**English 100**
**Essay Proposal**
**Studious Student (Name!)**

1. **Explain the controversy you will address in your essay:**

   My essay will look at controversies concerning the use of restorative justice for juveniles in western legal systems

2. **Describe at least two different perspectives or arguments about your controversy:**

i. Some people argue that restorative justice isn't an appropriate response to crime because, for example, it doesn't punish perpetrators and causes added trauma for victims.
ii. Other people argue that restorative justice

3. **What is your working thesis/central claim/main argument about the controversy? Remember that here you need a *declarative statement* rather than a question or a weighing of pros and cons. Your thesis will likely change between now and your final essay – that's okay! I'm just looking for a sense of what you THINK you MAY argue!**

   Restorative justice is a beneficial tool in our justice system today, particular for juveniles, for several reasons: it focuses on the needs of the victim, the community, and the offender; it can be implemented in all stages of the criminal justice system; and has shown to be effective at lowering recidivism rates.

4. **What is your relationship to your controversy? For example, is this an issue you already know about or are you just learning about it for the first time? If you do have experience and/or expertise, please provide a bit of detail:**

   I have no previous knowledge on restorative justice, but I have a genuine curiosity to learn more about it.

5. **Are you planning to use the first-person ('I') in this essay? Why/why not?**

   I will not be using the first- person in my essay, as I have no experience with the topic or any expertise in the field.

6. **What kind of background information will you need to provide for your reader to help them to understand the controversy your essay addresses? Similarly, are there any specific words or concepts that you will need to define in order to help familiarize your reader with your controversial issue?**

   I will need to explain that restorative justice "emphasizes repairing the damage done by a crime" and that it is "an alternative to the retributive, punishment-based systems" that are common in North America, and around the world (Boslaugh).

   I will also need to provide the reader with some background on punishment-based justice systems, so that they will understand how restorative models provide an alternative.

7. **How do you intend to support your thesis/main argument? What are three-five supporting points, arguments, or examples you intend to use to help persuade your reader to accept your argument?**

   The supporting points that I plan to use in the body of my essay are:

- how restorative justice effects/supports each participant (victim, community, offender)
- the implementation of restorative approaches at different stages
- facts and statistics on recidivism rates for both punitive and restorative approaches
- rebutting the argument that restorative approaches are too 'soft' on young people who have committed crimes

**Annotated Bibliography**

Gavrielides, Theo, Editor. *Offenders No More : An Interdisciplinary Restorative Justice Dialogue*. Nova Science Publishers, Inc, 2015. *EBSCOhost*, https://ezproxy.okanagan.bc.ca/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e900xww&AN=1100235&site=eds-live&scope=site

This source is an edited anthology available electronically. Each chapter is written by different experts in the field, including professors of law, criminology, and sociology, as well as people working directly in the justice system. The editor of the book, Theo Gavrielides, is a very well respected expert in the field of restorative justice, who has written numerous articles on the topic (both academic and more popular) and is the Editor-in-Chief of three peer reviewed journals: *International Journal of Human Rights in Healthcare; Youth Voice Journal*; and *Internet Journal of Restorative Justice*. So while this is book isn't academic, it does seem like a credible source of information.

Because this anthology offers so much information, from so many different experts, I can see myself using multiple chapters in my research essay. I am specifically interested in Part II, which provides Case Studies, as these practical examples could be used both to provide evidence of how restorative justice works in practice and to show peoples' lived experiences (rather than just statistics). I also think that Ashley Shearar's chapter "How Restorative Justice Can Enable an Interdisciplinary Response to the Perceived Needs of Victims and Children Who Offend" will help me to support my argument, as I am interested in focusing specifically on youth. Shearar is the Principal Advisor of the Youth Strategy at New Zealand's Department of Corrections, and is also a scholar, both of which make her a credible source of information.

Latimer, Jeff *et al.* "The Effectiveness of Restorative Justice Practices: A Meta-Analysis." *Government of Canada: Department of Justice,* 11 August 2001, https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/csj-sjc/jsp-sjp/rp01_1-dr01_1/toc-tdm.html.

This report was written by Jeff Latimer (a Senior Research Officer for the Research and Statistics Division of the Canadian Government), Danielle Muise (a Research Assistant for the same division), and Craig Dowden (a PhD Candidate in the Department of Psychology at Carleton University), and is published on the Government of Canada website. Each of the authors has published academic articles

on the topic of restorative justice, which helps to establish their expertise in the field.

The report itself is organized into easy to access sections – "Method", "Results", and "Discussion" – and there are subsections within these. The introduction provides a comprehensive look at how restorative justice is understood, theoretically, which will be useful in helping me to define my terms. Latimer *et al* explain the five entry points into the justice system where people who have committed crimes might be referred to a restorative justice program, while will help me to establish that one of the strengths of restorative justice is its applicability at various stages. The "Results" section considers both the experiences of victims and offenders, as well as recidivism – information that I will use to help develop my body paragraphs. While this publication isn't specifically focused on juveniles, it does include information about youth offenders; further, it provides credible data for restorative justice issues in Canada, specifically, which is lacking in my other sources so far.

Laundra, Kenneth *et al.* "Transforming Teens: Measuring the Effects of Restorative Justice Principles in a Teen Court Setting." *Juvenile Family Court Journal,* vol. 64, no. 4, September 2013, pp 21-34. *Wiley Blackwell,* doi: 10.1111/jfcj.12012

This academic, peer-reviewed article was co-written by three authors: Kenneth Laundra, who is a Professor of Sociology; Keyria Rodgers, who is the Director of a teen court program and an instructor; and Heidi Zapp, who is a student majoring in Sociology. Laundra *et al*'s article details their attempts to measure how effectively participants in Teen Court learn particular principles of restorative justice. The authors first establish that retributive, "get tough" approaches to crime continue to result in growing numbers of incarcerated people, and is also "increasing costs for local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies and, ultimately, to taxpayers" (22). They provide background on different problems with this approach, and they clearly explain the goals of restorative models prior to delving into an explanation of teen courts and, finally, into their research on a particular teen court in Illinois. This article will be useful in helping me to establish some of the difference between retributive and restorative approaches to crime; specifically, it will help me to explain weaknesses of the retributive approaches and to show how restorative models can work effectively. The article itself is organized very effectively, and is accessible, providing non-expert readers with necessary background and clearly defining the terms and concepts a reader needs to be familiar with in order to understand the research findings and arguments.