; Rest, 1975).

Kohlberg’s theory establishes a cognitive framework for moral judgment but this judgment does not always drive moral action (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). It was not his belief that this framework could be studied and applied to “get students to behave”. Instead, it is a theory that can inform understanding of the cognitive structures behind moral decision making (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). RAs are often put in a position to evaluate moral dilemmas in the residence halls when applying policy to student behavior or when making decision about the overall health and safety of a community. RAs are consistently put in a position to weigh their personal needs, others’ personal needs, and the community’s needs in order to take action. Kohlberg’s theory can be helpful in shining light on the cognitive structure that may guide a RAs decision and action.
2.5.8. Gilligan’s In a Different Voice

Gilligan (1982) enhanced our view of moral development by focusing on the voices of women. Through Gilligan’s teaching and research on identity and moral development she noted women had a distinctly different voice. Prior to Gilligan’s (1982) research, this different voice was characterized as an underdeveloped one. Gilligan’s 1982 book *In a Different Voice* was an important text that focused on the voices of women and puts women’s experiences in the foreground of a model of moral development. In this book, Gilligan draws from three different studies, which involved women from a wide variety of socio-economic statuses, educational attainments, races, and ethnicities. First, the college student study explored identity and moral development during college. In this study Gilligan followed 25 students throughout their college experience. In the second study, focused on women’s meaning making as they worked through conflict in a moral dilemma, Gilligan studied 29 women who were considering having an abortion during a first trimester of pregnancy (Gilligan, 1982). These participants were interviewed for a year following their choice. This study was significant because it asked the participants to reflect on a real moral dilemma in their life, not a hypothetical dilemma created by researchers (Gilligan, 1982). Both of these studies formed the groundwork of a the third study which was the *rights and responsibilities study* (Gilligan, 1982). This large-scale study involved 144 participants ranging in age from six to sixty. Half of the participants were women and the other half men. Participants were asked to respond to hypothetical moral dilemmas and Gilligan was able gather gain an in depth understanding of women’s identity formation and moral development from adolescence to adulthood (Gilligan, 1982).
Gilligan (1982) described an orientation to moral development that was based upon relationships or what Gilligan identified as a care orientation. This finding is in contrast with earlier forms of moral development which emphasized autonomy and a universal ethical principle or justice orientation (Kohlberg, 1969). Gilligan described three levels of moral development. The first was an orientation to individual survival. In the first level an individual is driven by their desires and may not be able to distinguish between necessity and desire (Gilligan, 1982). As an individual grows in their attachment to others this more selfish orientation grows into the second level in Gilligan’s (1982) model, goodness as self-sacrifice. In the second level, an individual is driven by this connection to others. So much so, that the drive for social acceptance may cause an individual to suspend their own judgment to achieve consensus. An individual transitions out of this stage as they gain the ability to introduce self-needs back into their moral judgments. In level three, the morality of non-violence, an individual is guided by a principle of care. Gilligan describes this orientation as, “the moral person is one who helps others; goodness is service, meeting one’s obligations and responsibilities to others, if possible, without sacrificing oneself” (Gilligan, 1977, p. 486). In the third level, an individual finds a way to reconciling the selfishness that drives level one and the responsibility to others that drives level two. This orientation toward care becomes self critical and the new understanding and balance of self and others results in a redefinition of morality (Gilligan, 1977, p. 511).

Gilligan’s work has enhanced the moral development literature by honoring an ethic of care, which was previously undervalued. Student affairs literature has emphasized the importance of training RAs about both the ethic of justice and ethic of
A student leader can enhance their role in a group by modeling the value for both an ethic of care and ethic of justice within a group dynamic. For example, in a residential community these two orientations may come up as a floor is engaged in a responsive circle discussing disruptive behavior within the community. An RA who is knowledgeable of the ethic of care and justice can model the acceptance of both perspectives as the community works through their understanding of the impact of the behavior.

2.6. Conceptual model for the research

The literature has informed the development of the conceptual model (figure 6) which provided a conceptual framework for this study.

Figure 6: The conceptual model for this study is set within the context of human development. This model depicts how the structure of the RA role may influence how an RA conceives of their role within the residential community.

When students enter college they are typically guided by Dualism or Received Knowing (Belenky et al., 1986; Perry, 1970). When in Dualism, problems and conflicts
are perceived as being black and white (wrong vs. right). Often you can observe first-year students expressing dualism through their opinion of courses, they are “great” or “terrible” with little room in between. Authority is something distant from oneself (held by faculty or other more legitimate source). One of the major developmental tasks in college is to understand what is authority and to develop critical thinking skills to understand and wrestle with multiple authorities with conflicting ideas and beliefs.

RA training can be situated in this developmental continuum of received knowing (Dualism) to Constructed Knowing or Commitment to Relativism. Students in Received Knowing (dualism) may perceive authority differently than students in Constructed Knowing. RP posits a means of holding authority with the community. Overlapping the developmental and RP theory has provided important developmental insights into the RAs implementation of RP. The RP framework provided a basis to address conflict (e.g. affective questions, circles). As a RA grows in their experiences they may find that their view and self-definition of authority and their ability to hold authority as a peer becomes challenged by their own experiences and exposure to other student leaders. RP may provide the structure for an RA to conceive of how to reconcile these two roles they hold within the residential community by challenging the RAs notion of what it means to have authority and encouraging RAs to be restorative leaders who hold authority with their peers rather than to or for their peers.

2.7. Research questions

This mixed methods study, set within a small public research institution, sought to understand RAs’ experiences with RP. Specifically, I explored ways that developmental theory can enhance how RAs enact RP.
Additional research questions are:

- In what ways can developmental theory illuminate how restorative practices are implemented on college campuses?
- How does RP intersect and effect how RAs manage their dual roles as an authority figure and peer in the residential community?

In this study, I engaged in the method of narrative inquiry by interviewing eleven RAs over one academic year. This method of data collection allowed me to solicit stories and reflections to better understand the meaning making of RAs who have been trained in restorative practices. I also use a developmental inventory to provide an additional perspective on participants’ development and narrative.

The interviews focused on participants’ experiences with RP and how the participants made meaning of their roles as RAs. This study explored the application of RP as a structure and RPs effect on the role of the RA in college residential communities. The results from this study can be used to inform the training and supervision of RAs and illuminate the potential of RP in college residential settings (see figure 6).
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This chapter will explore the epistemological lens that served as the foundation for this inquiry and closes with a discussion of narrative inquiry methodology, methods, and trustworthiness. The research questions for this study required an in depth understanding of RA’s experience with RP. In order to develop this understanding I engaged in the method of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Josselson, 2013) by interviewing eleven RAs three times over one academic year. This method of data collection allowed me to solicit stories and reflections to better understand the meaning making of RAs who have been trained in restorative practices and also capture changes in these reflections across one academic year. The interviews focused on participants’ experiences with RP and how they are making meaning of their roles as RAs. In addition, the participants took a moral development inventory to provide an additional perspective on the participants’ development. This mixing of qualitative interviews and a quantitative development inventory creates a parallel convergent design (Creswell & Clark, 2010). The qualitative and quantitative data were gathered at the same time and combined during data analysis. This study explored the application of RP as a structure and its effect on the role of the RA in college residential communities. The results from this study can be used to inform the training and supervision of RAs and illuminate the potential of RP in college residential settings (see figure 1.1).

3.1. Epistemology

I used narrative inquiry nested in the constructivist paradigm to explore the research questions. The constructivist paradigm reflects the ontological belief that multiple realities are constructed through individuals’ lived experience and
sense making (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). The perceptions and “truth” in this study are mutually constructed between participants and myself as the researcher (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2013; Josselson, 2013; Patton, 2002). These transactions were subjective, and were mediated by my own prior knowledge and experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). In addition, any experiences shared throughout this interview process were snapshots of the participants meaning making at a particular time in a particular context.

Learning and development occurs when individuals connect new ideas to existing understanding and the constructivist lens provides insights to the meaning making of an individual (Boes et al., 2010). These experiences are expressed within the context of the participants’ social realities (e.g. race, class, sexual orientation, cultural values). These social realities mediate the RA’s experience with their peers and implementing RP. In this study, I focused on RAs’ perceptions and experiences with RP. Specifically, I was interested in furthering my understanding of how the RAs make meaning of RP and RAs description of their use of RP within their residential community. The experiences were shared with me across three distinct time periods, which allowed me to compare realities (both the participants’ and mine) across one academic year. The time periods were selected purposefully and guided by the academic calendar. The interviews occurred at the start of the academic year, after one semester, and at the end of the academic year. In addition to providing insights to an individual participants’ growth across three points in time (October, January, and April), the interview data also provided a snapshot of all participants at three different times of the
academic year allowing for cross case comparisons (Josselson, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 2013). These realities are regarded as a snapshot of the participants’ meaning making, not as the single truth of the participants’ experiences with restorative practices.

3.2. Methods

3.2.1. Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry methodology comes from the field of psychology and allows the researcher to focus on individuals’ stories or narratives, identities, and meaning making (Creswell, 2013; Jones et al., 2013; Josselson, 2013). This tradition of research relies on what Dewey described as the human capacity to reconstruct experience and make meaning out of it (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012). Dewey described the inquiry into experiences as both social and personal. Participants’ experiences cannot be disentangled from the social context in which they lived this experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Thus, the underlying assumption of narrative inquiry is that as the participants remember and convey their experiences, they are making meaning through the telling and these stories and experiences are often co-constructed between researcher and participant (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012). Narrative research asks the participant to recount events with the researcher, which creates a narrative truth about a lived experience (Josselson, 2013).

Narrative inquiry is a method that allows for understanding a participant’s experiences but also informs methods for writing about these experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I focused on participants’ narrative truth in order to understand participants’ perception of RA training and their experiences as an
RA for one academic year. Thus, the RAs’ perception of their relationships with
their residents and conceptions of RP are at the foreground of this study, rather
than the “how” and “what” of the skills development during RA training. This
focus on the participant’s personal views, social views, and values positions the
participant as the ‘sense maker’ in the relation to their story (Josselson, 2013).

3.2.2. Defining issues test

The Defining Issues Test (DIT) was developed in 1979 based upon Kohlberg’s
semi-structured interviews to measure moral development (Kohlberg, 1969). Rest (1975)
developed the DIT to approximate the participants’ moral development. Rest tested and
validated the DIT by administering the instrument and verifying the findings by using
Kohlberg’s semi-structured interview protocol. The DIT results change Kohlberg’s
(1969) theory from a staged model (categorical data) to two continuous variables (P score
and N2 score) which results in moral development continuum rather than the stages as a
step process.

The assumption that a quantitative instrument can provide insights about a
participant’s development is a challenge to the constructivist epistemological lens that has
guided this study. At the core of the constructivist paradigm is the commitment to
valuing multiple perspectives to move knowledge toward a deeper understanding of a
construct (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). The DIT-2 involves a reductionist approach to
estimating an individual’s development. The DIT-2 is an instrument that has been
validated to approximate an individual’s development through a quantitative assessment
(Rest, Narvaez, Thoma, & Bebeau, 1999). The testing of this instrument resulted in a
Cronbach’s alpha in the upper 0.70/low 0.80 (Rest et al., 2000). This measure of
reliability is adequate. This carries with it a more positivist world-view, which reflects a reductionist approach to development and places an emphasis on empirical observation. This two seemingly conflicting world views are common in mixed methods research and are embraced under a pragmatic world-view (Creswell & Clark, 2010; Greene & Caracelli, 1997). The emphasis in the pragmatic worldview is to let the research question drive the philosophical world-view and to not embrace a forced choice dichotomy between positivism and constructivism. This pragmatic paradigm allowed me to fully incorporate the qualitative and quantitative insights that my data provided into my findings. I will be explicit about the choices that were made in the study and how the results will be used. Next, I will describe how I mixed the qualitative data and quantitative data in this mixed-methods study.

To understand the participants’ developmental changes throughout the academic year, the participants took the defining issues test (DIT-2) before the first interview (October) and after the last interview (April). This parallel convergent design was used to enhance the findings (Creswell & Clark, 2010). The term parallel describes how the quantitative and qualitative data was collected at the same time. The convergence of the data occurred during the data analysis.

The DIT-2 was mailed to and scored by the University of Alabama’s Center for the Study of Ethical Development. A summary of the DIT-2 results for the participants were returned to me through mail. The DIT-2 produced two continuous variables (P Score and N2 Score) that approximate development. First, the P Score describes the degree to which the participant uses higher order moral reasoning (Center of Inquiry, 2015; Thoma & Dong, 2014). Particularly, this score assessed the level of importance the
participant associates with principled moral considerations (Kohlberg’s stage 5 and 6) (Rest, Thoma, Narvaez, & Bebeau, 1997). For undergraduate students the mean P score is 35.09 and a standard deviation of 15.21 (n=32,989) (Dong, 2009). In the second version of the DIT, the DIT-2, the N2 score was developed. The N2 score similarly describes the degree to which the participant uses higher order moral reasoning and was developed after the P Score to capture the extent to which the participant does not accept ideas that are simplistic or biased (Center of Inquiry, 2015; Thoma & Dong, 2014). The mean N2 score for undergraduate students is 34.76 and has a 15.45 standard deviation (n=32,974) (Dong, 2009).

This mixed methods perspective was intended to add an additional layer of triangulation to my analysis (Greene & Caracelli, 1997; Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). The results were intended to provide me a secondary source of information about the participants’ developmental growth. During analysis I gave the qualitative data priority and found that DIT-2 did not provide sufficient information to inform the findings of the study. One limitation, within the context of my study, was participant engagement with the survey. The DIT-2 scoring process includes protections for “test motivation” which may mean a participant is not fully engaged in the test (Rest et al., 1997). Unfortunately, two participants’ could not be scored because the pattern of their responses suggested some problems with test motivation and thus may not accurately reflect their moral reasoning.

Table 2 describes the participants’ pre and posttest scores as measured by the P Score and N2. First, I removed the two participants (Findley and Quinn) who did not have a posttest score available. This left me with only 9 participants who had two scores
(pre and post) for P Score and N2 that could be used to estimate the developmental growth of the participants. Of these, only 3 participants (Bridget, Emerson, and Riley) had a move greater than one standard deviation in the P Score, the rest were relatively small shifts in their P Score. The N2 measured only two participants (Riley and River) with a change greater than one standard deviation. Julia’s scores were slightly below the mean P Score for undergraduate students but her N2 score was higher than the mean. All other participants’ P Score and N2 score were higher than the national mean for Undergraduate students.

Table 2: Defining Issues Test results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>P Score (Pre)</th>
<th>P Score (Post)</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th># of SD</th>
<th>N2 Score (Pre)</th>
<th>N2 Score (Post)</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th># of SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexis</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-12</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>46.63</td>
<td>39.43</td>
<td>-7.2</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridget</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>-16</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>62.28</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>-9.88</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerson</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>40.28</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>10.12</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findley</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>No Score</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>50.26</td>
<td>No Score</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>52.67</td>
<td>50.13</td>
<td>-2.54</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>37.15</td>
<td>36.97</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeline</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>37.49</td>
<td>38.74</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marley</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>53.44</td>
<td>53.18</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quinn</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>No Score</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>56.33</td>
<td>No Score</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riley</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>23.24</td>
<td>42.51</td>
<td>19.27</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>12.94</td>
<td>37.74</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The incorporation of the DIT-2 scores with the study will be discussed later in the analysis section of this paper.

3.2.3. Document collection

In order to gather additional context for the RA position, I gathered key documents from MU and the department of Residential Life. I gathered the RA job
descriptions, Residential Life promotional material, and I reviewed the departmental website, and recruitment blog. These points of data should be able to provide insights into how the organization of Residential Life communicates regarding the RA role and the image the organization tries to convey to the campus community. These documents were used to further understand the participants and the research context (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012).

3.2.4. Observation

To better understand how RP was being presented to the participants of this study I was able to observe the training-of-trainers for Resident Directors and other residential life leadership who would be training small groups of RAs on RP. During this training I kept field notes and training materials that were provided.

3.3. Site selection and sampling

The site for this research is a small public research university (Mountain University). The University houses more than 5,000 undergraduate students on campus. At MU RAs undergo a two-week training prior to incoming and returning students moving on campus each fall. Two days of this training are focused on RP. RP is the largest single topic addressed in the training. This allocation of time reflects how RP is a major emphasis in the policies and practices of MU’s residential life program.

I engaged in purposeful sampling to achieve maximum variation across key characteristics to select participants (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). I worked with the leadership of the Department of Residential Life to recruit RAs who were interested and available to participate in this study. An email invitation was sent to all active RAs (130 people) and twenty-two interested RAs completed a short survey that asked about their
race, ethnicity, gender, major, involvement within Residential Life, and comfort level with applying restorative practices (see appendix B). Even with the small numbers, I attempted to create a sample that not only reflects the three types of floors that make up most residential halls (all first years, all sophomores, a mix of both), but also attempted to achieve diversity among the participants in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, years of RA experience, and self disclosed comfort level with RP.

3.3.1. Participants

Eleven participants were selected through this sampling technique, which resulted in information-rich cases that provide diverse perspectives on and meaning making about the application of RP and the role of the RA. Appendix C contains a description of my participant interest form and information available to me as I selected the participants for this study. Table 3 provides a brief demographic introduction to the sample. Names are pseudonyms chosen by the participant.

**Table 3: Description of the participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexis</td>
<td>Senior; female identified; Latina; Environmental Studies major; who has been an RA for 2.5 years; has a floor of a mixture of first and second year students; and indicated that she is very comfortable with RP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridget</td>
<td>Junior; female identified, White; Biochemistry major; who has been an RA for 2 years; has a floor of a mixture of first and second year students; and indicated that she is very uncomfortable with RP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerson</td>
<td>Sophomore; male identified; White; Business Administration major; a first-year RA; has a floor of primarily first-year students; and indicated that he is very comfortable with RP.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findley  Junior; female identified, White; Environmental Studies major; a first-year RA; has a floor of a mixture of first and second year students; and indicated that she is very uncomfortable with RP.

James   Senior; male identified; White; Psychology major; has been an RA for 1.5 years; has a floor of primarily first-year students; and indicated that he is comfortable with RP.

Julia   Sophomore; female identified; Caucasian/Hispanic; Animal Sciences major; a first-year RA; has a floor of primarily first-year students; and indicated she is comfortable with RP.

Madeline  Junior; female identified; White; Sociology major; second-year RA; has a floor of primarily first-year students; and indicated that she is very uncomfortable with RP.

Marley   Sophomore; female identified; Asian American and Chinese; Elementary Education major; a first-year RA; has a floor of primarily sophomores, juniors, and seniors; and indicated she is comfortable with RP.

Quinn   Sophomore; gender “TBD”; White; Parks, Recreation, and Tourism major; first-year RA; has a floor of primarily first-year students; and indicated that they are very comfortable with RP.

Riley   Sophomore; female identified; White; Animal Sciences major; first-year RA; has a floor of primarily first-year students; and indicated that she is comfortable with RP.

River   Sophomore; female identified; Japanese; Music education major; first-year RA; has a floor of a mixture of first and second year students; and indicated that she is uncomfortable with RP.

This demographic description of all of the participants is taken from the participants’ interest survey and was used to select participants based upon maximum variation.

### 3.4. Data collection and analysis

Following the constructivist tradition, I focused on observations and document collection to understand the RA’s perceptions and meaning making. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed me to prepare some open-ended questions in advance of the
interviews but I remained open to changing and revising questions during the interview (Glesne, 2011; Josselson, 2013) (see appendix A). The semi-structured interview questions were informed by the interview protocol of WWK (Belenky et al., 1986) and Gilligan (1977). During the first and last interview with the participants, they took the DIT-2, which required an extra 20 to 30 minutes beyond the hour or so interviews. These results were intended to be used as a pre and post test to aid in highlighting developmental changes that occurred during the academic year.

Writing memos to myself at the end of each interview allowed me to capture my initial thoughts, observations, questions, and points of interest that emerged during the interview (Creswell, 2013; Glesne, 2011). I obtained training documents, job descriptions, and reviewed the departmental website and blog from the Department of Residential Life to provide context and additional data for this study. The documents provide a way to triangulate or give context for the interview data and were coded and analyzed along with the interview transcripts. I also observed the training-of-trainers for Resident Directors who are responsible for training RAs on RP and provide day-to-day supervision of RAs.

Preliminary steps for data analysis included organizing interview transcripts, survey data, reflective memos, RA job description, RA training outlines, presentation slides used during training, and my observation notes taken during the RP training-of-trainers. I coded each set of interviews several times. Figure 7 describes an overview of my approach to coding the qualitative data in this study.
Step 1 - Coding each set of interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODING ROUND</th>
<th>TYPE OF CODING</th>
<th>FOCUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Round 1</td>
<td>Structural coding</td>
<td>Interview questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round 2</td>
<td>A Priori coding</td>
<td>Codes from the literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round 3</td>
<td>In Vivo coding</td>
<td>Codes that emerge from the data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 2 - Coding through each participants’ interviews

Step 3 - Pattern Coding

Figure 7: Summary of the coding process for the qualitative data.

The first round coding included structured coding to identify the different sections (generally, pre-determined questions) of the semi-structured interview (Saldaña, 2013). Through a review of the literature, I developed a-priori codes to help guide my research analysis, such as developmental codes (cognitive, intrapersonal, interpersonal) and application codes (RP strengths, RP challenges). All coding focused on capturing the
exact words of participants or key words in the data (Creswell, 2013; Saldaña, 2013). Coding emerged and evolved throughout the research project as I read and reread the data. I coded the data in stages first, the first-round of interviews as group, then the second round, and finally the third round using the same coding strategy.

In addition to this staged analysis I also read through and coded each participant in each interview round (see figure 7). For example, I read round one, two, and three as group units then reread each participant’s three transcripts to follow and illuminate the RA’s development over one-year. Finally, I used pattern coding to organize the individual codes into the larger themes (Saldaña, 2013). Pattern coding involves looking for links and groups of codes that display a pattern such as being similar, different, sequenced, or corresponding. This method of coding helped to pull smaller sets of codes into larger themes or categories based upon patterns (Saldaña, 2013). Because of the large amount of data that were collected (33 interviews, 33 memos, and documents), I used the NVivo software, which provides a systematic way to code data and develop themes and observations.

I did not look at the DIT-2 results until after I had collected all of the data with participants and conducted an initial round of coding for all three rounds of data collection. I made this decision because I did not want the developmental insights provided in the DIT-2 results to drive my data collection or interpretation of the qualitative data. I had made the intentional decision to emphasize the narrative truth provided by the participants and planned to use the DIT-2 to provide insights and another viewpoint of the participants’ development. After reviewing the DIT-2 results I reviewed each participant transcript across the three interviews and noted the developmental
changes I observed for the participant. This description was compared to the DIT-2 results to further enhance or challenge my understanding of the participants’ developmental changes across the academic year. As previously discussed there were limited number of participants who had significant changes in their development as measured by the DIT-2. As a result the DIT-2 provided limited insights into the analysis of the data and was not a rich source of data. The convergent design with identical samples is notated in figure 8.

![Diagram](chart.png)

*Figure 8: Depicts the parallel convergent design of this study.*

The DIT-2 results were not a strong source of data and the results were not included in the findings portion of this paper.

### 3.5. Trustworthiness and subjectivity

The researcher in a qualitative research project is the instrument for data collection and interpretation (Creswell, 2013; Hesse-Biber, 2013). For this reason, it is important to identify myself within the study and describe the social lens through which I make observations and relate to participants. I am a white, middle-class, educated, woman who has worked in higher education for over ten years. As an undergraduate student, I held the position of RA but resigned within the first semester to focus on my academics after a family emergency required me to miss several weeks of school. My
perspective on the RA’s role primarily comes from my role as a student affairs administrator outside of the department of residential life. I have great respect for the role RAs play in higher education and how hard an RA is expected to work. I am a full-time administrator at MU where data were collected, and participants were aware of my role in the Division of Student Affairs. This identity may have shaped what the participants shared with me and how I interpreted their narrative. I was explicit about the confidentiality process for this study in my study information sheet (see Appendix D) and revisited confidentiality in each subsequent meeting with participants. In spite of this identity, my experience with the participants suggested that they did not guard their words as a result of my role.

In order to help ensure trustworthiness within this study, I attempted to map the interpretive process and use this map to reflect on the social context of the research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Josselson, 2013). When summarizing the findings, I used “thick descriptions” of the findings in order to foreground participants’ voices (Ryle, 2009). Gilbert Ryle (2009) used the metaphor of a sandwich to described what it means to use thick descriptions. A thin description would be to only describe the bottom layer of the sandwich. Where a thick description will cover all of the many layers of the sandwich in a way that the reader can understand the sandwich construction (Ryle, 2009).

In addition, I utilized member checking, inter-rater reliability, and external content review of findings, each of which are described below.

I conducted member checks during the second and third interview with the participants. The member checks focus on giving voice to the participants by hearing them reflect on the major themes found during the first round of interviews (Josselson,
I provided a description of the themes to the participant in the interview protocol and asked the participant to provide their insights to confirm or challenge the themes generated after the first interview and second interviews. For example, after the first interview I observed that the participants were challenged to hold authority in the community and be a peer in the community. During the second interview I asked the participants if this was a challenge for them and if so, to please describe their thinking about this challenge.

To enhance the consistency and accuracy of my coding I followed the process for reaching inter-coder reliability and inter-coder agreement established by Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, and Pedersen (2013). I selected a colleague who is well versed in higher education and student affairs developmental literature. This colleague read approximately 10 percent of my total transcripts (4 transcripts) selected at random and coded them based upon my codes and code descriptions (Campbell et al., 2013). I reviewed the transcripts with the colleague and came to full agreement with her on our codes (Campbell et al., 2013). After this exercise, new insights into the coding process were applied to all of the transcripts to try to enhance the stability and accuracy of the coding process (Campbell et al., 2013). One limitation of this approach is that this person did not have the same grounding in the literature or my study context to code in the same way I would (Kurasaki, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1994). As a result my coding was far more intensive. However, the act of having a colleague review the transcripts did provide new insights into the data, which enhanced the overall trustworthiness of my interpretation of the data.
In order to further enhance the trustworthiness of my interpretations I selected two peer debriefers who are experts in the fields of residential life and restorative practices. The Director of Residential Life and Associate Director of Residential Life served as experts in the field of restorative practices and the field of residential life. Each reviewed my emerging themes to provide challenges and additional context for these themes. These experts reviewed drafts of my findings and offered feedback from their viewpoint. Feedback from participants, the inter-coder agreement process, and peer debriefers is incorporated in the findings of this study.

3.6. Summary

This mixed method study relied on the constructivist epistemology to inform the narrative inquiry approach to understanding RA’s experiences with restorative practices over the course of one academic year. The DIT-2 was intended to provide information to further triangulate the findings that came out of the qualitative analysis of the semi-structure interviews. However, the DIT-2 did not provide sufficient information to be incorporated into the findings. The interviews, DIT-2, observations, and document analysis were to be analyzed together to attempt to provide insights into how developmental theory can inform the implementation of restorative practices in college residential settings.
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

The findings of this dissertation study will be divided into three papers that will be submitted for publication. The papers will focus on the implementation of RP, the impact of RP on the conception of the RA role, and finally, how RP has influenced the participants’ view of authority and leadership.

4.1. Restorative residence halls: Implementing restorative practices as a community development model

This paper is intended to be a broad view of the implementation of restorative practices as a community development model for residential life. Dr. Stacey Miller, the former Director of Residential Life at MU, authored the introduction of this paper. The introduction provides some context for why RP was selected as the community development model. The findings will describe how restorative communities are formed, RAs’ evolving comfort level and views on RP, and finally the transformational potential of RP will be discussed.
Restorative residence halls: Implementing restorative practices as a community development model

Patience E. Whitworth
University of Vermont

Stacey A. Miller
Valparaiso University
4.1.1. Abstract

This article explores the implementation of Restorative Practices (RP) as a community development model within residential life. This narrative inquiry study illuminates the experiences of eleven RAs who were interviewed three times over the course of one academic year. The findings will discuss how the RAs made meaning of RP and describe the impact of RP on building restorative communities within the residence halls. The findings will posit that RP is an innovative approach to teaching life long relational and leadership skills to not only RAs but the residents living within the community. The introduction of this paper was written by Dr. Stacey A. Miller who provides institutional context for why RP was selected as the community development model for the department of residential life. The findings will focus on implications for practice for student affairs practitioners as well as further research potential for student affairs scholars.

Keywords: Residential Life, Restorative Practices, Student Development, Community Development
4.1.2. The context for restorative practices at Mountain University - An introduction by Dr. Stacey Miller

In the academic year of 2008 – 2009, after having worked in residential life and housing programs for over 15-years, I had come to a professional crossroads. While I had made what I considered significant progress toward the creation of better systematic policies and practices related to housing management, procedures and protocols for crisis and critical incident intervention, and developed professional staff training programs crucial for the effective supervision of resident advisors (RAs); community development - the ability to consistently build healthy residential communities with students continued to elude me as a leader.

Several years earlier, through the adoption of Terry Piper’s (1996) *Community Standards* philosophy of *dialogue, interaction and perspective-taking* (DIP), my department begun to find a sense of direction in how it engaged students in the creation of positive communities. But what *Community Standards* provided as a philosophical support structure, it lacked as an operational framework, as it did not provide a real model for the implementation of DIP.

While Piper (1996) was correct in his use of Astin’s (1997) theory of peer-to-peer context, as one of the most impactful ways of encouraging students to change their behavior; and that dialogue, interaction, and perspective-taking were an essential part of that process, Piper left no road map for how this could be operationalized by residential life staff. As a result, residential life professional staff and student staff were left to figure
out how best to bring DIP to life. A daunting task for the most seasoned and experienced professional, much less a novice resident advisor. As a result the inconsistent application of this philosophical framework made community development a “hit or miss” prospect.

Resigned to this fate, I continued to believe and assume that positive residential communities were only based on luck, exceptional staffing, and/or good students; but later that year I would be introduced to a new framework that would not only change the way I saw residential life and housing, but the way I work, lead, and live. This framework is known as Restorative Practices (RP). RP takes some of the best research related to education, counseling, criminal justice, social work and organizational management and tightly anchors it within the constructs of tangible skill based application – when, done well, it has the ability to transform individuals and their relationships to others within their greater community.

However the buy-in, implementation, and application of RP is no easy task, as it requires three critical elements: trust, strong leadership, and patience. Since the successful implementation of RP at Mountain University (MU) (pseudonym), many of my residential life and housing colleagues have reached out to me to learn more about the transformation that has occurred on the MU campus. Their questions are often based in excitement, skepticism, research related proof, or quick implementation; unfortunately RP cannot always be quantified in such simple terms.

Belief in this framework is essential for its application, but is often met with disbelief and cynicism. How could something that in many ways is so simple, really work? We have been socialized to believe that the punitive approach and punishment-
Driven models are the only ways to get people/students to change their behavior, even though we have overwhelming evidence that these systems alone do not work.

In the case of residential life, when incidents happen on a floor or hall, its members—the students, as well as external voices, i.e. parents and community members—often cry out for justice! The assumption being that this can only be achieved through harsh sanctions, restitution, suspensions and/or expulsions. But the outcome of this kind of “justice” often leaves both “victim” and perpetrator empty. While a victim may feel some sense of satisfaction with a punishment, they often never get an opportunity to share how they have been impacted by the incident and receive real atonement from the perpetrator, needs that are critical for healing. In the converse the perpetrator is often left regressing into a shame spiral, often leading them to attack others, avoiding what they have done, withdraw from community or society, or attack self through self-harm or masochism. Solely being punished never allows them to hear how they have impacted others so that they can move beyond their shame into taking real responsibility for their behavior. Punitive measures do provide some sense of justice for the victim and other impacted community members, RP also allows for the potential restitution of relationship(s). Trust and belief in RP as another, alternative, and/or complementary way to address harm and wrongdoing are critical to its success.

Implementation of RP also requires strong leadership. Drawing directly from RP theory, leadership must exercise their authority “with” the members of their organization. Working with staff to provide high expectations for the implementation of this framework, but also providing high levels of support is essential. This includes helping
staff understand how RP will not only impact them professionally, but personally; and owning the change as their organization’s long-term project.

This leads to the last critical component of RPs implementation, patience. RP is not instant. It requires buy-in, understanding, and consistency in use to develop comfort in everyday application; and while an organization can see changes and results in a fairly short period, the process of truly becoming a restorative organization and building restorative communities, will take years before it is fully realized (Miller, DePaul, & Rodriguez, 2015). In essence, becoming restorative is not for the faint of heart.

There is no doubt in my mind that organizations that venture down the path to building community through a restorative practices framework will be able to transform their organization and residential communities in a positive ways, but it requires strong leadership that is committed and willing to engage in the innovative and difficult work of real change management. Only then, will that organization be able to realize the full power and impact of RP.

4.1.3. A study of restorative practices at Mountain University – An introduction to the study

Higher Education works with students both inside and outside of the classroom to educate students to be more engaged citizens in our society (Weis, Nozaki, Granfield, & Olsen, 2007). Skills for complex thinking, relationship skills, and commitment to cultural awareness has been shown to increase during college (H. S. Astin & Antonio, 2004). MU has responded to this goal by using Restorative Practices (RP) as the community development model in the residence halls. As Dr. Miller stated, RP draws upon research and practice from education, counseling, criminal justice, social work and organizational
management (Wachtel et al., 2012). This paper describes the use of RP as a community development model at a small public research institution in the north east (MU). RP was selected as the community development model for Mountain University in 2009. This study was conducted five years after implementation. This one-year study followed 11 RAs through one year of using RP and describes their perspective on RP. RPs strengths and weaknesses are also discussed.

4.1.4. Relevant Literature

RP values taking a proactive approach to building community through participatory learning and decision making (Wachtel et al., 2012). RP has its roots in restorative justice; however, the key distinctions between restorative justice and RP is RP’s emphasis on community building and applying the restorative paradigm outside of the criminal justice system (Wachtel et al., 2012). This intentional method of community building is believed to improve individuals’ commitment to a community while also providing a basis to address harm within the community when it occurs.

Used in the residential life context, RP describes a restorative continuum (see figure 9). The continuum describes a range of practices, processes, and methods for creating and building community, resolving conflict, and addressing harm, which become ways for RAs to interact and build community with the residents in their halls and dormitories.
INFORMAL  FORMAL

AFFECTIVE STATEMENT  AFFECTIVE QUESTIONS  SMALL IMPORTMTU CIRCLE  GROUP OR CIRCLE  FORMAL CONFERENCE

Figure 1: Restorative practices continuum depicts a range of practices within the restorative practices framework that are used to build and restore relationships and community (Costello et al., 2009, p. 12; Wachtel et al., 2012, p. 19)

This RP continuum frames a series of responses and potential dialogue within a community beginning with using affective statements, typically “I statements,” that focus on an individuals’ feeling regarding a certain behavior (Wachtel et al., 2012). For example, “I feel happy to see how clean the common room is today” or “I felt sad when I heard you got sick in the bathroom last night.” Next on the continuum, affective questions encourage people to reflect on their behavior beyond just asking “why” (Wachtel et al., 2012). Avoiding the “why” question is an important concept within RP theory. Why presumes that the individual being asked knows why they took an action and may solicit a defensive reaction (Wachtel et al., 2012). Often those who cause harm in a community do not have a reasonable explanation for why they behaved in a harmful way. RP moves a community beyond “why” and uses restorative questions to focus on impact of the decision or action, which can help all community members to understand the situation in a more constructive way (Costello et al., 2009; Wachtel et al., 2012). A key component of a restorative interaction is the end goal; the intention behind the restorative questions is to restore the relationships within the community rather than finding a satisfactory explanation for a behavior and resolution. An example of affective questions is, “what impact has this incident had on you and others?” At the other end of
the continuum, more formal small and large group settings are used to respond to harm in a community (usually referred to as a “circle”) in which participants are able to make affective statements and answer affective questions in a formal and facilitated setting (Wachtel et al., 2012). This intentional focus on making and restoring relationships in the residence hall reflects an emphasis on students’ connection to peers and the institution through their residential experiences.

RP provides a framework for restorative leadership that emphasizes leading with people rather than the narrowly defined powerful leader who leads passive followers. The latter is a perspective on leadership that dominates the discourse of our society (Collinson, 2005). The social discipline window describes a leadership style which provides a community high levels of structure and expectations and emphasizes full participation and full support of the community in decision making (Costello et al., 2009; Wachtel et al., 2012). Based in the RP theory, RAs are trained to stretch their leadership skills to provide high levels of support in their community (e.g. community building, visible presence) and high levels of expectations in their community (e.g. explicit community standards.

4.1.5. Methods

Seeking to understand how RP was affecting RA’s work and effectiveness, I used narrative inquiry to focus on the RAs perspectives on the use of RP as a community development model and to illuminate the strengths of the model, to examine the personal impacts of using RP and weaknesses of using RP. A constructivist lens was used for this research, which reflects the ontological belief of multiple perspectives. Any experiences shared throughout this interview process will be snapshots of the participants’ meaning.
making at a particular time in a particular context. The representation of these findings will be mutually constructed with the participants and researchers. Eleven RAs were interviewed at three points across one academic year. A constructivist approach allowed the research to rely on what Dewey described as the human capacity to reconstruct experience and make meaning out of it (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012). Dewey described the inquiry into experiences as both social and personal. The questions posed to the participants were focused on their understanding of the RA position and the experiences with applying RP within the context of the RA position. In addition to the interviews additional data was collected through Mountain University’s training documents, RA reference materials, and the departmental website.

4.1.6. Findings

**Restorative communities.** In their own words, the RA participants often described RP as a proactive means to build community, emphasizing that they frequently used the more positive or proactive end of restorative practices in their work, rather than the reactive, harm-addressing skills that were also addressed during the training. Bridget (all participant names are pseudonyms) describes her perspective on RP: “I use restorative practices mostly as a preemptive measure. Reaching out to my residents and really trying to build a rapport with them so that if they have questions they can come to me” (Bridget, Interview 1). James described using RP as a means to improve his relationships with residents; “restorative practices … [are] useful for establishing a connection with residents by being as authentic as you can be when you first start talking to your residents” (James, Interview 1). Participants in the study used RP methods to build relationships with residents and among residents.
For the first few interactions with the residents, the Residence Life department provided RAs with scripts and prompts for their first community circles, which ensured there was a consistent means to discuss the community values of the department in residence halls across the campus. Three questions were asked of each resident during a circle on their first night on campus: “what are you hoping for in your first year here? What are your concerns? What are some of your long-term hopes and dreams?” (Residential Life, 2014a). Documents reviewed reveal that Residential Life provided a highly scripted start to the academic year and then provided less structure as the year went on and the RAs confidence and skills with RP developed.

**Imperfectly restorative.** The RA participants initially described RP as a mechanical approach to expressing emotion. Bridget, Emerson, Marley, Quinn, Riley, and River all describe that when they started to used RP, they relied heavily on the structure of affective statements and questions that they were provided during training. As River describes in our first interview, “having a formula… made me feel comfortable… just having that formula [for] people who function like me. I think its nice to have that and know that [RP] exists and it does work” (River, Interview 1). Throughout the school year the participants started to have increased comfort with RP as they had success within their community. For example, Emerson progressed in his comfort with RP in our first interview he described,

I’m much more inclined to say… ‘I feel upset. I feel hurt.’ Rather than saying ‘You messed up’ or ‘You did all that’ [I] continue to practice [RP] in my everyday life and even outside of that RA position with friends, with family, practicing ‘I feel. I feel. I feel.’ Over and over and over again (Emerson, Interview 1).
After a critical incident on his floor Emerson started to have success with addressing the incident through RP. Half way through the year, Emerson exhibited more comfort with RP and has learned through making mistakes,

For me the perfect restorative practice is being imperfect at it. I think there are so many different ways to go with it that if you try to be perfect at it, it’s not gonna work… if you have the script laid out and you follow it to a T, it’s not gonna work every time. You just have to adjust to it and be OK to make those mistakes, even though I was hesitant to do so, it paid off in the long run (Emerson, Interview 2).

Ultimately Emerson realized the power of being proactive in building community through using restorative practices. After a community circle following the serious alcohol incident in the fall semester he reflected; “[the circle] changed my view of how to use RP outside of a serious event. How do I use it in my daily life so I don’t have to use it in that kind of event?” (Emerson, Interview 2). What we see happening for Emerson is that he started to be less focused on a script for reactive circles and more focused on the community building as a foundation for the successful implementation of restorative practices.

Preparing the residents to share their opinions and experiences during a circle was not something Emerson felt they would do without intentional relationship building. He reflected on the community growth from their first circle saying that initially the residents were not comfortable sharing in the circle for fear of being shamed by the community. When exit signs were being destroyed in the community, Emerson informed his floor during a floor meeting that they would be charged for the cost of replacing the signs. When residents came to complain about that decision, he encouraged them to bring up their concerns during a floor circle. In Emerson’s words, “it will carry more weight because [hearing] it from another member of the community versus me means more”
(Emerson, Interview 3). After a successful circle where the residents shared the impact of being charged for the signs and their frustrations with the damage to the community, there was far less vandalism on his floor. In the end, he counted this as a success for himself and the residents who learned to be more “direct” in sharing their experiences.

Emerson’s story about growing comfort with RP was not unique. Emerson, and other participants who shared similar stories of addressing vandalism, reflected that it was not policies or fees that changed students’ behavior. Rather, the RA learns how to help the residents talk about (affective statements) and share the impact of these actions with the community, rather than the RA “solving” the problem for the community on their own or expressing the impact in terms of a new policy. Instead, it was the acknowledgement of the impact their behaviors had on others that really lead to the behavior change of less vandalism.

**Transformational power of RP.** As another result of using RP, every RA interviewed described an increased comfort with expressing themselves directly in both proactive and reactive ways. Alexis, who has spent two and a half years as an RA by the end of the year, was particularly reflective of how RP has influenced her leadership skills:

"when I started job searching I would automatically put leader, and when they... would ask [about that]... the first thing I would talk about is restorative practices [and] how it helped me grow by... challenging myself to speak up and speaking from how I feel and actually addressing issues instead of just leaving them there" (Alexis, Interview 2).

A few of the woman-identified participants talked about the ability to incorporate their emotions into their leadership. Prior to their training with RP, they mentioned feeling like showing their emotions made them feel “weak” as leaders. Alexis, Julia, and Quinn were especially attuned to the fact that they experienced empowerment through practicing RP.
“What makes it like really useful is the fact that you’re expressing how you feel and even though that sounds like something that should always be done, it’s not. Because I know that before I heard of restorative practices, when I first learned it I was like ‘I can’t do that. That’s gonna make me be perceived as weak’ and that ‘…being a woman of color, that’s gonna bring me down.’ So I can’t express how I feel to others. I just have to hold my ground and tell them no. Just be blunt but without expressing how it affected me.’ And then after RA [training], you really get to see that by expressing yourself that actually means – you’re being strong. You’re actually finding what’s affecting you and being open and honest about it and seeing how the other people on the other side are receiving that, and then they’re realizing like ‘Oh crap. I actually just hurt her. She’s human too.’ …I think by being that open and honest and straightforward is really what makes restorative practices strong” (Alexis, Interview 1).

Julia also described how RP has changed her view on what it means to display and express emotions, which Julia referred to as being vulnerable in front of others:

“[RP has] helped me put myself out there a little more and helped me be more comfortable putting my feelings out there without feeling that anyone could take advantage of me feeling vulnerable. I have some sort of control over it and some sort of power with it, instead of most people will attach vulnerability to weakness or being open to attack. But really, when I put myself out there using restorative practices I feel like I have a strength with being vulnerable” (Julia, Interview 3).

RP not only provided a model for the RAs to express their emotions directly but also provided a model for RAs to facilitate their residents to share more openly about their experiences within the residence halls. Most of the participants moved toward a more community-centered concept of their floor and leadership. RP seemed to build scaffolding to move from the RA at the center of the community to a facilitator and relationship builder among the residents. As Emerson found with his floor conflict, the residents’ voices carried more weight in the community than his own.

This work to build relationships and the community was not easy or quick for many participants. Riley a second year RA, was able to describe the role RP has played in her own development and leadership within her community,
"definitely a healthy one. I think it’s a great tool for watching out for people and also for yourself, because... you can’t help other people if you’re not willing to put in the time and the commitment to doing it. I feel restorative practices is a commitment for yourself that you want to be better, you want to better other people. So for me, I feel it’s just been a development in my social aspect where I’m willing to put more time and commitment into things because I know that if I don’t it’s not gonna get better. It’ll just – I can make something average. But I don’t want something average – I want something great" (Riley, Interview 2).

Riley also discusses recovering after having a conversation that doesn't feel very restorative, in her words,

"language defines how you’re going to interact. If you speak... to them and try to get them to see your viewpoint, or you only try to give them solutions, a lot of times... that’s a 'to' box where you realize 'I am speaking to or at them.' And then from there you can look at a situation… I’ve actually come out of situations and been like... I could have said other things or I could have worked at them more. And but then that sets up another conversation... there is never really an end to restorative practices or community building because there’s always something more you can do... rarely have I ever heard of someone saying that a resident never wants to talk with them or a resident is like not willing to speak with them. So it’s all about the time and what you’re willing to give to try and make something better" (Riley, Interview 2).

Like Riley and Emerson most of the participants talked about RP as a process rather as a singular interaction. For the participants, RP was community development model that had to be continually worked on to improve environment in their communities. Even when participants realized they had not been very restorative in their interactions, Emerson, James, Madeline, and Riley all told stories of going back to the residents to follow-up in a more restorative way. Often this occurred after working with their supervisors to reflect on their actions and get guidance on how they could move forward in a restorative way. Most RAs came to hold themselves to the same restorative standard of being direct, caring, and thoughtful of their impact on others as they expected their residents to employ.
Limitations for RP. Using RP as a community development model is not without its challenges. Particularly when conducting formal responsive circles for which the “deed doer” was not present or was unknown. Bridget provided an example that we talked about in all three of her interviews. There was an incident on her floor in which a student expressed her frustration about unclean bathrooms in a disrespectful manner. The student targeted Chinese international students on her floor and left anonymous signs that assumed the unclean bathrooms were their fault. When Bridget decided to address this behavior in the community circle, the student who left the notes did not fully participate in the RP process so Bridget was unable to restore her relationship back to the community, "I felt I was really unsuccessful... everyone figured out pretty quickly who the aggressor was. That wasn’t something that was kept quiet on the floor and unfortunately the aggressor – most people ended up avoiding her” (Bridget, Interview 2). Bridget discussed how she tried work on this relationships but the resident's view of her was perceived to be an obstacle for Bridget,

I did try to work with her in it, but at the same time it was difficult for me because she also victimized me and whenever I’d walk by and she didn’t think I was there – I would hear ‘Oh she’s the RA. She’s gonna get me in trouble. She’s just out to get me.’ That’s not the role of an RA that I play. So it was difficult for me because she already minimized my ability to interact with her as a friend, as a peer. I was just an authoritative figure and her personality didn’t work well with authority, so I had no pull in any way with her."

Although that particular resident did not get restored back into the community addressing the harm did bring many students on the floor together and resulted in increased ownership for the community, Bridget describes this development:

"one of my residents took it upon herself to make pictures and posters for the bathroom sinks, that are still up in my bathroom, and it felt good for me because once other residents started taking responsibility for small aspects... all of a
sudden it became the floor working to solve the floor’s problem instead of me” (Bridget, Interview 2).

Responsive circles can only be held with participants who are willing to participate and with the intention of fully restoring the “deed doer” back into the community. In this case, Bridget’s resident refused to participate. However, the rest of the floor wanted to participate in the circle to address the perceived bias incident. Although not ideal, Bridget felt that it was the best outcome possible for her floor.

Other participants expressed when the “deed doer” was not present or known; the other floor residents could perceive the circle as not fulfilling their need for resolution. As James describes, “members of the community don’t feel like they’re being heard …[if they] feel like justice is not being served” (James, Interview 1). Despite these limitations, RP provided some platform to address both known and anonymous destructive and positive actions in the residential community.

4.1.6. Conclusion

RP is a promising practice as a community development model for college residential life settings. RP structure provides a framework for helping RAs to learn ways to navigate the community building and both positive and negative floor dynamics. The participants in this study experienced empowerment as they became able to express their opinions and emotions and they grew to develop an appreciation for their residents’ relationships with one-another. RP provides the structure of improving the environment in residential halls by focusing on student’s relationships with one another rather than relying on rules and policy enforcement. RAs who spend time intentionally fostering these relationships have a foundation on which to address noise, vandalism, and high-risk
behavior within their community. Not just through naming the impact of these behaviors and figuring out how to address it through punishment or policy, but by having the community name the impact of these behaviors and to together create a response that restores a sense of a supportive, functioning community in the residential community.

RP can provide not only a theoretical basis for how to create community within a residential setting, it also suggests a way to provide training and on going support to RAs so they grow and develop as leaders, and as professionals (Whitworth, In Press). As Dr. Miller has shared, it helps to operationalize the DIP model and other residential ideals. It breaks from a structure and method of training and supervising residential communities through programming and policy. And it provides the structure for an engaged community that will develop skills for students that reach far beyond the walls of a residence hall. Further, RP becomes an educational approach to residential life and training for RAs that frequently has an impact in how both residents and RAs conduct their lives as students and beyond.
4.1.7. References


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4.2. Powerful Peers: Restorative practices as a conceptual framework and method for resident advisors as they navigate their dual roles as peer and authority

This article explores using RP as a community development model and focuses on the impact that RP has on the way we conceive of the RA role. The findings will also discuss the structure and support that is necessary to successfully implement RP. This paper was prepared for submission to the Journal of College Student Development.
Powerful Peers: Restorative practices as a conceptual framework and method for resident advisors as they navigate their dual roles as peer and authority

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4.2.1. Abstract

This paper explores the use of Restorative Practice as a community development model at Mountain University (MU) (pseudonym). This study used narrative inquiry to provide insights from eleven RAs across one academic year as they navigate the challenges of their complex role within the residential community. Implications for practice include the suggestion that RP provides an integrated structure that supports RAs and their effort to build healthy communities within the residence halls.

Keywords: Residential Life, Resident Assistant, Residence Advisor, Higher Education, Student Affairs, Restorative Practices
Powerful Peers: Restorative practices as a conceptual framework and method for resident advisors as they navigate their dual roles as peer and authority

One of the challenges a Resident Advisor (RA) faces is being put into a leadership position within a community of peers. This has been described by Wachtel, Wachtel, and Miller (2012) as the RA’s dual role, being both a peer leader with the residents and the person responsible for enforcing policy within the residential halls. RA training at colleges throughout the country emphasize skills and approaches to successfully navigate this relationship with their peers (Blimling, 2003). How an RA reacts to this challenge can be tied to job satisfaction, stress level, and burnout in the RA position (Paladino et al., 2005). This paper explores RAs perceptions of their dual role and how Restorative Practices (RP) may influence how the RAs conceive of and enact their role within the residential community. First, this paper will explore RAs’ perceptions of their dual roles and its impact within the community. Second the paper describes the use of restorative practices as a means to provide RAs with a conceptual framework and a method for dealing with their dual roles.

4.2.2. Literature

RAs are uniquely positioned to be the “front line” for influencing student persistence. RAs have a front row seat from which to observe students’ social adaptation and their connection to the institution (Shim & Ryan, 2012). RAs are often best positioned to intervene when there is a concern about a students’ success at the University. For example, the RA may be the first to respond when a first-year student in her hall or in his residence expresses a lack of connection to the institution, or academic challenges that they made need help navigating (A. W. Astin, 1999). The RA’s dual role
of creating community and holding peers accountable for the University’s policies and procedures (Blimling, 2003; Wachtel et al., 2012), can put RAs in a challenging situation and can be perceived as a barrier to creating relationships with their residents (Wachtel et al., 2012). Blimling (2003) described the RA position as five roles: student, administrator, role model, teacher, and counselor. This description provides more detail for the dual foci of the RA position focusing on being a peer (student and role model) and possessing more formal authority structure (administrator, teacher, and counselor). Wachtel et al. (2012) and Blimling (2003) both identify how multiple roles can be challenging for RAs and if the RA is not appropriately supported, they may start to experience depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and burn out (Paladino et al., 2005). Moreover, these outcomes have the potential to affect not just the individual RA, but the overall quality of the residential experience for all the students in the residence hall.

Thus, if an RA is not or cannot be fully engaged in their role as a leader in the residential community, the result is likely that he or she cannot effectively create and provide an engaging environment for residential students.

**Restorative practices (RP).** At Mountain University (MU) (pseudonym) the RAs are trained in RP. RP is used as a community development model, which also has the potential to help RAs deal with their multiple roles within the community. RP puts a strong emphasis on proactively building relationships and provides a leadership model that emphasizes leading with residents:

the fundamental premise of restorative practices is that people are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes when those in authority do things *with* them, rather than *to* them, or *for* them (Wachtel et al., 2012, p. 15).
MU has used RP in their residence halls for five years as a way to both build community and to help RAs navigate their complicated roles. This collaborative style of leadership moves away from a style of leadership which emphasizes a powerful or charismatic leader and emphasizes a model of shared leadership with the community rather than to or for the community (Collinson, 2005; Costello et al., 2009; Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005; Wachtel et al., 2012).

RP is based on what is defined as the restorative continuum (see figure 1), which identifies a range of methods for dialogue that focuses on building and restoring a sense of community for a group of people.

![Figure 1: The restorative continuum describes how relationships are built and restored using RP (Costello et. al., 2009; Wachtel et al., 2012)](image)

For the RAs, the continuum helps them in their daily work. For example, the RA may use affective statements and affective questions to navigate difficult conversations such as roommate conflicts or to name positive contributions to community. Statements as simple as, “I felt very happy to see all that you did to welcome your new roommate to our community” or “I felt sad to hear that you were documented for drinking in your room last weekend” are ways for an RA to show empathy, as a peer might, while also naming their own affect during both positive and challenging situations. An RA names the positive or negative impact that these actions may have had on themselves or others in
the community. The affective questions or comments have been demonstrated to change
the direction of conversation to focus on the deed that occurred rather than the fault of the
doer (Costello et al., 2009). Asking “why did you do [the act]” rarely produces a
satisfactory answer. RP provides the framework to focus on affect, by asking a
restorative question, such as, “what were you thinking at the time?” Which allows the
conversation to move forward in a more constructive manner and, potentially, to fully
address the harm and restore the relationships that may have been strained as a result of
the residents or RAs actions. Frequently, the training in using these affective statements is
new to the RA as a way to interact.

Small impromptu or formal circles are another RP method designed to promote a
mode of interaction that emphasizes getting everyone’s voice in the conversation in a way
that honors individual’s perspectives, builds trust, and emphasizes ownership in the
outcomes (Costello et al., 2009; Wachtel et al., 2012). RAs use circles to build
community the first night students are in the residence halls. These opening circles range
from a quick icebreaker (what is your name, home town, and favorite ice cream flavor) to
getting students to share their goals for their first year at MU. Responsive circles are a
way for the community to get together to address an incident in the community. For
instance, if a residence hall bathroom is messy, the RA and students might get together in
a circle to come to an agreement on how to keep the bathrooms cleaner. In all of these
situations the RA is the facilitator and is focused on leading the residents through the RP
continuum. Successes are celebrated and problems are addressed as a community and the
sense of being accountable to one’s peers is cultivated with the restorative continuum.
This particular collaborative style of leadership is depicted by the social discipline window (figure 11).

![Diagram of the social discipline window]

**Figure 2:** The social discipline window describes a restorative leadership model that emphasizes high levels of control and support (Costello et al., 2009, p. 50; Wachtel et al., 2012, p. 18)

This four square window addresses achieving both a high level of expectations and control in the environment as well as a high degree of support. This model challenges the traditional leadership model, which has been described as holding onto high levels of control and expectations without high levels of support or encouragement (Costello et al., 2009). This to style of leadership, as defined in the window above, may lead an RA to be very policy based and hold residents strictly accountable for their actions as dictated by policy without any focus on using the incident(s) to build community and or to engage the community in the development of community norms and relationship building activities. In contrast, using RP concepts and methods, in responding to a particular incident or incidents, RAs are taught to use fair process to address community standards and proactively build community. This focus on creating an environment that is highly supportive and encouraging of positive behaviors is
balanced with high standards and expectations for residents’ behavior (Miller & DePaul, 2014; Wachtel et al., 2012). The emphasis on leading with the residents is woven throughout MU’s training, structure, and supervision. For example, each week RAs are expected to reflect on their restorative leadership in their weekly reports (Residential Life, 2014a). These reports can be used as a basis of discussion in their weekly supervisory meetings.

4.2.3. Research questions

This study seeks to explore how RP training impacted how RAs make meaning of their role within the community. To further our understanding, we asked these specific research question:

1. How do RA’s perceive and react to their multiple roles in the community?
2. How does RP influence the RAs’ perception of their ability to navigate their multiple roles?

4.2.4. Research Methods

This narrative inquiry study was informed by the constructivist paradigm (Jones et al., 2013; Josselson, 2013). The constructivist paradigm emphasizes a worldview in which reality is mutually constructed between the participant and the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Eleven RAs participated in three individual interviews over the course of one academic year at MU. These interviews were focused on the participants’ experiences as RAs and their reflections on using RP within their community. The nature and description of the participants’ experiences is mutually constructed through their stories and my reflections as the researcher.
In addition to the individual interviews, I observed residence life senior staff being trained as RP facilitators in order to understand how RP is framed for the RA. I also reviewed the RA training manual. These interviews, observations and documents provided insight into how RP is and is not woven throughout the structure and culture of the department of residential life.

**Site selection and sample.** MU was selected as the site of this study because of its five-year history implementing residence life. Today, RP is woven throughout RA hiring, training, and supervision. RP receives the most time (two full days) of any issue in the two-week RA training. RP has become the center of the departments’ culture and, thus, MU was uniquely positioned to provide insights into the impact of RP on RA’s understanding of their roles and their purposes for their work in the residence halls.

I engaged in purposeful sampling to recruit a diverse group of participants for this study (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012). I emailed all RAs and requested that they complete an interest form for the study. This form included demographic questions, years of experience as RA, a self-rating of their comfort level with RP, and asked the respondents to provide a description of the residents on their floor. The interest form was the basis for selecting eleven participants who exhibited maximum variation across key variables such as race and ethnicity, years of experience, comfort level with RP, and floor descriptions (see table 1). These eleven cases resulted in information-rich cases that provided varied and complex perspectives on the intersections of RP and the role of a RA at MU (Savin-Baden & Major, 2012).

**Narrative inquiry.** The RAs agreed to meet with me three times (September, February, and April) over the course of one academic year. These interviews were semi-
structured and focused on understanding the participants’ experience as an RA and how RP influenced their perception of their role and their leadership. Member checking was completed throughout the interviews by sharing with each participant my definitions of the major themes from earlier round of interviews. Participants were invited to reflect on, challenge, and provide more information about the proposed themes. Further review of the themes was provided by two experts in RP theory and method within the department of residential life (Director and Associate Director). They reviewed the themes and offered feedback and provided more context and rich reflections on the data. I also established inter-rater reliability by asking a knowledgeable peer to code 10 percent of the transcripts (four) and we came to full agreement with our codes (Ryle, 2009).

4.2.5. Findings

Dual role defined. From the start of the academic year, RAs appeared to employ two different lenses to describe their role: their perspective and their residents’ perspective of them. Moreover, their perspective of what an RA’s role was within the community differed significantly from how they felt their residents perceived the RA’s role within the community. The RAs saw their residents as defining the RA role as “cop” or “authority”. The RAs preferred to define their role as a community builder, resource, and mentor, and emphasized how seriously they took their role. As Riley (all participant names are pseudonyms) describes it:

Our role isn’t based on the idea of justice or the idea of dealing out punishment. Our role is to help guide students during their first few years… it doesn’t mean you’ll take their hand and pull them through school. It means that we’re there for them if they need a resource (Riley, Interview 3).
However, they did acknowledge that their role of both building community and enforcing policy could sometimes come into conflict with residents who viewed them as police. As Emerson described a change in his understanding of the RA from last year to this year, “As a resident last year I viewed an RA… as someone who was perfect. Who was there to almost police. Who was there not just to be friends but almost to be a supervisor” (Emerson, Interview 2). The challenge for the RA, then, is to create a bridge between these two perspectives and focus on building and restoring relationships. For example, if the RA had to document a room for loud music after quiet hours, would the residents who were documented come to the RA’s next program event? Or participate in future community circles? As Emerson describes, the RAs themselves may have some sense of being police-like from their own experience in the residence halls. However, the RA job description has a greater emphasis on restoratively building community than policing the community (Residential Life, 2014b). From MU’s residential life perspective documenting the behavior is only step one of the interventions. For example, in the case of the noisy room the RA would need to document the noise but also name how this noise may be adversely affecting themselves and others in the community. This could be done on a small scale with an affective statement but in the case of a more critical incident, it could result in a community circle which has the goal of restoring those who made the noise and the RA back into right relationship with the community (Wachtel et al., 2012). This tension between building and restoring community and documenting student’s behavior was a recurring theme expressed by the RAs throughout all of the interviews.
Responses to the dual role. During our first interview, Bridget, a second year RA discussed her dislike of doing rounds and addressing student behavior. As Bridget explains it, she takes an approach that ignores her relationship with her residents and treats them generically,

I hate having to write people up... most of the time I’ll knock on doors and I’ll know the person behind the door and I’m like “We’re gonna hang out tomorrow and go grab lunch but right now I can’t even remotely recognize you as a friend. For me to be able to be authoritative I have to look at you as just like Student [A] and Student B” (Bridget, Interview 1).

Many RAs described their role in documenting residents as just writing down what they have seen and they do not participate in assigning formal consequences that occur during the judicial process, which is managed by senior staff. Bridget describes this process (documentation followed by the judicial process) as changing her residents’ perception of her, “the student all of a sudden goes from seeing me as a friend that has a title to someone who’s like inhuman… in those moments I become the job and I lose who I am as a person” (Bridget, Interview 1). This sense of depersonalization is what Paladino et al. (2005) associate with burnout in the RA position and lower rates of job satisfaction. Navigating this sense of depersonalization is a key challenge for an RA, particularly in a community with primarily first year students (Paladino et al., 2005). For Bridget, this depersonalization is described as a “barrier” between her and the residents.

Documenting residents was one of the most challenging parts of the job for the RAs. They describe hurt feelings when they had to document their residents. James reflected on his emotions associated with addressing a large party on his floor by saying he was upset. In his words, “If you’re invested in your relationship with your residents… there can be a [sense of] betrayal that happens when they break the rules” (James,
Interview 3). This investment in the health of the community can lead the RAs to have an emotional response to the residents’ behavior. A central aspect of RP is to name this emotional response through affective statements rather than suppress the emotions an RA feels when all they can do is focus on the policy violation. Providing an outlet to express concern or disappointment was one way for RAs to avoid depersonalization. Alexis described how showing and naming the impact of the residents’ behavior made them see her as a person rather than someone who was there to enforce a policy. When documenting her residents for drinking in the residence hall, Alexis became so upset that she started to cry. Which led the residents, who were being documented, to see how upsetting their actions were to her, “they were all really, really respectful, which I was very surprised” (Alexis, Interview 1). Instead of getting angry at Alexis, they reacted to her disappointment, Alexis described their response as, “Oh Alexis it’s not your fault. This is your job. We know this is what you have to do. It’s all OK” (Alexis, Interview 1). Alexis showing her emotion was very natural to her and naming her disappointment was a skill that learning restorative practices provided her. Instead of intentionally suppressing her emotion, and focusing on the policy violation Alexis reacted in a genuine way. From Alexis’ perspective, her emotion came from having a strong relationship with her residents, and the residents’ reaction was also response to that relationship. Using RP as a community development model emphasizes the development of these relationships so that when harm does occur, there is a basis for addressing the behavior and restoring the relationships (Costello et al., 2009; Wachtel et al., 2012). This may be one benefit of RP that starts to address the depersonalization that Paladino et al. (2005) describe as a cause of RA burnout.
From the participants’ perspective, building relationships is core to the RA role, and documenting students’ negative behaviors was perceived to be a barrier to this core function. Bridget and Findley both discussed making conscious decisions to ignore behavior because they did not want to document it. For Findley, it was the severity of the violation that would make her decide to document or not document a situation,

…my friends call me really logical. I don’t do things unless it makes complete sense to me… If people are being smart and still participating in drinking, as long as they’re being smart in every sense of that word I don’t care” (Findley, Interview 1).

Judging the safety and severity of the situation was a skill that many RAs described. This discernment, from their perspective, was what distinguished them from the police. From the RAs perspective they were not “out to get” the residents. The RAs describe that they were not seeking out policy violations in an intrusive way. As Findley says, she only documents the behavior when the behavior has become disruptive to or unhealthy for the community, such as loud noise, too many people in one room, or drinking to the point of needing medical attention.

4.2.6. Impact of Restorative Practices

Knowing about RP seemed to facilitate the RA’s expressing themselves in a leadership role that was not artificially bifurcated between being a peer or authority figure, a friend or a “cop” within the community. In fact, many RAs described bringing their emotion and sense of connection with the residents to their expression of leadership on the floor.

The development of people. Riley shared the impact of RP on her role as more of a distributed responsibility for the sense of community. RAs described a community
where issues are addressed not only from the RA to resident but between residents.

Riley sees it this way:

> Restorative practices by far enables the development of people, the development of communities. It’s entirely about developing relationships in a healthy manner. That you’re working together with someone else. It’s not just you developing, its developing with someone else or a group of people to create bonds or a community or something that works together to fix problems or to just do something (Riley, Interview 1).

Alexis described how she puts the ownership on the community. In her own words, “I’m more of a leader that helps people realize that they are also a leader” (Alexis, Interview 1). She puts this into action on her floor by building a sense of ownership for the community and its’ development:

> I’m the leader in this leadership role but to me they’re all leaders. They all take part in building this community… I’m just providing them the opportunity by creating spaces for them to build this community and facilitating it sometimes now and then. But it all comes down to them if they want to build a community or not. Then I’m just there to make sure they stay safe while they’re building that community (Alexis, Interview 1).

This shared model of leadership is influential for RAs because it does not put them in control of the community. Instead, it puts the relationships among the residents in the center of the community. As James describes his goal for the community is not necessarily anything to do with his presence,

> I would actually consider myself more successful if the residents walked away thinking it was a great community but didn’t remember what their RA was like – than if they knew what their RA was like but didn’t feel like they were in a community. And I feel like that's what’s going on here. They’re gonna walk away, they’re gonna forget what I looked like, they’re gonna forget who I was, but they’re gonna remember living on that floor (James, Interview 3).

This focus on relationships is a critical emphasis that emerges from using restorative practices as a community development model.
“It is a community problem”. Emerson learned throughout the year that when conflict occurred on his floor that he had to reframe the conflict in the community from something the RA or other administrators were going to address to something that the community would address. In his first responsive circle, Emerson first expressed the impact of the incident (disruptive behavior in a party requiring the police to be called) on him. Then some of the residents named the impact on them, such as not being able to study for an exam or considering leaving the community to find a quieter place to sleep. This resulted in improved behavior on the floor and Emerson felt that his residents were more responsive to one another once they heard from their peers how the party had impacted individuals in the community. Emerson still had difficulty addressing the less direct threats to community safety such as vandalism to the exit signs. As the year went on and Emerson became more comfortable with RP, he described his approach as leading with the community,

I think the key thing is to make sure that all those voices are heard and really pushing to make sure that they have that confidence and the comfort [level] to be in that space. I think that goes back to how I address that conflict… [by] being supportive of the community and showing that it was a community problem (Emerson, Interview 3)

Emerson shared that now when he addresses community issues that he does pre-work before the circle to ensure that people are willing to share their perspectives.

I’ve told those students before that I would want them to be part of the discussion when we have that meeting and if I could call on them to really share how they feel because… I know they are passionate about what’s going on (Emerson, Interview 3).

As a result of this pre-work, the residents started to hear about the impact of the vandalism on their peers rather than the policy based response that Emerson had been
using to explain the impact on the community. This meeting was a more successful way for Emerson to address the concerning behavior within the community.

Marley also shared her experiences with her community feeling responsible for the overall health and wellbeing, she notes it as bringing about a shift in her residents’ language:

instead of ‘my neighbor’s door got vandalized.’ ‘Jordan’s door that got vandalized’ and [they] know who that is, I feel that it makes the residents a bit more accountable for making [an] effort to make their community more safe” (Marley, Interview 1).

Most of the RAs described that it was a community’s sense of ownership that was most likely to transform the community. Particularly this might occur after a critical incident that led to the RA calling the residents into a formal circle. As Emerson and Marley described in their interviews, the community is more likely to respond in positive ways when they have relationships with one another and are willing to name and share the positive and negative impacts of various behaviors in the community. RP provides the RA with a structure and methods for both creating and facilitating these critical conversations on the floor.

**Multiple perspectives.** In our final interview I asked Bridget how RP has influenced her. She responded that using RP as a community development model improved her listening skills and gave her voice in difficult situations:

> I think it makes me stop and question where people are coming from, if they have an opinion that’s more strident than my own. But it’s also given me more of a voice and more of a productive voice to ask people where their opinion’s coming from, and to say ‘I see how you see it. This is how I see it.’ Kind of thing (Bridget, Interview 3).
Emerson described how the use of affective statements helped him to have more constructive conversations with his residents:

‘I feel’ statements are really conveying or making others feel empathetic towards me and so going forward, when it comes to events on my floor such as a messy bathroom or posters being torn down, I’m much more inclined to say rather ‘I feel this way’ or ‘I feel upset’ [or] ‘I feel hurt.’ Rather than saying ‘you messed up’ or ‘you did all that.’ (Emerson, Interview 1).

The appeal of the affective statements (e.g. “I feel…”) is something that can further conversation between residents, and their effectiveness is affirmed by the way the residents respond to the RA. It is worth noting that like Alex, each participant discussed also using RP methods in their lives outside of the RA role with family and friends.

James was a mid-year hire during his junior year and, thus, was not trained in RP during his first semester as an RA. His approach to mediating conflict between residents has changed since receiving RP training. James is now less focused on “getting to the bottom of the facts” and more on making the residents’ feel heard and the impact of the situation known. In his words:

In my hall last year I focused a lot more on a sort of objective, ‘who’s right, who’s wrong, how to solve it.’ but then this year I was trying to focus on making sure both sides are heard, making sure both sides know what’s going on, because one thing I realized that was happening was that like both parties in the conflict, in the past, weren’t getting all the information that they needed. But then when you bring in restorative practices… you can actually hear it [go] from who is saying it, [to] what they’re feeling, and know that they’re not going to attack you (James, Interview 1).

James described modeling using affective statements with his residents and mediating conflict through affective questions. After RP training, James expressed more satisfaction with his interactions with his residents and his ability to address harm in the community.
James did not describe always having a perfect application of restorative practices. In particular, he described an incident mediating a roommate conflict when he realized his approach was not restorative, so he went back to the two residents and tried again:

After having a conversation with my supervisor I realized... that I was not establishing as strong a relationship with this resident as I could in trying to help deal with the roommate conflict… I came back into it and I used restorative practices to establish that connection and repair what I hadn’t quite done right previously (James, Interview 1).

This act of going back to correct his initial reaction seems to provide insight into how James views his authority in the residential community and the importance of repairing harm. The structure of RP allowed him to reflect on his initial reactions and go back to correct those actions in order to repair his relationship with his residents as well as their relationship with one another. RP gave him a new (and non-defensive) way to understand the situation and his behavior.

4.2.7. Implications for Practice

All of the participants were able to express how RP has influenced them as individuals. Alexis shared how the skills she learned through RP are showing up in her job interviews and helped her navigate a challenging internship she had during the summer prior to her senior year. Bridget, Findley, Alex, and James shared that RP has helped them to be better listeners. Bridget felt that after using RP in her RA work, she was a more self reflective individual and leader. Almost all of the participants felt that they had increased confidence and some new ways to navigate challenging situations. As Julia describes:
now I see the authority figure as something to take advantage of in terms of showing that someone of authority can be a support and not just trying to attack you, get you down kind of thing. Where a lot of people would take that authority and take advantage of it in the way where they’re going to really show people that they’re an authority figure and get them in trouble and write them up or whatever they’ll do. When I take it more of a – authority in terms of being more knowledgeable than a resident maybe, because of my training and because of my time at the university. But using that authority and spreading the knowledge instead of a dictator-y authority, kind of being a support and a resource (Julia, Interview 3).

The result of experiencing RP has created a more integrated approach for the RA to hold authority, be a peer, and to create support systems within the residence halls. Rather than artificially dividing the role of an RA into dual roles (Wachtel et al., 2012) or the five roles (Blimling, 2003) over the course of the year the participants in this study did not describe holding multiple roles within the community. RP provided the framework for a more holistic model of the RA role that includes proactive community building, addressing harm, and restoring and supporting relationships. All of these methods are within the RP framework and do not require an RA to view their role as artificially divided between community builder and policy enforcer. This integrated approach to leadership may result in higher job satisfaction for the RAs. As Julia describes, she saw her role as more integrated, as someone who has authority within the community and as a result is present to support the community.

Riley describes that being proactive helps prevent harm within the community:

using restorative practices you learn a lot about how to maintain relationships, how to create relationships, and through that it definitely helps you care more… a lot of times restorative practices is based on the idea of being proactive, and if you talk to someone before they do something you have the chance to stop an event from occurring later (Riley, Interview 3).
This investment in the community can be seen by the RAs reaction when an unhealthy situation in the community arises that requires the RA to document their residents. Their investment makes them feel sad or hurt that the event occurred. RP also provides the RAs with the tools to respond to this emotion using the restorative continuum rather than focusing strictly on documenting the policy violation. RAs can use affective statements, affective questions, or form a circle to respond. This engagement is focused on restoring the relationships and avoiding a depersonalized approach to the RA role which has been associated with lower job satisfaction (Paladino et al., 2005).

There was also evidence that the restorative community was a community that could support the full engagement and support of the students within the community. The participants described residents voicing the impact of their peers’ actions. This peer-to-peer interaction, facilitated through restorative circles, led to positive changes in behavior. And for the RA, there was some reflection that they did not have to be at the center of the conflict resolution. Instead, they were creating an environment through RP where multiple voices could be heard. These conversations were not had in lieu of a judicial process but rather as a restorative act aimed at soliciting the full engagement of the community. In turn, the participants felt these conversations strengthened the relationships on their floor.

RP continues to be a very promising practice to engage student leaders in a way that is new for the field. This method of community development may frame the work that appears to be full of many roles and integrate these roles through a lens that allows and promotes a leader to be holistic in the approach to setting expectations (control) and providing a high degree of support. This study was able to focus on RP from the RAs
perspective. However, further study should be conducted to explore the organizational structure that supports RP and the residents’ experience with RP.
4.2.8. References


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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexis</td>
<td>Senior; female identified; Latina; Environmental Studies major; who has been an RA for 2.5 years; has a floor of a mixture of first and second year students; and indicated that she is very comfortable with RP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridget</td>
<td>Junior; female identified, White; Biochemistry major; who has been an RA for 2 years; has a floor of a mixture of first and second year students; and indicated that she is very uncomfortable with RP.</td>
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<td>Emerson</td>
<td>Sophomore; male identified; White; Business Administration major; a first-year RA; has a floor of primarily first-year students; and indicated that he is very comfortable with RP.</td>
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<td>Findley</td>
<td>Junior; female identified, White; Environmental Studies major; a first-year RA; has a floor of a mixture of first and second year students; and indicated that she is very uncomfortable with RP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>Senior; male identified; White; Psychology major; has been an RA for 1.5 years; has a floor of primarily first-year students; and indicated that he is comfortable with RP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>Sophomore; female identified; Caucasian/Hispanic; Animal Sciences major; a first-year RA; has a floor of primarily first-year students; and indicated she is comfortable with RP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeline</td>
<td>Junior; female identified; White; Sociology major; second-year RA; has a floor of primarily first-year students; and indicated that she is very uncomfortable with RP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marley</td>
<td>Sophomore; female identified; Asian American and Chinese; Elementary Education major; a first-year RA; has a floor of primarily sophomores, juniors, and seniors; and indicated she is comfortable with RP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quinn</td>
<td>Sophomore; gender “TBD”; White; Parks, Recreation, and Tourism major; first-year RA; has a floor of primarily first-year students; and indicated that they are very comfortable with RP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Sophomore; female identified; White; Animal Sciences major; first-year RA; has a floor of primarily first-year students; and indicated that she is comfortable with RP.</td>
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<tr>
<td>River</td>
<td>Sophomore; female identified; Japanese; Music education major; first-year RA; has a floor of a mixture of first and second year students; and indicated that she is uncomfortable with RP.</td>
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4.3 Restorative leadership: Exploring resident advisors views on authority through a developmental lens

The final paper focuses on the RA’s evolving view of authority and RP’s impact on the students’ development and leadership identity.
Restorative leadership: Exploring resident advisors views on authority through a developmental lens

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University of Vermont
4.3.1. Abstract

Developing student’s leadership identity and skills is often cited as central to the mission of higher education. This development requires more than skill or trait based trainings that support the industrial model of leadership of a powerful leader and passive followers (Collinson, 2005; Northouse, 2009). Instead, a comprehensive framework should be used to support students obtaining the skills to solve and lead within the context of our increasingly complex world (Dugan & Komives, 2011). This paper explores using Restorative Practices (RP) as a community development model and leadership framework within the residence halls at Mountain University (pseudonym). By focusing on the Resident Advisor’s (RA) evolving concept of authority, this paper will explore how RP influences RA’s leadership skills and identity.

Keywords: Leadership, Restorative Practices, Authority, Student Development
Restorative leadership: Exploring resident advisors views on authority through a developmental lens

At colleges and universities across the country residential students are welcomed to campus by their resident advisor (RA). This peer leader is charged with welcoming students, building community within the floor, connecting students to the university, and leading their community to a strong start for the academic year (Blimling, 2003). Higher educations institutions have learned that students involvement and connection to the institution will lead to success and retention (A. W. Astin, 1999; Tinto, 1994) and, thus, they invest heavily to create an engaging environment inside and outside of the classroom. Student Affairs hires and trains RAs to help guide students through their first year of college. RAs have a large job and are seen as both peers and leaders within their community (Blimling, 2003; Wachtel et al., 2012). They have the potential to create the sort of environment that produces the aforementioned success and retention. In addition, this challenging leadership role is an opportunity for RAs to explore their leadership identity.

How a leader holds authority is a concept that reverberates throughout the discourse on leadership (Collinson, 2005). Images of powerful leaders and passive followers are deeply ingrained in concepts of leadership and in the broader structures (Collinson, 2005; Dugan & Komives, 2011; Northouse, 2009). This authoritative leadership model is incompatible with the RA’s role of building connection and community. At Mountain University (pseudonym) (MU) RAs are trained in Restorative Practices (RP), which is viewed as both a leadership and community development model. RAs at MU are trained to hold authority *with* their residence and build community.
through a wide range of practices within the restorative framework. This study uses narrative inquiry to explore how RP influences the RAs expression of authority within their communities across one academic year. This study will also explore how RA training and supervision can support the implementation of RP.

4.3.2. Literature

**Leadership.** Komives, Dugan, Owen, Slack, and Wagner (2011) posit that developing strong leadership skills is not simply a byproduct of a college education, it is a central to the mission of higher education institutions. Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, and Osteen (2005) call for a comprehensive approach to leadership education that is not just delivered in short-term trainings but is integrated throughout the college experience. This would mean an RA is not only trained as a leader during summer training but would be exposed to leadership principles throughout the academic year and have the opportunity to engage in reflective conversations about their own leadership development throughout their experience of being an RA.

The industrial model of leadership is deeply ingrained in our discourse (Collinson, 2005; Dugan & Komives, 2011; Northhouse, 2009). This model of leadership creates a discursive dichotomy that emphasizes a view of leaders as powerful and followers as passive. Leadership training that is leader-centric and trait based reflect this ingrained version of leadership (Dugan & Komives, 2011; Northhouse, 2009). Lipman-Blumen posits that, “The future of American institutions, both corporate and political, depends upon our willingness to relinquish the tattered leadership legacy” (p. 226). Collinson (2005) and Komivez, Lucas, and McCahon (1998) describe and define leadership in relational terms that focus on inclusiveness, empowerment, and a process orientation.
Heifetz (2009) emphasized the importance of developing adaptive leadership skills that can respond to the increasing complexity of our world. These skills will be needed to mobilize people to respond and to create leaders who consider culture, organizational structure, context, and the capacity of individuals (Heifetz et al., 2009).

Through exposure to different leadership methods, one is influenced by the theoretical approach to the leadership role (authoritarian vs. transformational vs. relational) and by one's own developmental position in terms how decisions are made and authority is viewed. This exposure and reflection is best absorbed through prolonged, iterative, and consistent reflective experiences (Komives et al., 1998). This paper will explore how RP influences RAs’ reflection on leadership and their viewpoints on authority within the context of their role as an RA.

**Restorative practices.** RP challenges the polarizing view that leaders are separated from followers. This model of leadership requires that strong relationships be built within the community, which includes a leader having both high expectations for the community but also offering high levels of support. RP is an intentional method of community building that is designed to build individuals’ commitment to community and provides a basis to address harm (Costello et al., 2009; Wachtel et al., 2012). A key component of RP is the social discipline window, which illustrates how individuals in our society can hold authority (e.g. lead, supervise, manage).
The social discipline window describes a framework for holding authority that emphasizes that leaders holding authority with their community rather than to or for the community as is emphasized in an industrial model of leadership (Costello et al., 2009; Wachtel et al., 2012). The social discipline window (Figure 2) expands the view of those in authority from being simply punitive (high control and low support; doing things to people) or permissive (low control and high support; doing things for people). In this expanded framework, a restorative approach to holding authority exhibits high levels of both control and support. Holding authority in a restorative way is a leadership style that requires a proactive investment of time in building and strengthening relationships and attentiveness toward repairing relationships when harm occurs (Miller & DePaul, 2014). Restorative leaders spend time being explicit about the controls in the environment (limits and expectations) while helping to support the community to meet these expectations and community goals (encouragement and nurture). The social discipline window provides those in authority with a lens for reflecting on how they are holding...
their authority in terms of control and support (Costello et al., 2009). In addition, RP defines and describes processes for effectively building community, addressing positive and negative forces within the community, and creating buy-in toward decision making.

Foundational to RP is the use of the restorative continuum, which is a framework that provides a number of ways to interact with members of the community that range from informal statements and questions to more formal conferences.

**Figure 3: Restorative practices continuum which describes a range of restorative practices organized from informal to formal approaches (Costello et al., 2009; Wachtel et al., 2012).**

RAAs are encouraged to use affective statements with students to express both positive and negative reactions to actions such as, “I was very happy to see you take leadership within our community” or “I am sad to hear that RAAs on duty had to knock on your door two times on Friday night.” RAAs are taught to utilize a set of questions when exploring a concerning event within the community, questions that solicit multiple perspectives on and, often, narratives about a specific experience. Circles are used as a format during floor meetings, which provides opportunities for all individuals within the circle to speak thus facilitating a way for different perspectives and voices to be heard. RAAs utilize circles to build community as icebreakers in the start of the school year and later to address concerning events that may affect the community. The restorative continuum
provides a range of methods for an RA to use to build relationships and a sense of community among residents within the community.

**Developmental theory.** Not all students are ready or able to view their leadership role as relational and as focused on restorative practices and values. They bring various perspectives to the job of the RA. One way to understand what these perspectives are, and what the students need if they are to successfully implement RP, is to examine how they think about authority in the context of developing a supportive community. Developmental theory provides the lens for this examination.

**Authority.** Authority is described as a construct that an individual draws upon to define self (Perry, 1970). In earlier stages of development (e.g. dualism or Received Knowing) this construct is external to oneself. Individuals may experience strong influence from individuals in their world who are deemed to have authority such as faculty or parents (Belenky et al., 1986; Perry, 1970). In later developmental positions, an individual may really wrestle with where authority is located. Often this is after a critical incident where an individual may see two authorities disagree with one another (Perry, 1970). This may cause this individual to be challenged by the fact that there is more than one way to hold authority and truth exists within a context. The reaction to this challenge can be anger at and frustration with authority (Belenky et al., 1986; Perry, 1970). In later stages of development, authority is a less salient construct. As an individual’s commitment to relativism grows and develops, the individual is more comfortable with evaluating knowledge, authority, and assumptions (Belenky et al., 1986; Perry, 1970).
**Growth.** Tarule (1980) focused on the process that a human goes through as their framework of understanding the world around them matures and grows more complex. To understand a change in RAs’ perspective or the tension that they may experience as their notions of authority and leadership change, it is helpful to understand how this growth occurs. Many developmental scholars have focused on growth across positions or stages (Belenky et al., 1986; Perry, 1970; Tarule, 1980), but the literature also points out forms of active development that is not linear or staged. In Perry’s (1980) model, for example, he posited that humans may develop through his nine positions but also described times when individuals may regress (retreat) or may stop moving (escape). This changes the imagery of development from a staircase with rests on each step to movement up an incline. It is also important that the view of growth as an incline supports understanding that growth is not always linear or in one direction (Knefelkamp, 1999; Perry, 1970).

The concept of authority provides an important insight into students’ development because it highlights how they think about how knowledge and relationships are constructed. This paper explores eleven RAs changing viewpoint of authority to better understand the impact that RP can have on students developing as leaders and the development of community within the residence halls.

**4.3.3. Research questions**

1. What are RAs viewpoints and experiences with authority within the context of their role as a student leader?

2. Does learning and implementing restorative practices (RP) influence RAs viewpoint, experiences, and conceptions of being an authority within their community?
4.3.4. Methods

This narrative inquiry study is informed by the constructivist paradigm. This paradigm reflects the ontological belief that multiple realities are constructed through individuals’ lived experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). I engaged in the method of narrative inquiry by interviewing eleven RAs, three times each, over one academic year (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Josselson, 2013). This method of data collection allowed me to solicit stories and reflections to better understand how the RA’s developmental perspective(s), their meaning making, influenced the RAs concept of authority and thus their experiences using RP.

In order to understand the structure of MU’s department of Residential Life, I also collected documents from RA training and Residential Life website. These documents were used to understand how MU trained the RAs on RP and how the department communicates the value or purpose of RP to the University community.

Site selection and sampling. This research was conducted at MU. MU has used RP as the community development model in the residence halls for five years. RAs at MU go through a two-week training prior to the start of the academic year. Two days of the training are devoted to RP, which makes RP the largest single topic in the training. RP circles are used throughout the training and the academic year as they model RP in staff development, and to address key issues within residential communities and among residence hall staff. The intent is to fully incorporate RP into all aspects of the organizational structure.

I engaged in purposeful sampling to achieve maximum variation across key characteristics to select participants (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). I worked with the
leadership of the Department of Residential Life to recruit RAs who were interested and available to participate in this study. The interested RAs completed a short survey that asked about their race, ethnicity, gender, major, involvement within Residential Life, and comfort level with applying restorative practices. I focused on achieving a sample that represented the variety of students that might be on an RA’s floor, and the RA’s race, ethnicity, gender, and major. I also focused on recruiting a sample in which participants had differing number of years of experience in the RA position as well as varying levels of comfort with RP. Eleven participants were selected through this sampling technique, which resulted in information-rich cases that provide diverse perspectives on and meaning making about the application of RP and the role of the RA (see table 1).

4.3.5. Findings

The section discusses the participants changing view of authority across one academic year. Several themes will be discussed including internal and external viewpoints of authority, and how these viewpoints of authority evolved over the course of one academic year. Following a discussion of the themes that emerged from an analysis of all participants’ interviews, I will present a brief case study of two participants’ evolving views on authority and leadership.

“Being an RA is not about having authority”. When describing the RA’s leadership role in the community, participants often used the word “authority”. The RAs’ view of authority is rich with developmental insights and was discussed regularly throughout all three interviews. For this reason, I decided to closely follow the participants’ viewpoint on authority through the course of the academic year to see how it might shift, and how it might provide insights into the RA’s developmental progression –
and how RP appeared to influence or become the site of that development. In their narratives, authority was a negative term associated with a leader enlisting a power “over” stance with the residents rather than leading “with” the residents. Many of the RAs asserted that authority created distance between their residents and themselves and, hence, it had a negative connotation.

This viewpoint was discovered during my first interview. I was surprised when James (all participant names are pseudonyms) strongly objected to me referring to him as a “leader” during our first interview,

I don’t use the term leader to describe myself in relation to my residents… If I start thinking of it as a leadership role then I'm going to start attaching too much authority to it, and being an RA is not about having authority. Being an RA is about having experience and it’s about having connections (James, Interview 1).

James expressed rejecting both authority and leadership as relevant concepts for him during our first interview. James expressed comfort with RP; he described struggling to hold authority “over” his residents. James’ comfort with RP was centered on specific skills (e.g. affective statements and questions). However, his reflection suggests that James has not yet connected with all of the frameworks provided by RP. Specifically, he does not seem to engage with the social discipline window. In our second interview, I asked James to reflect on the social discipline window. James still expressed discomfort with the concept of leadership and seemed to not connect well with the framework. He stated,

wanting to be a leader means that you crave the control and that authority, and I don’t want to be that kind of person who craves control and authority. The reason why I would want to be a leader is because I want to make sure that the people that I am working with are benefiting from what I am doing. Not because I want to control them or to have power over them (James, Interview 2).
Many of the RAs had similar struggles in the first interviews with the concepts of being an authority or a leader.

Bridget shared that she really struggled to balance the authority that she held as an RA with the desire she had to form relationships with her residents:

The aspect of us having authority is negative in our role specifically. It’s not like the same authority that like a teacher has, where they’re an authority on the subject matter so you can ask them a question. We’re an authority on school policy and that’s not what the residents want to know when they just want to enjoy their time away from their parents or just like enjoy an evening out… the fact that I have authority distances me from the residents and it’s like that barrier that I want to break. (Bridget, Interview 1)

The RA’s construct of authority at this point seems to be tied to how their residents’ viewed them rather than the authority they actually hold. Bridget describes authority as positional and associated with a knowledge base, for example, a “teacher” who can answer questions about a subject matter. This process of defining authority and conflict with authority is consistent with Perry (1970) and Belenky et al. (1986) description of individuals in dualism or Received Knowing positions who may experience authority as those who have formally assigned authority positions and with individuals who demonstrate a deep knowledge base about a particular subject, like teachers.

**Two perceptions of authority.** In our first interview participants used two lenses to describe authority. The first lens was their own perceptions of authority and how their experiences impacted their relationships with their residents. The second lens was based on their own analysis about how their residents perceive the authority that they exercise in a community. These two lenses of what authority is were important to track as the participants changed their view of authority.
**Self-perceptions of authority.** Bridget described two ways of leading the community with RP, she referred to these two methods as the “authoritative way” and the “covert way”. The authoritative way of using RP was described as directly addressing issues in the community in a structured way (e.g. formal circles and community meetings). Bridget preferred to use RP in a more covert way, which focused on more individual informal interactions rather than large-group sessions. Bridget preferred directly asking the restorative questions or making affective statements in response to a specific behavior on an individual level. For Bridget, more formal activities were associated with being more authoritative within the community.

As previously described, authority can be associated with individuals who hold positional leadership, which is often associated with individuals with a depth of knowledge in a particular area. Many of the RAs interviewed see themselves as not holding that kind of “real” authority, like a faculty member or a policeman holds. This lack of what they saw as formal authority in their own title or position led them to describe their authority as “not real” (Bridget, Emerson, and James). This belief that authority is title-based seems to reflect the more concrete conceptualization of a dualistic or Received Knower who sees authority as a given role with direct access to “truths” that others do not have (Belenky et al., 1986; Perry, 1970). This view of the nature and role of authority then colors the RA’s perspective on how residents see and accept them in their RA role.

**Resident perceptions of authority.** Alexis, the most experienced RA in the study, with over two years as an RA, had very distinct views on how she defined her own authority and how her residents viewed her as “police authority”. Alexis describes how
she works to communicate her role to the residents, so they might see her differently:
“yeah I’m your RA but I’m your support person and I’m here like to build a community
and I want to be a part of that community as well, not just standing on top of you all”
(Alexis, Interview 1). In the first interview, Alexis seemed to be the most comfortable
with this mismatch in perception between her view and the perception of the residents.
Alexis utilizes RP, particularly affective statements and questions, to create a respectful
interaction with her residents even at times when they are not being respectful toward her.
Alexis’ comfort with authority and RP seemed to be associated with her extensive
experience with the RA position.

Other RA’s seem to struggle more with their residents’ perception of their
connection with formal structures (e.g. university police, conduct process). Participants
expressed frustration when this connection to “authority” and the perception of getting
residents in trouble was more salient to the resident than more positive community
building activities. Bridget expressed wanting to be seen as a resource to her residents,
and felt frustration when she has to address unsafe behavior in her community. She
describes how this commitment to keeping the community safe can harm her
relationships with her residents,

I have to deal with [unsafe behavior] and its just one of those situations where I’m
put in that awkward place of, I want to be able to help you but my help, instead of
looking like help it looks like I’m just going at it for power and just like I have
power over you. (Bridget, Interview 1)

In the first set of interviews, the participants’ view of authority was highly influenced by
their residents’ perception of them. This appeared to take precedence over the RA’s own
perception of authority. Even when using the RP framework which explicitly addresses
authority, RAs did not make the association between how they held authority and their comfort level with RP. Even James who expressed a high degree of comfort with RP experienced a high degree of discomfort with the notion of authority during our first and second interview.

**Evolving views of authority.** Most participants had a different way of describing their authority by the end of the academic year. Instead of questioning their ability or legitimacy as an authority figure in the community, which occurred frequently during our first interviews, participants expressed more comfort with their own sense of authority as the academic year progressed. Emerson described a more nuanced perspective of authority in which holding authority was not all good or all bad,

> authority doesn’t mean you’re necessarily in charge of others, and in the sense I think that authority is that you have the power and how you use that power, and how you use that authority of having power doesn’t mean you have to use it or have to be in charge of anyone or use it negatively. I think authority, for a lot of people, has a negative connotation and how you use your authority is bigger than the authority you hold, a lot of times, especially as an RA. I think the power we have as an RA is – is good and bad and depending on how you use it (Emerson, Interview 3).

This growth in perspective starts to reflect a more relativistic viewpoint on authority that is described by Perry (1970) and in WWK (Belenky et al., 1986). As participants started to use RP in formal and informal ways in their environment, the impact on their understanding of what it means to be an authority figure within the community evolved. The sense of authority the RA’s describe in later interviews seemed to be defined more as a “bridge” (James) or “guide” (Riley) and “support” (Quinn). These descriptions were much more closely associated with the social discipline window’s concept of restorative leadership.
It should be noted, however, that for one RA, the view of authority did not appear to change throughout the year. In our final interview Findley reflected on authority:

I’ve been given this authority to use against [residents]. Because our authority isn’t used for them… the things that we do for them is not authority related. The stuff that we do that’s authority related is to them and it just feels invasive, and that’s my own beef with the RA position (Findley, Interview 3).

Findley holds to a perspective of authority as only how the RA role is defined by and connected to formal structures and consequences at the University. Her work for the residents was not reflected in her own concept of holding authority within the community. For Findley, the word authority was only used in a negative way. Not surprisingly, Findley remained dissatisfied with her RA position throughout the year.

**Personalizing authority: Quinn’s story.** A transition from rejecting their own authority to accepting their own authority within the context of the RA role was important for many participants to experience success in their RA role. Participants who were able to move to a place of accepting their own authority within the community expressed more satisfaction with their job at the end of the academic year. In our first interview, Quinn described herself as “unprofessional” because of the way that she held power and authority in relationship to her residents. In Quinn’s words, “although my strength is connecting to people, I can see it as a weakness that it feels like I lose authority or professionalism [when connected to others]” (Quinn, Interview 1). She reflected on this as a “loss of professionalism” with her alternative spring break adviser who encouraged her to broaden and personalize her definition of professionalism. Quinn reflected on the work of personalizing her own viewpoints on authority and professionalism in this way: “I think about my expectations for myself and using words like authority and
professionalism and maybe my perception of someone else might be different from what my expectation [are] for myself just because of who I am” (Quinn, Interview 2). In other words, Quinn’s perceptions of what it meant to be professional and to hold authority was based upon what she sees in others, rather than what fits her personality and approach to leadership. This exploration of professionalism, authority, and leadership was a stated goal of Quinn’s for the year.

In our final interview, Quinn embraced her own style of leadership and authority within the context of her role as an RA and moved away from the model of authority being attached to an official title with defined power, “my leadership is more like guidance and support as an RA. As opposed to whatever kind of formal relationship could be happening” (Quinn, Interview 3). Quinn transitioned to seeing her role through her natural relational approach rather than striving for a formal leadership model rooted in the industrial model of leadership. Quinn did express more comfort leading the community during community events and responding to problems within the community. Even the act of having the duty phone, which is a phone that is called if a serious incident within the community occurs, got more comfortable for Quinn: “I used to get super anxious when I had the phone… but I understand that it’s not worth it to be really worked up about hypothetical situations” (Quinn, Interview 3). Personalizing the definition of professionalism led Quinn to feel less conflict with being an authority figure within the community and moved toward an understanding of more relational styles of leadership.

Restorative Leadership: Julia’s story. Julia started the year with the goal of being a “consistent face” for her residents. She acknowledged, “they’ll switch professors, they’ll switch friend groups… but they’ll always have something consistent
going on in their life which is their hall, and I feel like every RA[‘s] personality reflects in their hall…” (Julia, Interview 1). Mid year Julia started to reflect on how RP has influenced her own leadership,

I feel like it’s making me more personable as a leader instead of being the leader up here, then whoever they’re leading kind of down here. Just being at the same level kind of like why we always sit in circles, to be at the same level as everyone else. I think it’s changed my leadership style… I can be a more effective leader by including everyone, hearing everyone, and supporting everyone, instead of telling [others] what to do and kind of see myself in a higher position than everyone else (Julia, Interview 2).

This description is rooted in the dichotomy of leadership that Collinson (2005) describes as powerful leaders and passive followers. RP seems to be providing Julia a way of experiencing a more relational form of leadership. This was particularly salient to Julia with her involvement outside of the RA world. Julia is one of two TAs for a intensive experiential learning program. This experience has become a venue to reflect on how RP is affecting her concept and enactment of leadership. Julia sees this difference as she compares herself to the other TA who is not trained in RP,

The other TA that I’m partnered with is the exact opposite of me, so I think since she’s more of a ‘do it right now’ just kind of a dictatorish when it comes to telling them to do things and I’m more of a ‘that’s a great job. yay.’ So I feel me using all the proactive statements kind of balances out our very different personalities. So I use it, I like making people feel better about what they’re doing (Julia, Interview 3).

Julia discussed using the proactive forms of restorative practices to build community within the program. Julia has also used RP to mediate the conflict between two students in her class:

I was teaching them both separately, ‘This is how I learned how to talk and it kind of just helps [you to] not feel like you’re attacking someone else and just talking about how you feel’ and I ended up having to mediate a conversation between
them but they both kind of used [RP] and felt more comfortable which is something I really liked seeing (Julia, Interview 2).

This extension beyond the residence hall context reflects a change in Julia’s approach so she can now see herself as being a leader in all contexts. Teaching others to utilize affective statements to express themselves demonstrates a high degree of comfort with RP.

The social discipline window is a framework that suggests a way to hold authority within a restorative community. The emphasis on being both highly supportive and having high expectations lends itself well to the role of an RA. RAs are in the community to offer support for students to be successful both inside and outside of the classroom. RAs also make University policy and community expectations clear to their residents in an effort to make their community safe. Julia reflected on the social discipline window as a means to understand how they held authority within their community,

I see being an authority person in a more positive light than I thought in the beginning of the year where I saw it as people are going to hate me because all I do as an authority figure is get them in trouble. But now I see the authority figure as something to take advantage of in terms of showing that someone of authority can be a support… because the relationship part makes you a better leader because you can do what actually will support the people you lead (Julia, Interview 3).

Over the year, for Julia and some other participants, the high expectations end of the social discipline was the easiest part to get across to their residents. They almost came into the environment knowing that the RA was there to set expectations. However, the rewarding part for many participants was getting across to their residents that they could
have both high expectations and high levels of support as a leader, and as a way to be in relationship as a ‘restorative authority’ in the community.

4.3.6. Discussion

Perry (1970) and Belenky et al. (1986) describe authority as a construct which an individual draws upon to define self. Early in the academic year many the participants reflected the developmental position of dualism or Received Knowing when they define authority as external to themselves. Participants largely viewed the “real” authority to be administrators or faculty at the University. They conceived of their role as an RA as being a middle person between the real authority figures at the University and their residents. As a result they described their authority as being a barrier to relationships with their residents. Perry (1970) and Women’s Ways of Knowing (Belenky et al., 1986) describe a developmental process in which there is a disruption of authority as externally defined to a more internally defined definition. The ‘disruption’ often means the individual experiences a breakdown of the meaning making structure (diffusion), and begins to actively seek new ways to make meaning (dissonance), and finally comfortably operating within the new making structure (differentiation) (Tarule, 1980). This process of change in the concept of authority and, hence, leadership can be seen as one experienced by most of the RAs over the year of this study. In Quinn’s story, she entered the RA in dissonance and was actively seeking a new definition of what it meant to hold authority in a professional way. Quinn seemed to be entering into differentiation during our final interview as she was able to start to conceive of her relational style of leadership as not being in conflict with being professional.
Those who were able to start to transition developmentally seemed to reflect more positively on their role as an RA. Julia describes initially feeling that her residents would only view her authority within the community negatively but ended the year feeling that she had been able to demonstrate to her residents that individuals with authority could be a supportive force within the community.

The role of the RA seems to challenge a student to think of themselves as leaders within the context of building community and keeping the residence halls safe. This expression of leadership held tensions between their own concept of leadership and their residents’ perception of their leadership. For many participants, RP provided a basis to strengthen their own definition of what it means to be hold an authority within the community and their definition of authority became more complex and relativistic. This is a critical transition for the students to further their own leadership philosophy and practice.

4.3.7. Implications for practice

It is clear that the concept of authority as described in the RP training did not immediately resonate with the RAs. While they could remember the social discipline window in our first interview, it did not provide a structure or meaning for the students to understand their RA role in the community. When I reviewed the training material, it did not define authority nor spend time breaking down perceptions and concepts of authority. Instead, the training focused on the application of authority within the context of leadership. RAs at this point in the training are likely rooted in a more dualistic notion of authority. By exploring different expressions and concepts of authority more explicitly, RAs may start to widen their concept of authority. This idea is supported by Komives et
al.’s (2005) advice that prolonged leadership development is more effective in helping students develop, than is one time trainings.

In order to support this best practice of prolonged leadership development, the Residential Life organization should reflect the restorative approach to leadership. At MU the trainings, staff meetings, and staff development all attempt to use restorative practice. Weaving RP intentionally throughout the organization is a more holistic approach to training RAs. Many of the participants used their supervisors as sounding boards for how their leadership was being expressed within the community. RAs at MU describe how they have used RP during their meetings with their supervisors throughout the year. Continued reflection in supervisory meetings seemed to be key for the participants who were most satisfied with the RA position. Staff members at all levels of the organization are trained in RP and are able to support the institutionalization of RP within MU’s Residential Life program. This offers consistency for the RA who may be seeking multiple perspectives on restorative leadership and to have a chance to examine their own developing leadership skills.

Using insights from developmental theory can help to shape the implementation of RP within college residential settings, and potentially serve as a tool to assess how it is working. An understanding of student development and growth is important to inform the content of training, organizational structure, and supervisory relationships. The development of students’ leadership skills may be informed by where they are in their development. Explicitly discussing foundational concepts like authority may start to build the scaffolding for students to move toward more multiplistic viewpoints on authority and leadership. This may allow students to connect more directly with a
framework that allows them to hold authority within the community (the social discipline window).

RP does appear to be a useful tool to facilitate RA’s reflection about leadership, the expression of authority, and how to navigate many challenging situations within the context of the residential community. Alexis, a graduating senior, described how RP consistently came up for her during her job interviews as she described her leadership style. This suggests that RP, for most of the participants, became bedrock for their own leadership identity and philosophy.

Understanding the impact of RP as a community development and leadership model for residential life programs should be done through multiple vantage points. This initial review of student leadership through the lens of authority is just one of many important perspectives. Further study could explore the organizational structure necessary to support RP, the impact of RP on the residents, and the supervision process necessary to support the implementation of RP.
4.3.8. References


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4.3.9. Tables

Table 1

*Participant demographic introduction*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexis</td>
<td>Senior; female identified; Latina; Environmental Studies major; who has been an RA for 2.5 years; has a floor of a mixture of first and second year students; and indicated that she is very comfortable with RP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridget</td>
<td>Junior; female identified, White; Biochemistry major; who has been an RA for 2 years; has a floor of a mixture of first and second year students; and indicated that she is very uncomfortable with RP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerson</td>
<td>Sophomore; male identified; White; Business Administration major; a first-year RA; has a floor of primarily first-year students; and indicated that he is very comfortable with RP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findley</td>
<td>Junior; female identified, White; Environmental Studies major; a first-year RA; has a floor of a mixture of first and second year students; and indicated that she is very uncomfortable with RP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>Senior; male identified; White; Psychology major; has been an RA for 1.5 years; has a floor of primarily first-year students; and indicated that he is comfortable with RP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>Sophomore; female identified; Caucasian/Hispanic; Animal Sciences major; a first-year RA; has a floor of primarily first-year students; and indicated she is comfortable with RP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeline</td>
<td>Junior; female identified; White; Sociology major; second-year RA; has a floor of primarily first-year students; and indicated that she is very uncomfortable with RP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marley</td>
<td>Sophomore; female identified; Asian American and Chinese; Elementary Education major; a first-year RA; has a floor of primarily sophomores, juniors, and seniors; and indicated she is comfortable with RP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quinn</td>
<td>Sophomore; gender “TBD”; White; Parks, Recreation, and Tourism major; first-year RA; has a floor of primarily first-year students; and indicated that they are very comfortable with RP.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Riley  Sophomore; female identified; White; Animal Sciences major; first-year RA; has a floor of primarily first-year students; and indicated that she is comfortable with RP.

River  Sophomore; female identified; Japanese; Music education major; first-year RA; has a floor of a mixture of first and second year students; and indicated that she is uncomfortable with RP.
CHAPTER V: IMPLICATIONS

Students’ experiences in the residential halls are critical to success in college (A. W. Astin, 1999; Tinto, 1994). These experiences can help students have a strong sense of connection to the university, be academically successful, and start to make connections with peers. For residential students, the residence hall can be a foundation of their first-year on campus. In 2009, MU’s Department of Residential Life decided to redesign their community development model to incorporate RP. This study provides a glimpse into this community development model through the perspective of RAs. This study has yielded insights into the organizational structure needed to sustain this change, how student development theory may inform RA RP training, and a new framework for the role of the RA in the residential community. This discussion will address how my findings in these three domains supported, added to, or challenged existing literature, the implications for student affairs practice, and future areas of research.

5.1. Organizational structure

Heifitz et al. (2009) identifies two different problems that organizations face. First, the technical problem which is characterized by having known solutions or expertise to solve or address the primary cause of the problem (Heifetz et al., 2009). Examples in higher education could include organizing move in day arrival times or distributing course schedules online. While efficiency can be gained, for the most part, there are known solutions and systems to address these problems. The second kind of problem that Heifitz et al. (2009) describe are adaptive problems. These are problems that can only be addressed if stakeholders change their priorities, beliefs, and habits (Heifetz et al., 2009). For decades building community in the residence hall has been
treated as a technical problem. RA training does not vary drastically from university to university and the expectations of the residents are centered around policy and procedure (Blimling, 2003). I posit that by implementing RP as a community development model, MU has taken on the adaptive approach of changing the residential experience.

Participants described how RP was woven throughout the structure of Residential Life at MU. Not only is RP the single largest topic of the two week training, but also the structure of the training incorporated RP (e.g. opening circles, fair process) throughout each topic and day. During the academic year, RAs are meeting with their supervisors. During these meetings RA are expected to reflect on their own restorative leadership within the context of their floor. Even success and conflict among RA staff is addressed or celebrated in a restorative way. While this level of incorporation was not uniform for every participant, some had supervisors who were more or less reflective, some had staff conflict that was dealt with more or less restoratively, but almost all participants could describe how the department of Residential Life valued RP.

Komives et al.’s (1998) emphasized that leadership training has to be more than a program or single point of exposure. It should be woven throughout the student experience. MU has modeled this principle by incorporating RP throughout the structure of Residential Life, which makes implementing RP more sustainable. The participants in this study had the chance to regularly reflect on their leadership, learn from watching others implement RP, and gain feedback from their community about the success (or lack of success) with their own implementation of RP. In short, the findings reveal that the intentions of Residence Life are indeed evident, and that generally the RAs reflect that they work in an environment that reflects the stated values of the organization.
Thus, this is evidence that implementation of RP cannot be done only as a program. Instead, it must be woven throughout the organizational structure. MU Residential Life has integrated RP throughout the organization not just in one area of the department. This reflects an orientation to RP that reflects an adaptive solution to a community development model. This consistency allowed for the RAs to clearly understand the values of the organization and supported a reflective environment for the RAs to build their own restorative capacity. Other viewpoints of this organizational culture, such as the residents and professional staff views, are areas for further research which could enhance our understanding of the effectiveness of RP as a community development model.

5.2. Training

One of the key components of RP is the practice of explicitly stating your intentions and expectations of a community (Costello et al., 2009; Wachtel et al., 2012). For MU, expectations of RAs are stated and discussed during training. However, when exploring participants’ concepts of their role there was variation, particularly at the start of the year, in how they conceived of themselves as leaders and as individuals with authority in the community. This distinction is typical for students who are in dualism or Received Knowing positions in their development (Belenky et al., 1997; Perry, 1970). This knowledge of student development has an important implication for how students are trained to be RAs. There seemed to be evidence that a complex notion of leadership and authority were not addressed within the context of RP training at MU. This led participants to struggle with how they might express their authority within the context of their role as RA. As the year progressed, most participants did move from a notion of
authority that was knowledge or positionally based (e.g. Faculty, Director of Residential Life) to seeing more authority in their peers and in themselves.

Julia described wanting to demonstrate to the students that she was a supportive authority and Alexis reflected that she wanted her students to see her leading with them rather than over them. Initially the participants’ notion of authority and leadership appeared to be rooted in the industrial model of leadership which positions a leader as powerful with a deep reserve of knowledge (Collinson, 2005; Northouse, 2009). More intentional time in training focused on addressing models of leadership, particularly deconstructing the industrial model of leadership, may help shorten the learning curve for RP.

The social discipline window is a framework within RP that provides RAs with another view of authority and leadership, that emphasizes having high expectations and high levels of support. The social discipline window provides a lens to understand how RP challenges a leader to lead with the community rather to or for the community. This model is foundational to the understanding of RP, but did not seem initially resonate with the participants in this study. Perry (1970) and WWK (Belenky et al., 1997) research supports the idea that leadership and authority are central to a student’s development at this position in their life. More intentional time within training and throughout the year may need to be spent on these concepts to help a RA fully incorporate restorative leadership.

Nevitt Sanford (1968) claimed that higher education’s central focus should be on furthering students’ individual development. Sanford’s focus on both challenging and supporting students has been a guiding principle in the field of student affairs practice.
and research (Sanford, 1968). For many of the participants, RP created a tension for them to express their leadership within the context of their peers in the residence halls. This tension is characteristic of a student in dualism or Received Knowing. As the participants practiced leading restoratively, they gained confidence in a new approach to leadership. Their prior concept of leadership or holding authority within a community was challenged and their increased comfort with RP was sign of growth. This developmental transition relied on RP as the stimuli and the organization of Residential Life to provide both the challenge and support necessary for a student to further their thinking about leadership and progress in their development.

This new approach to furthering students’ development was critical for students to understand their leadership and the way they are in community with others. As a result, Alexis, a senior and third year RA, was able to articulate the impact RP has had in her life. She uses RP to describe her approach to leadership within the context of job searches and provided examples of how she has used RP in summer community development internship. Other participants described using RP outside of their RA role. For example, Julia was able to describe how she used RP as a TA for a large course. These experiences suggest that RP will have lasting impact on the students outside of their RA role. Further study could help us to better understand this impact of RP beyond the RA role. While the evidence in this study suggests there is a lasting impact, a longitudinal approach to studying the RAs’ experiences would further illuminate the impact of RP after the RA position.
5.3. Framing the RA role

The complexity of the RA role is characterized by Blimling (2003) as holding five distinct roles within the community: student, administrator, role model, teacher, and counselor. Wachtel et al. (2012) suggest that RAs have dual roles of authority and peer. All of these models seemed to resonate with the participants’ experience in this study when they distinguished between their central role as a community builder and other roles associated with community walks, planning programs, and enforcing policy. The toll these multiple roles take has been associated with depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and burn out for RAs (Paladino et al., 2005). At MU the multiple roles can be seen throughout the different sections of training (e.g. crisis management, diversity). However, RP may be a basis to help move the framework from multiple roles to a more consolidated role. This consolidated framework would describe what it means to lead a restorative community. In a restorative community, building community and restoring community are under the same framework (see figure 5.1).

![Figure 9: Model of framing the RA position as a process of building and restoring community.](image)

Under this framework, a RA would plan a program and hold a responsive community meeting toward the same ends, to build a strong community. This would mean that rather than thinking of the RA role through multiple lenses, we start to think of the role
restoratively. This requires an increase in the ability to articulate that building community and restoring community are part of the same process and not separate roles.

An example of this would be for an RA to build community throughout the year with actions such as affective statements (e.g. “I am so happy to see you cleaning the common room for the community”) and community development programs. This consistent effort toward naming positive affect and building community would build a basis to address harm (Costello et al., 2009; Wachtel et al., 2012). For example, when students on Alex’s floor threw a party when he was away for the weekend, he relied on the relationships between residents that they had built prior to the incident to name the issue. When other residents named the impact of the party, such as having their studies interrupted or not being able to sleep, Emerson described a powerful moment within the community. The impact of peers naming the harm resulting from a group of individuals’ actions was perceived to be more effective to changing future behavior than discussing the reasoning behind residential policy. This is not to say that the judicial process does not exist at MU. The police, and other RAs who observed the noise and policy violations likely documented this party. However, the work of the RA is not to just document the party. It is to address the harm that occurred among the residents and use this to influence more community-centered decisions in the future, integrating what it means to be a peer leader in the community.

This study focuses on the RAs experience with building and restoring community using RP. However, further research should explore the residents’ experiences with RP. The formal training that the RAs received provided structure and language to describe their approach to building and restoring community. It is also important to understand
how residents experienced the community. Most participants referenced wanting to help their residents develop connection with one another and have a positive sense of community within the residence hall. Insight into the residential experiences would enhance our understanding of RP as a community development model.

5.4. Further implications

5.4.1. Leadership identity.

Alexis, a senior, shared how she has reflected on RP in her job search process. Her exposure to RP will have a lasting impact on how she views herself as a leader,

I started doing job searching I automatically put leader, and when they would ask the first thing I would talk about is restorative practices and the challenges with it. But how it helped me grow by working with the challenges of restorative practices and challenging myself to speak up and speaking from how I feel. And actually addressing issues instead of just leaving them there... when I’m looking for a job it shows that I’m a person that could speak up, do my job, and I’m aware of what’s going on. I think that’s important. [RP] it has affected me a lot. I know I’ve changed a lot from it (Alexis, Interview 2).

This illustrates the influence RP may have on students’ leadership identity. Alexis was an RA for three years. After years of prolonged engagement with RP she was able to articulate the impact of RP on her leadership identity and name this impact as she interviews for positions. In our third interviews I was struck by the impact RP had on the student’s leadership identity. Although further study would enhance our understanding of this process, it was clear that this identity was emerging as participants had a growing comfort with RP. In our first interview, many described RP as mechanical. By our third interview it was clear that most participants had personalized RP and were incorporating RP into their leadership identity. I had a sense that this would continue to grow if this research extended beyond one year. Alexis and other returning RAs provided some
insights into this process. Future research, over a longer period of time, would further illuminate this the impact of RP on students’ leadership identity.

5.4.2. Perfectly restorative communities

Furthermore, I was struck about the potential impact of creating a restorative community. As an ideal, the community would have strong relationships that are supportive of success in college. When harm occurs, it would be addressed with the goal of restoring relationships within the community. A perfectly restorative community would create an environment where individuals are connected and supportive of one another. This would characterize an ideal environment for student retention, increasing students' sense of connection to the institution and their peers (Tinto, 1994).

Furthermore, restorative communities would be focused on maximizing the positive affect and minimizing the negative affect within the community (Costello et al., 2009; Wachtel et al., 2012). This would mean that the community might make different decisions as a result of considering the impact their decisions would have upon themselves and others. Further research should focus on the possible association of increased retention and overall engagement for students at MU.

5.4.3. When RP does not resonate

It was clear that RP did not reach all of the participants in the study. Findley, for example, left the RA position after one year feeling dissatisfied. Findley did not resonate with the concepts of authority, fair practice, and community circles. The dissatisfaction with her sense of authority and the department of Residential Life’s expectation to enforce university policy were major contributing factors to Findley’s dislike of the position. While she talked positively of using RP outside of the RA role, she was not
satisfied with using the framework within the context of being an RA. Further study is needed, but I wondered what could have been done to help Findley adopt RP more fully within the context of her role as an RA? Or was the RA position just a poor fit for Findley? There was not conclusive data to theorize if it was training, supervision, or integration of RP into processes. However, her experience would likely not be unique to the RAs at MU. A deeper understanding of this perspective would enhance the implementation of RP within residential communities.

5.4.4. Outcomes

Finally, MU has experienced some significant changes to the residential community since implementing RP. One indicator has been the decrease in the amount of unassigned damage to the buildings (Rodriguez, 2015). Unassigned damage at MU is the cost of damage to the halls that cannot be attributed to an individual or group of individuals. In addition, the recidivism rate for individuals found responsible for alcohol and other drug within the residential communities has almost dropped in half in the last five years. While I cannot assign causation to these changes in the residential hall community, there does appear to be some association with the implementation of RP (Porter, Stevens, & Whitworth, 2015). Expanding the focus of the research to the overall health of the community is important for future research. This furthers my earlier suggestion that RP is an adaptive solution to building stronger and more responsive communities within the residence halls.

5.5. Implications for practice

As an administrator in higher education I sit in countless meetings a month that focus on students retention and improving the overall quality of the student experience.
Often our solutions are program based or focused on making many small improvements to the system. Our field has a tendency to stress the importance of the first year, the quality of engagement in academics, and the development of critical thinking skills (Tinto, 1975, 1994), which are large complex goals that we often strive to achieve without a systems-based response. MU’s department of residence life has transformed their approach to building and sustaining community within the residence halls. MU has changed the hiring, supervision, training, and structure of the organization to support this systems change. After implementing RP for five years there are very promising signs of success as measured by unassigned damage in the halls and recidivism within the judicial system (Porter et al., 2015; Rodriguez, 2015).

This study has focused on the RAs experience implementing RP as a community development model. These findings suggest a positive impact on participants’ leadership identity and approach to building community. RP is a community-based model that is very different than the industrial model of leadership that has dominated our discourse (Collinson, 2005; Northouse, 2009). This model has a tendency to separate leaders from followers by creating the binary of powerful leaders and passive followers (Collinson, 2005). RP provides the scaffolding for RAs to break from the industrial model and move toward a model of leadership that emphasizes high levels of expectations and support for members of the community. This focus on community building and restoring community are critical skills for leadership that will serve students well as we continue to face complex challenges in our society.

This work of furthering students’ identity and leadership skills is central to the mission of higher education (Dugan & Komives, 2011; Sanford, 1968). RP is a new and
adaptive solution to approaching community within the residence halls, which may produce lasting impact for the students’ life far beyond their college years. In addition to the student impact, there is also an organizational change. Implementing RP challenges the organization to change the priorities, beliefs, and habits during hiring, training, supervision, and responding to issues within the residential communities (Heifetz et al., 2009). Further study is necessary to understand the impact of RP from multiple perspectives. It is my assessment that RP is a promising practice for student affairs, and is an adaptive response for leadership and community development within the residence halls.
References


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Appendix A: Interview protocol

The following interview protocol was adapted from Women’s Ways of Knowing (Belenky et al., 1986) and Carol Gilligan’s moral dilemma interview protocol (Gilligan, 1977, 1982).

Interview 1

1. Select a pseudonym

2. As an RA, please describe your role in the community?
   a. What is your most important role?
   b. What is your least important role?

3. How have you or how do you plan to use restorative practices in your community?
   a. What do you perceive to be the strengths of restorative practices?
   b. What do you perceive to be the weaknesses of restorative practices?

4. Please walk me through what you would do in the following scenario - You are doing community walks and pass your best friends room. Inside are 3 of your closest friends sharing a 6 pack of beer and watching TV.
   a. Would this be a difficult situation for you? Why?
   b. How would you decide what to do? How would you respond?

5. What is your biggest goal this year as a leader in your community?
   a. What tools will you use to reach this goal?

6. Are there other things you want to say about RP and you as a person or as an RA?
Interview 2

1. What stands out for you from the past semester?

2. How would you describe your role as an RA?

3. Has restorative practices influenced your view of yourself? As a leader?

4. Thinking over the past semester, can you describe an incident where there was conflict?
   Please do not provide names or identifying information of the students involved in this incident.
   a. What were the significant (moral) issues for you?
   b. In thinking about how to address this conflict what did you consider?
   c. How did you decide what to do? What was the response?
   d. What have you thought about since?

5. I’m really interested in your meaning making around being both a peer and a person with authority in your community. I’d like to hear how you are thinking about this.

6. What role has restorative practices had on your floor? What has gone well? What has not gone well?

7. Has restorative practices influenced the way you have interacted with your peers in the residence community?

8. (Show social discipline window) Do you think about this? How is this making sense for you in your role as being both a peer and authority figure in your community?

9. Are there other important aspects of how RP has played out in your work as an RA that I didn’t ask you about?
Interview 3
1. What stands out for you from the past year?

2. Looking back over the past year, how would you describe your role as an RA?
   a. What is your most important role?
   b. What is your least important role?

3. Again, looking back over the year, how has RP influenced you?
   a. When has RP gone well? When has RP not worked?

4. Can you describe what was the biggest incident you had to deal with this year in your RA role?
   a. What were the significant issues from you?
   b. In thinking about how to address this conflict what did you consider?
   c. How did you decide what to do? What was the response?
   d. What have you thought about since?

5. Moving to another topic, would you say that restorative practices help build community on your floor? Has influenced how you interact with your peers in the community?

6. Review goal from round one interviews

7. What would you do differently if you were going to be an RA next year?

8. What did you learn about yourself this year? Has restorative practices helped you learn anything about yourself?

9. Are there other things you want to say about RP and you as a person or as an RA?
Appendix B: Invitation to participate

Subject: Invitation to participate

Email:

I am writing to invite you to consider participating in a research project for my dissertation. I am interested in learning about your experience with restorative practices and how that influences their understanding of themselves, the job of being an RA, and how they think about their community. Thus, Your experience as an RA will be the focus of the research.

Your involvement will include three one-hour interviews with me in a private place of your choosing. We’ll do the interviews in September 2014, December 2014 or January 2015, and April 2015 of this academic year. Up to ten participants will be selected for this study.

If you are interested in this study please complete this short interest form. It will allow me to learn a little more about you. I will be in touch with you regarding the next steps in the research project.

<Lime Survey Link>

I will make every effort to make sure that what you share with me remains confidential and be careful to change anything that might identify you. I will compile your experiences, with the experiences of your peers, to understand collectively your experiences with restorative practices in the residential environment. By participating in this study, I will be a nonjudgmental listener to your stories and experiences. You may find this a rewarding experience. However, if you do not feel comfortable at any point you can withdraw from the study. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and will have no impact on your status with residential life or at the University of Vermont.

This research project is being completed under the supervision of my advisor Dr. Sean Hurley (sean.hurley@uvm.edu). If you have any concerns about this project you can contact either Dr. Hurley or myself (patience.whitworth@uvm.edu) at any time. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project or for more information on how to proceed you should contact Nancy Stalnaker, the Director of Research Protections Office at the University of Vermont (802) 656-5040.

Thank you for your support of my research.

Patience E. Whitworth
Doctoral Student, Education Leadership and Policy
College of Education and Social Services
University of Vermont
Appendix C: Interest form

(online form)

Thank you for your interest in participating in this qualitative research study on RA’s perceptions and experiences with Restorative Practices. You are being invited to take part of this research study because you are a current Resident Advisor (RA) at the University of Vermont. This study is being conducted by a Ph.D. student in the department of Education Leadership and Policy at the University of Vermont. I am interested in learning about your experience with restorative practices and how that influences their understanding of themselves, the job of being an RA, and how they think about their community.

This information will help provide some demographic information about you including your interest in your RA position and your comfort level with Restorative Practices. I will use this information to help select up to 10 participants for this study. Your responses to this survey will be retained until the participants for the survey have been selected. After this point, the responses will be destroyed.

If you are selected you will be invited to participate in a study that involves interviews about your RA experiences over the next year, and questions about hypothetical situations that involve ethical decisions. Additional information such as RA training materials will also be examined.

Consent to participate in this study will be gathered prior to the first interview. By completing this survey you are not providing your consent. This questionnaire only collects demographic information to aid in the selection of participants for the study. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you can withdraw at any time without prejudice.

This research project is being completed under the supervision of my advisor Dr. Sean Hurley (sean.hurley@uvm.edu). If you have any concerns about this project you can contact either Dr. Hurley or myself (patience.whitworth@uvm.edu) at any time. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project or for more information on how to proceed you should contact Nancy Stalnaker, the Director of Research Protections Office at the University of Vermont (802) 656-5040.

Name: _______________________
Email: _______________________
Phone: _______________________
Date of birth: __________________
Expected graduation year and semester: __________________________
Major and minor: __________________________

Gender identity: ______________
Pronoun(s): ______________
Race and/or Ethnicity: ____________

How many years have you been an RA? ______

Have you been an RA at another college or university? Yes No

What best describes the residents on your floor?
- Primarily first-year students
- Mixture of first and second year students
- Primarily sophomores, juniors, or seniors

Why did you apply to become an RA (Open Ended):

What is your comfort level with applying restorative practices in your residential community? (Very Uncomfortable) 1 2 3 4 (Very Comfortable)

Describe the reasons that led you to choose that level of comfort: (Open Ended):

If you qualify for study you will be asked to participate in three one-hour long interviews (in September 2014, December 2014 or January 2015, and April 2015). Are you available and willing to participate in these interviews?
Yes No
Appendix D: Research Information sheet

Title: Exploration of Restorative Practices in the Residence Halls

Principal Investigator: Patience E. Whitworth, pwhitwor@uvm.edu, (802) 656-5476

You are being invited to take part of this research study because you are a current Resident Advisor (RA) at the University of Vermont. This study is being conducted by a Ph.D. student in the department of Education Leadership and Policy at the University of Vermont.

Why is this research being conducted?
Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study regarding RAs’ perceptions and experiences with restorative practices. The purpose of this study is to explore how developmental theory may inform the implementation of restorative practices in college residence life programs. This study is being conducted for dissertation research that is being supervised by Dr. Sean Hurley (sean.hurley@uvm.edu or 656-2072).

What is involved in the study?
Data will be collected in this study through a participant information form, three one-hour interviews, and observation of resident advisor training. Additional information such as RA training materials will also be examined.

You will also be asked to complete the Defining Issues Test (DIT-2) prior to our first interview and after our last interview. This test will provide scenarios and ask you to define an issue to a social problem. You will be assigned an identification number for this test that will only be linked to the pseudonym you choose. Your responses to this test will be mailed to the University of Alabama to be scored. Only your identification number and responses will be shared with the University of Alabama.

I will stay in contact with you throughout the year as we conduct these three interviews. With your consent I may follow-up in the future if future research is conducted. Your contact information will be stored in a secure location on a password-protected computer in a secure file.

How many people will take part in the study?
All RAs will be invited to participate in the survey for this study. Up to ten RAs will qualify to take part in the interviews, paying attention to creating as diverse a sample of informants as possible.

Can you withdraw or be withdrawn from this study?
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you can withdraw at any time without prejudice. You may be asked to withdraw from the study if there is a concern for your wellbeing. Any data in the form of interviews and DIT-2 may be used up until the point of withdrawal. If you prefer your data not be used you can request this of me and I will remove all of your data from the study.

What about confidentiality?
To protect your confidentiality, you will be given a gender-neutral pseudonym. This pseudonym will be used to identify the participants’ audio records, transcript files, field notes, and defining issues test (DIT-2). All data collected (recordings, notes, emails, and documents) will be stored on a password-protected laptop in an encrypted folder. Each interview will be audio recorded. You will only be referred to by your pseudonym during the recording or in the file saving.
Cynthia Snyder will assist in transcribing the audio files. Cynthia will not be provided with participants name only your pseudonym.

Upon request representative from the University of Vermont Institutional Review Board will be granted direct access to your research records for verification of research procedures and/or data.

**Are there any benefits to participating in this study?**
There may be no direct benefit to your participation in the study. However, you may gain some insights on your experiences as an RA through participating in the interviews and thinking about your role as an RA and restorative practices.

**Are there any risks or discomforts associated with this study?**
We will do our best to protect the information we collect from you. Information that identifies you will be kept secure and restricted. However, there is a potential risk for an accidental breach of confidentiality. If any breach occurs with the data I will notify you immediately.

**What other options are there?**
Another option is to not participate in this part of the study.

**Are there any costs?**
There are no costs associated with this study other than your time.

**What is the compensation?**
There is no monetary compensation for participation in this study.

**Support:** As a participant in this study I encourage you to exercise self-care. If you need any support is available to you through your supervisor in Residential Life as well as UVM Counseling and Psychiatric Services.

Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS)
http://www.uvm.edu/~chwb/psych/
(802) 656-3340

**Contact information:** You may contact me at (802) 656-5476 or patience.whitworth@uvm.edu for more information about this study. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project or for more information on how to proceed you should contact Nancy Stalnaker, the Director of Research Protections Office at the University of Vermont (802) 656-5040.

**Statement of Verbal Consent**
You have been given and have read or have had read to you a summary of this research study. Should you have any further questions about the research, you may contact the person conducting the study at the address and telephone number given below. Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice to your present and/or future care.

You may feel uneasy about answering some of the questions included in the interview. However, you do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable.

**Your verbal permission to take part in this research study will be documented in the research record. Please keep this Research Information Sheet for your reference.**
Name of Principal Investigator: Patience Whitworth  
Address: patience.whitworth@uvm.edu  
Telephone number: (802) 656 5476

Faculty sponsor: Sean Hurley  
Address: sean.hurley@uvm.edu  
Telephone number: (802) 656-2072

Protocol: CHRBSS 15-095

Subject, ____________________________, consented to the above name protocol.

(study participant’s Pseudonym)

Prior to signing the informed consent form the subject:

• Read the consent form
• Discussed the protocol participation with researcher including:
  o Purpose of the study
  o Investigational drugs or devices (if applicable)
  o Painful or uncomfortable procedures (if applicable)
  o Risks/benefits
  o Alternatives
  o Who to call with questions
  o Withdrawal rights
• Asked questions; and
• Consulted with family or other physicians.

Informed consent was conducted prior to any research-related procedures.

The subject was provided with a fully executed copy of the consent and HIPAA authorization form.

Other Comments:

PI/Designee

Signature:__________________________ Date:__________________