An analysis of the transfer of life skills through sport

Jennifer M. Jacobs

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Research has demonstrated that quality sport-based youth development programs promote life skill acquisition (e.g., leadership, self-control, social awareness) with the ultimate goal of facilitating lasting effects into the youth’s social and academic environments. Researchers call this process “transfer of life skills” or the idea that physical, behavioral, and cognitive skills youth learn in the sport setting can be applied in non-sport settings to promote healthy development. The research surrounding this topic has been mixed, as many studies of quality sport programs have not been able to establish transfer occurring. In this paper, relevant learning theories from general education literature were used to propose a comprehensive framework on transfer in sport. Specifically, this paper focuses on how research has overlooked the cognitive processes that bridge student learning within a sport program to application outside of the program. A comprehensive description of the cognitive components youth experience during transfer are described and represented in a logic model.
PAPER 2: WHAT IS LEARNED AND DOES IT TRANSFER? A SURVEY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS ON TRANSFER OF LIFE SKILLS

Given that physical education (PE) is a requirement for all school-aged children and PE national standards directly align with youth development principles of personal and social responsibility, there is a need for researchers to examine how PE programs can foster positive developmental outcomes for youth. The most well-developed approach for implementing youth development principles into PE is the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Model, however studies that examine PE programs through the TPSR framework often rely on adults observations (e.g. teachers, coaches, parents) of youth transferring behaviors from PE to the classroom, home, or school. There is a need for research to assess how youth’s perceptions and experiences affect their beliefs about their ability to transfer life skills outside of the context in which they learn. The purpose of this study was to examine how students in two physical education teachers’ classes (one intervention and one control group) interpreted their PE experience with respect to learning life skills and transferring them to other areas in life. As part of an ongoing professional development (PD) program, the intervention teacher received significant training on how to incorporate responsibility-based teaching strategies into the PE curriculum. Pre- and post-surveys determined that students’ in class experiences with life skills such as effort, problem solving, and emotional regulation were enhanced over the course of the intervention. No significant differences were observed overtime between the control teacher and intervention teacher on students’ transferring life skills outside of the PE context. Given the short
intervention period, future research should examine the impact of time on students beliefs about transferring life skills.

**PAPER 3: YOUTH PERCEPTIONS OF THE TRANSFER OF LIFE SKILLS IN A SPORT-BASED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

Research demonstrates that quality sport-based youth development (SBYD) programs teach life skills (e.g., leadership, self-control) and promote use of these skills in youths’ social environments. Nonetheless, one criticism of SBYD research is the limited evidence of “transfer” or application of skills in other contexts. Existing research may fall short because some researchers attempt to identify a single behavioral variable that signifies transfer, but youth may transfer life skills differently based on individual needs. Furthermore, outcomes-based research may fail to capture the complexity of the cognitive processes youth experience during transfer. A parallel line of research, called transformative learning, finds that youth may experience transfer though motivated use (behavioral component), expansion of perception (cognitive component), and experiential value (affective component). Thus, the purpose this study is, a) to examine youth perceptions on transfer of life skills from sport to life, and b) describe how youth cognitively experience this process. This study included a sample of adolescent youth (n=11) involved in a SBYD program in inner-city Chicago for four years. Three in-depth interviews were conducted that examined participants’ understanding, perceived relevance, and motivation for using life skills taught in the program. Systematic observations and ethnographic field notes complimented interview data. Results indicated that participants’ perceptions of transfer were characterized by four themes: personal impact, social responsibility, life skills, and situational
insights. Across these themes it was clear that the transfer process was shaped by the participants’ relationships with coaches and peers, commitment to program values, and assessment of their immediate environment. This study sheds light on the behavioral, cognitive, and affective components of transfer in SBYD programs. Implications for research and practice are discussed.
AN ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSFER OF LIFE SKILLS THROUGH SPORT

BY

JENNIFER M. JACOBS, Ph. D.
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To my husband, who is both my teammate and number one supporter. You make every day as exciting as a slam dunk.

Last, this dissertation is dedicated to my parents, my very earliest and best coaches in life. You gave me my first words that ultimately led to the thousands I wrote in this project. “WOW.”
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INTRODUCTION

Research has demonstrated that quality sport-based youth development programs promote the development of certain life skills for youth (e.g., leadership, self-control, social awareness) within the sport setting with the ultimate goal of facilitating lasting effects into other areas of youths’ lives (Gould & Carson, 2008; Petipas et al., 2005). Researchers call this process “transfer of life skills” or the idea that physical, behavioral, and cognitive skills learned in the sport setting can be applied in non-sport settings (Danish & Nellen, 1997). This line of research is termed sport-based youth development (SBYD) and has gained recent widespread interest (Inoue, Wegner, Jordan, & Funk, 2015; Weiss, Bolter, & Kipp, 2014; Whitley, Forneris, & Barker, 2014) sparked by an increased attention on problem youth behaviors (e.g., school violence, bullying, delinquency, drug use, academic failure) and concerns over the growing number of youth identified as overweight or obese. However, prior research has demonstrated that even youth who do not display delinquent and unhealthy choices are at risk for carrying maladaptive habits into adulthood and they too would benefit from youth programs that address positive, developmental outcomes (Larson, 2000; Lerner et al., 2005; Pittman, 1991). With this endorsement for the value of SBYD programming, there is a need for researchers to focus their efforts on studying how quality sport programs can best facilitate youth transferring life skills to other areas of their lives (Gordon & Doyle, 2015).

The body of literature describing what program and coach/instructor factors are essential to promoting transfer of life skills is well developed. Findings indicate that quality sport programs that include an intentional focus on a youth development curriculum promote
relationship building (Fraser-Thomas & Cote, 2005; Holt, 2007), include instruction on life skills (Gould & Carson, 2008) and create reflective experiences for youth to think about transfer of life skills (Hellison, 2011). Nonetheless, one criticism of many of these SBYD programs is that there is no actual evidence of “transfer of learning” or change in behavior to another context (Holt, Tink, Mandigo, & Fox, 2008; Jones & Lavallee, 2009; Weiss, Stuntz, Bhalla, Bolter, & Price, 2013). This research may have fallen short in part because most studies attempt to identify a singular behavioral variable that signifies transfer, but all youth transfer life skills in a different way, based on their individual needs (Wright, Dyson, & Moten, 2012). Furthermore, outcomes-based transfer research (i.e., research that assesses evidence of youth showing a specific outcome such as leadership or respect) may lack understanding on the full cognitive process youth participate in during transfer. A parallel line of research in education referred to as transformative experience (Pugh, 2002) finds that for youth to participate in transfer they must first demonstrate a grasp on learning the material and, having motivation to use it, reflect on it and find it relevant to everyday life. Based on this framework (Pugh et al., 2010), there is a need to more closely examine youth perceptions on life skill transfer rather than seeking only empirical measures of behavioral outcomes. Three separate papers in this dissertation will address this idea by conceptualizing the cognitive elements involved in transfer of life skills process in different contexts.

**Dissertation Overview**

The following papers will examine the transfer of life skills process through three separate lines of questioning. The first paper, entitled “Transfer of Life Skills in Sport-Based
Youth Development Programs: A Conceptual Framework Bridging Learning to Application,” uses relevant learning theories from other well-established fields to develop an advanced framework for transfer in sport. The focus of this paper is how research has passed over the cognitive processes that bridge student learning within a sport program to application outside of the program. In this paper, a description of the components contributing to youths’ thinking are described and represented in a logic model.

The second paper is entitled “What is Learned and Does it Transfer? A Survey of Physical Education Students’ Perceptions on Transfer of Life Skills.” The second paper, a study situated in the physical education context, will attempt to answer if a responsibility-based intervention will facilitate positive in-class experiences with teaching life skills and promote the likelihood of youth transferring those life skills outside of the PE context. Using quantitative methodologies, the purpose of this study was to strengthen the argument that teaching behaviors influences student outcomes in the program setting, and this is one potential explanation for why youth may choose to apply behaviors beyond the program setting. In general, this study provided evidence for the effect of the implementation on quality in-program experiences with life skills for youth; however, it was only the quality of the intervention teacher and not the intervention itself that influenced youths’ beliefs about their likelihood of using life skills outside of PE.

Finally, the third paper, “Moving Beyond Transfer Outcomes: Youth Perceptions on the Transfer of Life Skills in a Model Sport Program,” extends the ideas put forth in Papers 1 and 2 by focusing on how youth conceive and make connections within the transfer process in an actual SBYD program setting. A series of in-depth, one-on-one and group interviews were
conducted with a sample of adolescent youth from a model community-based sport program in an inner city setting. Results indicated that participants’ perceptions of transfer were characterized by four themes: personal impact, social responsibility, life skills, and situational insights. This study contributed to the larger aims of the dissertation by examining how the proposed conceptual framework in Paper 2 aligned with what the youth expressed in their interviews.

**Themes**

*Time.* Several themes emerged across the three papers that were not the focal point of the dissertation but warrant further discussion. The first relates to how the concept of time plays out over the transfer process. In the PE study (Paper 2), the duration of the teacher intervention was notable. Generally speaking, researchers have proposed that transfer of life skills and values learned in sport and applied to other life domains is a complex process that often occurs over long periods of time (Martinek, Schilling, & Johnson, 2001). Recommendations for the length of time students should be exposed to personal and social responsibility lessons have varied, ranging from 20 one-hour weekly lessons (Jung & Wright, 2012) to daily lessons over the course of an academic year (Gordon, 2010; Pascual et al., 2011). In my study, daily lessons were delivered to students over the course of a volleyball unit, amounting to one month of 15 days of in-class sessions and no intervention effects were observed related to students’ perceptions about transferring life skills outside of the classroom setting. One hypothesis was that this is because transfer is a long-term process that takes time and repeated exposure in order for changes in thoughts and behavior to extend outside the classroom setting. Few studies have examined the
role of time on the transfer process, but in Paper 3, I purposely selected a sample where youth had been exposed to life skill instruction over the course of several years. Here, favorable results were observed regarding youths’ ability to understand life skill transfer and then demonstrate evidence of it in their own lives. These studies taken together speak to the need for researchers to understand the role of time on the transfer process and fit that into a conceptual model, as is proposed in Paper 1. It would be interesting to examine how frequently youth should be exposed to responsibility-based programming (e.g., weekly, biweekly, daily) and for what duration in order to start seeing positive effects. This type of information could influence policy and practices related to SBYD programs.

**Program type.** The philosophy of SBYD has informed several types of programs, including in-school PE, school-sponsored afterschool groups, and community-based settings (Hellison & Walsh, 2002). However, each setting contains a different set of benefits and challenges to the SBYD framework that could be examined more fully to understand how transfer of life skills is affected by the physical setting. In Paper 2, a PE program was studied to examine how an intervention promoted positive experiences related to life skills for youth in and out of the PE setting. PE programs have the benefit of reaching a lot of youth because they are a required part of the school day; however, youth often struggle with a lack of motivation and engagement in these settings (Gordon, 2012). Furthermore, teachers need to devote significant time to being trained on SBYD principles, which requires time, effort, and motivation that they may not be willing to commit to beyond their normal job responsibilities (Pascual et al., 2011). This may have implications for youths’ motivation for learning life skills in the program and
transferring them later as well. In the PE study for this dissertation, we did not see an effect of the intervention on transfer of life skills, and one could hypothesize that this has to do with youths’ general motivation in PE carrying over to learning content that has not traditionally been a part of the PE program. For practitioners, it is important to consider how to set the goals of PE to align with life skill building and seek outside support in the school to help reinforce these concepts (Jacobs & Wright, 2014).

Another delivery method for SBYD teaching is through programs embedded in community agencies (Cutforth & Puckett, 1999; Hellison & Walsh, 2002; Wright, Dyson, & Moten, 2012), as was the case in the final study, Paper 3. Different from PE, community-based programs are voluntary and tend to attract a more motivated audience. A community-based setting provides the opportunity for coaches to teach using creative learning methods that are not conducive to the traditional school day (e.g., service learning projects, community outreach, games, active learning strategies, etc.). These experiences serve as ideal opportunities for promoting life skills, as was observed with participants in Paper 3 who talked about volunteer projects, mentoring other youth, and competing in sport contests as a part of the program. However, community-based programs present challenges as there are shortages in funding, inconsistency in attendance among participants (since it is voluntary), and high attrition rates overall (Weisman & Gottfredson, 2001). Further research should examine how to keep youth in programs for extended periods of time with the idea that extended membership promotes the transfer experience.
Overall, it is interesting to explore the idea that program context can influence the experiences and outcomes of their youth participants. This has implications for practitioners creating a program curriculum appropriate for the environment of the class. For instance, a program embedded in a community organization would not benefit from a regimented curriculum that included activities that were built upon in prior classes. Due to the inconsistency of attendance and high attrition rates of community programs, this design would not be conducive for learning advanced skills that require significant preparation (Hellison, 2003).

Likewise, programs embedded in PE school environments should design diverse experiences for student to reflect on how life skills can be applied outside of the PE setting. Strong ties with faculty and administration should also be garnered in order to enhance the transferring of positive program values into the school setting.

**Implementation fidelity.** In both empirical studies in this dissertation, I used a systematic observation tool (Escarti et al., 2015) to assess the implementation fidelity of the adult instructors utilizing the responsibility-based teaching principles from various SBYD teaching models. Generally speaking, the intervention teacher in the PE study and the coaches in the community-based program demonstrated a strong ability to implement responsibility-based teaching practices such as giving choices and voices, promoting leadership roles, and talking about transfer of life skills from the sport program to other areas. The use of this observation instrument is a technique that has been widely overlooked in current literature but represents an important component in the transfer of life skills process. According to the conceptual framework in Paper 1, in order for the transfer process to occur, certain teacher/coach factors
must be assured, such as having a motivation for teaching life skills and teaching according to some instructional model or framework in a way that fidelity is assured.

Without a measure of fidelity, it is unlikely researchers can make the case that the program setting facilitated the positive effects. This problem has been documented in other studies where youth report learning life skills in a program that were not intentionally taught or youth do not report learning any life skills that would be useful outside of the program setting (Allen, Rhind, & Koshy, 2015; Danish et al., 1993). When delivered with fidelity, a teacher utilizing an instructional model (such as the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility model used in Paper 2 and informing the curriculum in Paper 3) should expect to see a number of positive student interactions and behaviors that can lead to youth using those behaviors outside of the program setting. Thus, this dissertation calls for further studies to implement objective measures in the methodology process that would support the proper implementation of SBYD principles before attempting to assess the outcomes of the program.

**Concluding Thoughts**

The projects contained in this dissertation highlight an often overlooked idea that there is more to the transfer process than finding evidence of youth using life skills outside of the setting they originally learned them in. At a broad level, I believe there are cognitive processes at work that have not yet been studied, and this oversight may be the reason there is limited support and some inconsistency in the transfer of life skills literature. Paper 1 proposes a conceptual framework to shed light on how future researchers could study this complex phenomenon
looking at transfer as a cognitive and behavioral process that includes crucial milestones (e.g., assuring implementation fidelity, accounting for student learning, and examining how youth think about life skills transfer before studying how they apply it in other life contexts). Paper 2 was conducted to determine what type of results the current methodologies in the SBYD field can give researchers regarding the transfer of life skills as a process. Finally, Paper 3 attempts to look at how this proposed framework aligns with a sample of youth from a model sport program. While these papers present some form of chronology, it is important to note they all inform each other and include processes happening at the same time in a way that they do not logically fit into sequential steps in research. Instead, the three projects serve the role of individually informing how research can be extended to better understand how youth think about transfer so that practitioners can better facilitate positive developmental outcomes for youth.
TRANSFER OF LIFE SKILLS IN SPORT-BASED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK BRIDGING LEARNING TO APPLICATION

Introduction

In the past ten years, there has been an increase in research examining how youth programs have capitalized on the power of sport to enhance positive developmental outcomes. This has led to growth in the field of sport-based youth development (SBYD), which posits that sport can be used as a vehicle to foster psychological, emotional, and/or academic development (Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005; Gould & Carson, 2008; Hellison, 2011; Petitpas, Cornelius, Van Raalte, & Jones, 2005). In reviewing the SBYD literature, it becomes evident that existing research provides compelling support that sport participation can facilitate a plethora of positive youth outcomes, such as personal and social responsibility (Wright & Burton, 2008), life satisfaction (Gilman, 2001), subjective well-being (Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005), social skills development (Holt, Kingsley, Tink, & Scherer, 2011), and academic performance (Dwyer et al., 2001).

However, while the claim that sport fosters positive youth development is strongly supported, the literature has been inconsistent with regards to how this phenomenon has been methodologically studied. For example, some studies examine the developmental assets that students gain from participation in SBYD programs (Danish, Forneris, & Wallace, 2005) while others point to program goals (Danish & Nellen, 1997), values (Brunelle, Danish, & Forneris,
2007), or life skills (Papacharisis, Goudas, Danish, & Theodorakis, 2005). There is clear agreement that this is an important topic, but a review of the literature shows that there is little consistency in the way the outcomes from SBYD programs are conceptualized, defined, or studied.

Despite this lack of consistency over terminology in the literature, SBYD studies are strongly rooted in the claim that what is learned in the sport setting can be transferred and applied to other settings (Gould & Carson, 2008). Specifically, it is the non-physical lessons on skills learned through sport (e.g., leadership, self-control, respect) that are relevant and applicable to other areas in a youth’s life, such as one’s school, home, and community. Researchers call this concept of lessons learned in one context being meaningful elsewhere transfer of learning, or simply transfer (McKeough, Lupart, & Marini, 2013), and in the SBYD context, describe the content of what is being learned as “life skills” (Gould & Carson, 2008).

Research in education has provided empirical evidence for participants’ transferring skills from one context to another, specifically in science education (Heddy & Sinatra, 2013; Pugh, et al., 2010), adventure education (Sibthorp, 2003), and foreign language acquisition (Royer & Carlo, 1991). However, the specific phenomenon of transfer of life skills is still widely regarded as a contentious issue in sport literature (Allen, Rhind, & Koshy, 2015; Whitley, 2012; Wright, Dyson & Moten, 2012). Gould and Carson (2008) contend that while studies support the belief that sport can facilitate life skills, very few researchers empirically test this assumption. Others caution that a problem with studying life skills transfer is that there is a lack of certainty on
whether transfer is a likely outcome of sport participation or a combination of other environmental influences that are difficult to evaluate (Allen, Rhind, & Koshy, 2015).

The lack of consistency in the literature around transfer could have many causes. First, several researchers in SBYD have based their investigations of transfer on the perceptions of adults (e.g., teachers, coaches, parents) observing youth transferring behaviors from sport into the classroom, home, or school (Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2009; Wright & Burton, 2008; Wright, Li, Ding, & Pickering, 2010). For such reports to be meaningful, the observer must have prior knowledge of a youth’s behavior as well as an insider perspective on the content taught in the sport program. The inherent problem with this approach is that it involves a subjective judgment by someone other than the individual experiencing the phenomenon. Other researchers have sought out the youth participants’ perspectives directly through interviews with students examining their perceptions of how sport has influenced their overall development (Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2009), academic performance (Allen, Rhind, & Koshy, 2015), or behavior/conduct (Wright, Li, Ding, & Pickering, 2010). While this line of research is helpful in identifying that students are able to recognize instances where sport as a whole has helped them succeed in life, it does not establish a clear connection that these positive outcomes can be attributed to their sport program participation. These studies illustrate that there is an often unstated assumption in SBYD literature that transfer of learning equates to behavior change.

To date, little is known about the cognitive aspects of the transfer process or whether youth are aware of, find relevant, and are motivated to use the life skill lessons being taught to them before attempting to apply them outside of the SBYD program. Because of the complexity
of this topic, there is a need to examine those components in the transfer process that have been overlooked in order to better understand if, when, and how transfer of life skills occurs for youth in SBYD programs. Specifically, an updated and unified approach should be developed to address what youth thoughts and perceptions underlie the transfer process. Research that confines the transfer process to studying behavioral outcomes outside of sport minimizes the importance of youth intentionally thinking through their choices and overlooks the central cognitive processes that may lead to them being motivated to act in a prosocial way. Moreover, without considering the youth cognitive perspective, practitioners may lack valuable insight on ways to overcome potential barriers that exist in the transfer of learning process (Allen, Rhind, & Koshy, 2015). The field of SBYD would benefit from a clear and consistent conceptual framework, specifically examining transfer as a process rather than limiting it to a set of behavioral outcomes that are used as a proxy for transfer.

**Purpose**

The current paper argues that a more comprehensive and nuanced way of conceptualizing transfer is needed in order to address the underlying cognitive and motivational processes involved. While some studies do address the fact that youth think about the life skills emphasized in sport and perceive them to be relevant to their lives (Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2009; Li, Wright, Rukavina, & Pickering, 2008; Wright & Burton, 2008), they are largely based on the assumption that transfer equates to evidence of youth describing a behavior change. It is critical that researchers examine how students think about life skills taught in sport, namely whether
they actually learn the material, are motivated to use it, reflect on it, and find it relevant to their everyday lives (Pugh et al., 2010).

Therefore, in the current paper, the SBYD literature will be reviewed and transfer of life skills will be viewed through a new lens in order to develop a conceptual framework from existing models across other fields of study. A conceptual framework will be proposed entailing how certain cognitive processes are an underlying feature that connect student learning to application. This conceptual framework will provide insight on how researchers can better conceptualize the transfer of life skills in their studies and strengthen overall the argument that sport participation can promote positive youth development. Furthermore, this understanding can inform practice by strengthening program development and implementation in accordance with SBYD best practices.

**SBYD Background**

The field of sport-based youth development includes the fundamental philosophy that sport programs should do more than just improve physical performance, but also assist in the social-psychological development of youth (Danish & Nellen, 1997; Gould & Carson, 2008; Petipas et al., 2005). Traditionally, many sport programs with a life skill focus have catered to at-risk youth to help them overcome barriers within their environment. For example, some basketball programs in urban settings have the purpose of keeping youth off the streets so they can socialize and participate in sport in a safe setting. While these types of programs have been successful in achieving baseline goals such as providing a safe place for youth to be physically active, SBYD program goals are more comprehensive and target all youth, not just youth labeled
at-risk. Specifically, SBYD programs include the goal of enhancing and improving positive youth characteristics (e.g., building self-control or leadership) rather than correcting or overcoming youth deficits (e.g., preventing drug use or gang membership; Lerner et al., 2005).

The SBYD field draws from several frameworks, including positive youth development (Larson, 2000), social and emotional learning (Durlak et al., 2011), and the 5 C’s model (i.e., competence, confidence, connection, character and caring; Lerner et al., 2005). Generally speaking, in SBYD programs, youth from all backgrounds have the opportunity to learn technical sport skills (e.g., how to shoot a free throw) in conjunction with developing life skills (e.g., leadership, self-control) that they can apply outside of the sport context.

**Life skills.** According to Danish and colleagues (2005), *life skills* are defined as “those skills that enable individuals to succeed in the different environments in which they live, such as school, home, and in their neighborhoods” (p.40). Gould and Carson (2008) expanded on this definition describing life skills as internal personal assets “that can be facilitated or developed in sport and transferred for use in non-sport settings” (p.60). Life skills, like sport skills, are learned through demonstration, modeling, and practice, so while certain positive qualities such as self-esteem and global self-confidence can improve through sport participation, these are not life skills because they are personal qualities that cannot be easily taught, learned, and practiced (Danish & Hale, 1981). However, while sport skills include physical and technical movements that are specific to the content of the sport (e.g., dribbling a basketball or serving a tennis ball), life skills are skills that can be generalized to the non-sport context. In the current paper, examples of life skills include leadership, self-control, respect, and self-direction.
Transfer of life skills. A multitude of research studies have attempted to define the concept of life skills transfer. For example, Hellison (2011) defines transfer as applying lessons learned in the gym setting to school, home, and community life. Petipas and colleagues (2005) share a similar definition where life skills that are taught in an intentional and systematic matter are generalized to other important life domains. This line of research often relies on student self-report or teacher/coach observation of behaviors as a method for gauging whether transfer has occurred, which places a strong focus on the outcomes of learning rather than the process students take to get there (Hellison, 2011; Hellison & Walsh, 2002).

Gould and Carson (2008) approach the idea in a different way, referring to the term “transferability” of life skills, which is “a belief that acquired skills and qualities [from the sport program] are valued in other settings,” along with students having “the confidence in their ability to apply skills in different settings” (p. 66). This definition introduces an element of student cognition in that students must find the material relevant and be confident to use it. Other researchers have also concluded that in order for life skills transfer to occur, two critical cognitive elements need to be present. First, Martinek and Lee (2012) established that program participants need to have an awareness of program values in order to start the transfer process. Oftentimes students are not aware that they have learned life skills that can be used outside of the sport setting (Danish et al., 2002). Second, Danish and Nellen (1997) suggested that youth must be able to recognize, understand, and believe they can use life skills outside of the sport program. Taken altogether, there is a clear rationale for examining the role of youth’s thinking in the transfer process.
The belief that participation in sport will naturally lead to the development and transfer of life skills into other areas of participants’ lives has been strongly critiqued. Hodge (1989) contended, while sport programs have the potential to be linked to a variety of positive youth outcomes, an important distinguishing factor is that it is not mere participation in sport that guarantees these benefits to be gained by youth. Instead, life skills must be specifically “taught,” versus coincidentally “caught,” by way of intentional program design and instruction. This is refuted by the ever-popular idea that “sport builds character,” a phrase that assumes the automaticity of sport’s impact on youth personality. Shields and Bredemeier (1995) summarize the main point of this argument being that sport is an opportune place to develop moral character because it authentically introduces lessons on winning and losing, socializing with peers, and having control over one’s body. However, opponents of the “sport builds character” phenomenon agree that while sport does “encourage the development of desirable attributes… these attributes do not transcend the sport context” (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995, p. 175). This is where SBYD researchers would advocate for the importance of intentional coaching on facilitating the transfer of life skills process.

Teacher/coach factors. Several teaching strategies have emerged as integral to producing high-quality SBYD programs, including creating a positive motivational climate (Camiré, Forneris, Trudel, & Bernard, 2011), developing caring relationships with youth (Fraser-Thomas, & Cote, 2009) and teaching sport lessons that integrate rather than separate life skill instruction (Hellison & Walsh, 2002). The SBYD literature has also pointed to a number of program design factors that facilitate life skill development including devoting time to group
reflection and discussion on life skill lessons (Hellison, 2011), having caring adult mentors in the program setting that provide support and encouragement to use life skills (Petipas et al., 2005), and creating opportunities to practice life skills in the sport program (Gould & Carson, 2008). While the literature describing best practices for coaches on facilitating the transfer of life skills is well developed (see Camiré, Forneris, & Trudel, 2011; Camiré, Trudel, Forneris, 2012; Gould, Collins, Lauer, and Chung, 2007), the process of how, why, and where students choose to transfer these skills to other contexts should be examined further.

Transfer of Life Skills Through Sport Background

When the research on transfer of learning from sports programs is examined, a number of distinct themes around how transfer is conceptualized by the researchers can be identified. One dominant finding is that many studies include a narrow or inconsistent definition of transfer, only focusing on behavior change or youth outcomes. For example, some researchers have examined transfer of life skills in terms of academic outcomes such as truancy (Wright, Li, Ding, & Pickering, 2010), grade point average (Petipas et al., 2005), or classroom behavior (Walsh, Ozaeta, and Wright, 2010), but they do not define what life skills are related to these outcomes (e.g., responsibility, self-control). Furthermore, in these studies students were not interviewed about whether they believed these skills were actually necessary or relevant to their lives or if they suffered from problems in these academic areas. Allen, Rhind, and Koshy (2015) did address the student perspective by including interviews with youth that examined what life skills they learned in their sport program and ultimately used in the classroom. Participants reported that the sport program helped them improve their performance in school and gave them an
overall better attitude about school in general. However, students were not asked about what life skills they learned in the program or what program lessons specifically helped them improve their academic performance. A further contradictory finding was that, while the participants were able to identify that life skills were being taught in their sport program, they did not understand the relevance and utility value they had within the classroom setting (Allen, Rhind, & Koshy, 2015). This suggests that despite identifying positive academic outcomes that may or may not have resulted from their program participation, they were not able to see a clear connection between the life skill lessons and their intended use outside of the program. One way to address this oversight in future studies would be to ensure students understand the life skills and are aware of their potential to inform situations in other life contexts. It is imperative that research first address students’ perceptions of the transfer experience before making the assumption that behavioral improvements or outcomes can be attributed to the program.

Other researchers support the assertion that youth oftentimes have a limited understanding of the life skills being taught in sport programs, and this acts as a barrier for their ability to apply these skills in other contexts. Danish and colleagues (2002) found that one of the main barriers to transfer is that participants do not understand and are not made aware of the skills they are being taught, while Petipas and colleagues (2005) concluded that oftentimes students do not realize these skills can transfer to other settings. Thus, if understanding and insight are lacking, it would be an oversight to assume that youth can and will transfer skills to other relevant contexts. This problem becomes equally compounded when students discuss skills they believe they learned from the sport program but that were not explicitly taught. In one
study, researchers were unable to establish how, where, and why participants expressed learning about initiative and teamwork despite neither skill being mentioned in the program (Holt, Tink, Mandigo, & Fox, 2008). While it is encouraging that these positive outcomes were salient in these youths’ minds, it does not strengthen the argument that intentional programs that teach specific life skills help youth transfer their learning to other contexts.

One trend that has been observed in recent literature is that researchers are beginning to investigate youths’ perceptions of relevance and understanding of life skills. However, these are often framed as separate from transfer as opposed to part of the process. For instance, in a study by Wright and Burton (2008), it was established that the sport program’s curriculum was relevant to the youth participants because they were able to practice life skills such as making choices, expressing opinions, and learning to evaluate themselves. However, the conclusion that the curriculum was relevant and meaningful to youths’ life experiences was not associated with transfer, but instead seen as separate from another observed theme, “seeing the potential for transfer.” Furthermore, this was based on researchers’ personal communication and included no supporting youth quotes to substantiate this claim. Another study done through a First Tee Golfing Academy included interviews with participants testing their beliefs, knowledge, and feelings about the values taught in the program (Brunelle, Danish, & Forneris, 2007). Here, it was determined that participants had gained essential life skill knowledge and values that they could effectively use in their communities; however, no mention of transfer of learning was included as part of this conclusion. While these studies are strengthened by their acknowledgement of youth perceptions of transfer, they still fall short of seeing transfer as a
process, including youth understanding and perceived relevance rather than solely behavioral outcomes.

One recent study did examine student perspectives, perceptions, and knowledge on the specific concept of transferring life skills. While students in this study reported that they learned valuable life skills from the program setting, they could not provide specific examples (Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2009). Another study addressed this problem by using an instrument referred to as a life skills knowledge test (Papacharisis, 2005), based on the work of Hogan (2000), to assess students’ knowledge and beliefs about the effective use of life skills (Goudas et al., 2006). Results indicated that students who participated in the program demonstrated enhanced knowledge about life skills and their ability to use them outside of sport. Collectively, these studies provide support for the youth perspective in the transfer process and illustrate that more attention should be paid to student insight on their understanding and the perceived relevance of life skill transfer as opposed to making the assumption that students are motivated to use them.

**Contributions from General Education**

One body of literature that may shed light on the gaps surrounding transfer is general education, the field that first defined the term. In education, transfer is defined as one of the most fundamental purposes of learning (McKeough, Lupart & Marini, 2013). The complex phenomenon is closely related to many successful learning outcomes such as knowledge retention (Bender & Fish, 2000), skill acquisition (Ma et al., 1999), and motivation (Egan, Yang, & Bartlett, 2004). A key finding among educational researchers is that in order for transfer to successfully occur, a student must a) be equipped with knowledge and strategies of the learned
content, b) be able to readily access those resources, and c) be motivated to adopt the life skill in another context (McKeough, Lupart, & Marini, 2013). Thus far, no sport-based articles have addressed these factors in their studies on transfer.

Another concept worth noting is how “utilization” plays a role in transfer. Bransford and Schwartz (1999) describe transfer as the extent to which learning of a response in one task or situation influences the response in another task or situation. Separate from this idea is whether or not students actually adopt or utilize the learned knowledge to change the outcome of a situation versus simply recalling the knowledge and not acting upon it. This poses the question of whether or not transfer is outcome dependent or whether transfer still occurs if a student merely acknowledges the prior lesson rather than using that knowledge to perform an action. In contrast, Marini and Genereux (1995) identify transfer as the process that occurs when a student applies what she or he learned in one situation to another situation. This implies that the act of transfer is dependent on the utilization of that knowledge. These two conflicting conceptualizations call for a closer examination of what constitutes transfer and how the outcome view of transfer is disputed in literature. These points will be expanded on later in this paper.

Individual learner qualities have also been shown to impact students’ ability to transfer knowledge. In a review of literature on transfer in math education, Prawat (1989) proposed students having reflective awareness as one component that helps facilitate the transfer process. This concept assumes that students are able to cognitively access previously learned material from their knowledge base and apply it to new situations. Other researchers note this cognitive
concept in the transfer process referring to it as *metacognition* (Brandsford & Schwartz, 1999), *mindfulness* (Salomon & Perkins, 1989), or *insight* (Cormier & Hagman, 2014). Taken together, there is agreement that in order for transfer to occur, a student needs to have the ability to bring previously established skills to a new situation, examine the situational cues, and generate strategies from prior learning to problem solve and make positive choices. That said, the student also needs to have a sufficient degree of original learning and comprehension in order to effectively transfer, which is based largely on the teacher’s strategies for imparting knowledge.

**Applications to SBYD.** The underlying mechanisms in transfer are difficult to study for several reasons. Many researchers find that transfer is a rare occurrence and is difficult to document empirically (Engle, 2006; McKeough, Lupart, & Marini, 2013). This is likely due in part to researchers’ inability to capture the moment of knowledge transfer. A further confounding variable is that students may not have the self-awareness to describe all the factors influencing their decision to utilize knowledge learned from the program in another context. This can be explained by applying this concept to the sport context. For example, if self-control strategies are taught during a soccer practice, and later in the day the student encounters a stressful situation but keeps his temper under control, it is illogical to assume that the student kept his temper in control as a direct result of the soccer lesson. There are likely countless other social, emotional, or contextual factors that affected the student’s willingness to stay in control of the situation (e.g., support from a friend, fear of consequences, recollection of advice from a parent, etc.). But what can be investigated is the thought processes a student has about content learned in the program, i.e., how one perceives the content to be relevant to life, whether or not one thinks
about this content in other settings, and if one is motivated to act on this content, independent of whether or not one actually acts upon it. Based on this, several key pieces of information can be synthesized from educational research on transfer of learning that are relevant to the SBYD context.

In general education, specific teaching strategies have been demonstrated to promote transfer of learning. Prawat (1989) concludes that one way to increase the likelihood that youth will transfer knowledge outside the program is through having group discussions where students are encouraged to communicate their thoughts about the newly learned material shortly after they are introduced to it. This promotes internal reflection and is evident in sport literature through the prescription that quality sport programs should have established discussion and reflection time (Hellison, 2011). Another teaching strategy that facilitates reflective awareness in youth is demonstrating how knowledge can be made useful in alternative contexts (Prawat, 1989). In a review of transfer in education, Engle (2006) echoed this strategy by explaining that “transfer is more likely to occur when learning contexts are framed as part of a larger ongoing intellectual conversation in which students are actively involved” (p. 451), meaning they determine the important aspects of their environment where the skills could be applied. Again, this relates to the sport context as quality SBYD coaches are called to make deliberate connections between life skills learned in sport and life skills to be used outside of sport (Danish & Nellen, 1997). Ideally, the sport environment should be represented as a smaller community in life, in which all the principles learned there can be applied on a larger scale to more complex environments in school, home, and community.
Another strategy proposed in education to promote transfer is for teachers to give opportunities for youth to practice newly learned skills in the original learning context (Cormier & Hagman, 2014). This allows learning patterns to be established that can be accessed and generalized in different contexts. However, students must experience the benefits of adapting the new behavior while partaking in practice attempts (Meichenbaum & Turk, 1987). This has significant implications for the feedback teachers and coaches give in learning contexts. Ideally, coaches in SBYD programs will construct programs that allow significant opportunities to reflect on and discuss life skills, see the relevance of life skills outside of sport, and practice the life skills in an evaluative environment.

**Types of transfer.** One major challenge to understanding the transfer of life skills process is identifying where learning can be transferred. A concern observed in the SBYD literature is how different the environments are between the initial learning context (e.g., sport setting) to where future application of life skills will take place (e.g., school, home, community). This may pose a challenge to students as they are not able to see the applicability and relevance of lessons learned in sport to other life domains (Danish & Nellen, 1997). One concept from general education literature that addresses this issue is the idea of near vs. far transfer (Leberman et al., 2006; Royer, Mestre, & Dufresne, 2005), also referred to as low road (near) and high road (far) transfer (Salomon & Perkins, 1989). Near transfer occurs when the original learning context is similar to the future learning context. For example, a coach can use an instance where a student loses her temper during soccer practice to demonstrate the importance of maintaining self-control. The team can then have a discussion on how using self-control on the soccer field
during practice can also be useful when playing soccer with friends during recess. Near transfer is a more unconscious process in that it promotes automatic learning and enables students to see a clear connection between two environments (Gordon & Doyle, 2015).

While near transfer is a result of extensive practice and automatization, high road transfer results from mindful generalization (Salomon & Perkins, 1989). Far transfer allows youth to make meaningful, positive choices in varying life contexts that are different from the original learning environment. For example, far transfer might occur when a student learns to set a free-throw percentage goal during basketball season and uses the same goal-setting principle to set a target grade for an academic class. This is a strongly sought-after goal in sport programs because it capitalizes on the positive effects of sport; however, it is much more difficult to facilitate than near transfer (Leberman et al., 2006). Far transfer involves higher order thinking skills, metacognition, and the ability to generalize learned concepts (Leberman et al., 2006; Salomon & Perkins, 1989). This is supported by researchers in the sport world who assert that the transfer process requires a certain level of cognitive maturity in being able to identify the relevance of these lessons for youth (Martinek & Lee, 2012).

A multitude of research findings suggest strategies for coaches to promote far transfer for students in sport programs (Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2012; Gould, Collins, Lauer, & Chung, 2007), but of particular interest to this current paper are the recommendations that some researchers have made related to the student role in the transfer process. As previously stated, Lee and Martinek (2013) describe the need for youth to reflect on what life skills can be learned in sport programs through examining challenges and barriers to application, while Wright and
Burton (2008) call for students to examine the relevance of material learned in sport programs to their lives. Both of these studies highlight the need for students to take an active role in the transfer process through higher order cognitive thinking, a factor that continues to be overlooked and unmeasured in SBYD literature. The difference between near and far transfer is important to consider as it underscores the complexity of student processes involved in transferring life skills from one domain to another.

**Transformative Experience**

There is one existing framework from science education that offers crucial insight on how students make use of learned material in alternative contexts. Pugh and colleagues (2009) call this “transformative experience,” which establishes how students integrate classroom science concepts into their everyday experiences. Their rationale for the term “transformative” is that “for a learning experience to be complete, it must yield an expanded experiencing of the everyday world,” (Pugh et al., 2009, p.3). Pugh and colleagues (2009) define transformative experience as a type of engagement (Fredericks, Blumenfield, & Paris, 2004) with behavioral, affective, and cognitive components. Important to note, the authors make a clear distinction between transformative experience and transfer. Transfer is more broadly defined by emphasizing *ability* in the application of knowledge and skills (Pugh & Bergin, 2006), compared to transformative experience that focuses on the feeling (affective), value (cognitive) and action (behavioral). The major difference between the two concepts is that students participate in a transformative experience when they apply learning in a situation that does not demand it. According to the authors, transformative experience is an active choice due to perceived value
and relevance, versus transfer which describes a task that requires use of learned content (Pugh et al., 2009). Presumably, those students who partake in transformative experiences will likely continue to develop or maintain transfer ability over time.

A transformative experience is defined by three major features: a) motivated use, b) expansion of perception, and c) experiential value. Motivated use describes “the application of learning in a context in which such use is not required” (Pugh et al., 2009, p. 3). Expansion of perception is a cognitive component that includes “seeing and understanding aspects of the world in new ways” and experiential value “refers to the valuing of content for its usefulness in immediate, everyday experience” (Pugh et al., 2009, p.4). Transformative experiences result from meaningful instances where a student interacts with the subject matter at a deeper level. This framework strongly aligns with the argument that transfer is a process that may be linked to, but not understood simply in terms of, behavioral outcomes. In the next section, a cognitive process that connects students learning of life skills and application of life skills outside of the sport setting is presented through Pugh’s transformative experience lens.

**Toward a Transfer Model in SBYD**

The next portion of this paper presents a graphic representing the transfer of life skills process through sport. The proposed model integrates aspects of what has been posited in SBYD literature on transfer of life skills through sport, as well as concepts from Pugh’s (2009) transformative experience framework and general education literature. Figure 1.1 shows three interconnected components, starting with program implementation by teachers and coaches,
leading to what students can learn from the program, concluded by the transfer process, the focus of this paper. This graphic is dynamic in that these processes are not happening in a linear fashion; rather, they can occur at the same time or take place out of order, depending on the student’s experience.

Program Implementation

The first component essential to fostering the transfer of life skills process begins with program implementation, or how teachers and coaches execute the program design, structure, and curriculum. This concept has been well developed in the SBYD literature thus far. In summary, quality implementation includes developing a program philosophy that emphasizes relationship building (Fraser-Thomas & Cote, 2009; Holt, 2007) and teaching life skills.
integrated into sport activities rather than as separate lessons (Hellison & Walsh, 2002). Additionally, teachers or coaches should also be trained to provide opportunities for students to practice life skills in the program setting (Gould & Carson, 2008; Salomon & Perkins, 1989) and give feedback to them on their grasp of the material and ability to apply it (Meichenbaum & Turk, 1987). Finally, program teachers or coaches must link the sport experience to life by having intentional discussions about how what is learned in the sport context connects to school, home, and community settings (Engle, 2006; Hellison, 2011; Prawat, 1989). Provided that these components are effectively build into a sport program, the transfer of life skills process has the potential to unfold.

**Student Learning**

In any sport program, student learning results from quality program implementation. As discussed previously, SBYD research supports this idea, as Martinek and Lee (2012) posited that students must be aware of and understand the life skills taught in their sport program. Awareness is marked by the insight that skills are present in the curriculum and actually being taught. For example, a student on a soccer team is aware that leadership and self-control are two of the lessons the coach introduced today. Some research has demonstrated that students are aware of life skill lessons being taught in their sport program, but they were not able to specifically identify the skills (Danish et al., 2002), or they incorrectly identified skills that were not explicitly taught (Holt, Tink, Mandigo, & Fox, 2008). For these reasons, it is critical that coaches and teachers have explicit discussions on what life skills are taught to best promote learning. Beyond a level of awareness, students must also understand the learning content (Danish &
Nellen, 1997). Understanding is defined by students not only being able to identify life skills that are taught but also demonstrating insight on how these life skills can be explained. In the prior example, this would amount to the soccer player being able to define leadership and self-control as a result of being exposed to the lesson. Salomon and Perkins (1989) conclude that when students demonstrate an understanding of content, they create a mental model of the knowledge so that it can stay with them across multiple contexts. This sets the stage for students to be able to make connections between content learned in sports and situations outside of the sport setting.

**Cognitive Connections**

**Experiential value.** Once student learning has been established through an awareness and understanding of life skills content, this paper proposes that a cognitive bridging process is necessary to connect student learning with application. Key features from this stage draw from Pugh’s (2009) concept of transformative learning based on its emphasis of enhancing the way students learn from and engage with material. As stated previously, Pugh’s (2009) framework finds that one factor in facilitating a transformative experience is students assigning an experiential value to the material they initially learn by assessing its relevance outside of the original setting in which it was learned in. This includes seeing the utility value of the lessons learned in the program and connecting that to when an opportunity to transfer life skills presents itself. As an example, in the sport setting this might include a student recalling a leadership discussion from football practice when faced with the opportunity to volunteer for a community service project at school. The student makes the connection that volunteering for this service project is a good example of using leadership, as was taught during football practice.
**Motivated use.** While experiential value helps students see the value of life skills, they also need to be motivated to use them. As an example, having a “motivated use” for transferring life skills could include looking for opportunities to demonstrate self-control strategies that were learned as part of a relaxation exercise during volleyball. Central to motivation is the idea that students must believe they will be effective in executing the desired behavior (Danish & Nellen, 1997; Petitpas et al., 1992). This references the concept of self-efficacy, or the degree to which one feels capable of performing a task (Bandura, 1994). Self-efficacy can be built in the sport program setting through many sources, including coaches giving positive feedback, which Bandura refers to as verbal persuasion, or coaches giving opportunities for students to practice skills successfully, which Bandura refers to as successful past performance.

Another foundational theory that contributes to one’s motivation for carrying out a behavior is expectancy value theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). According to this theory, students have certain expectancies, or beliefs, about their ability to carry out a behavior and this shapes whether or not they choose to perform the behavior. For example, if a student believes he tends to have a hard time keeping his temper in check when his team is losing, this leads him to expect that he might have a meltdown after making a bad play when his team is behind. This belief then impacts his actual behavior and greatly contributes to whether or not he will handle the situation appropriately. This theory is relevant to the current framework in that it highlights the importance of student thought processes behind actions. Rather than determining if students are simply motivated to be leaders or show respect, it is important to understand the contributing
factors to this motivation, i.e., what is their expectancy and self-efficacy related to specific life skills in various environments.

The environmental context is a final contributing factor to motivational use. To successfully perform a task, students must believe they have resources that outweigh constraints to effectively carry out a life skill (Pea, 1987). Sometimes these constraints come in the form of personal values that combat the learning process, such as students feeling helpless or in disagreement with program goals (e.g., “There’s no point in being respectful in school because my teachers don’t respect me either,” Hellison & Martinek, 2006). Other times environmental factors are to blame because students do not feel they can safely or effectively adopt new behaviors in a way that would bring about positive results. This is particularly true for those youth who live in underserved communities with prevalent gang violence because it may not be safe for them to adopt healthy behaviors that conflict with gang culture (Buckle & Walsh, 2013). As an example, it would not be advisable for a student to demonstrate their social responsibility by asking a known gang member to pick up a piece of trash that they just littered outside on the street. With these factors in mind, it is critical that sport programs address the potential contextual barriers that exist in a youth’s life and provide resources (e.g., mentors, safe space, social support) to youth so they can act on their motivation to transfer life skills (Allen, Rhind, & Koshy, 2015).

Expansion of perception. One final cognitive bridging component that is important to consider as part of the transfer process is what Pugh (2009) refers to as “expansion of perception.” This entails thinking about program content in different and varied ways than what
was originally taught. For example, a student might notice how her coach’s advice about taking deep breaths before an important game can also be helpful when preparing for a test at school. In a broader sense, a student’s perceptions could be expanded through seeing how certain sports situations mirror life situations and coming to the conclusion that sport is a good opportunity to develop life skills. This type of high-level, deep reflection is an essential component in the transfer process because it maximizes the role of reflection and cognition in promoting valued behavioral outcomes. Taken altogether, these three factors from transformative experience greatly inform the transfer process and should encourage researchers to re-conceptualize how transfer is defined.

**Application**

Based on a combination of the above three cognitive components of being motivated, seeing the relevance, and expanding perceptions, one can expect students will have the opportunity to apply the material they’ve learned and thought about. Most SBYD studies evaluate this stage through measuring evidence of changed behaviors (Allen, Rhind, & Koshy, 2015; Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2009; Wright & Burton, 2008; Wright, Li, Ding, & Pickering, 2010). However, I propose re-conceptualizing the “application” stage as one that is represented by student learning informing future decision making, changing their worldview, or changing their behaviors (e.g., taking on a leadership role, mediating a social conflict, participating in a class discussion). This expanded definition no longer confines the transfer process to a researcher’s ability to identify the desired behavior, but asks for consideration of youth intentionality and their thinking processes that lead to acting in a prosocial way.
Conclusion

Despite the widespread belief that a strong purpose in education is to inspire students to apply what they have learned to new situations in life, transfer is widely regarded as a controversial and complex topic in education (Bransford & Schwartz, 1999; Prawat, 1989; Salomon & Perkins, 1989) and sport (Gould & Carson, 2008; Hellison & Walsh, 2002; Whitley, 2012; Wright, Dyson, Moten, 2012). SBYD literature is strongly rooted in research that either describes program qualities that promote transfer of life skills (Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2012; Danish, Fazio, Nellen, & Owens, 2002; Petipas et al., 2005) or assesses behavioral outcomes that presumably result from sport participation (Allen, Rhind, & Koshy, 2015; Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2009; Holt et al., 2008; Wright & Burton, 2011; Wright, Li, Ding, & Pickering, 2010). However, what happens in between the start of a sport program and a student eventually making use of life skills outside the program is often overlooked in the research. The purpose of this paper was to describe and synthesize relevant transfer theories from sport and general education literature in order to lay the groundwork for developing a conceptual framework that includes the cognitive bridging processes youth engage in during the transfer process. Figure 1.1, displaying the use of transformative experience in the sport context provides practitioners with valuable insight on how transfer of life skills can be facilitated through a sport program, specifically through developing students’ thinking about life skills. Furthermore, this paper contributes to the broader SBYD literature by offering a position that sport participation can facilitate positive youth development without evidence of youth behaviors, which can be challenging to capture.
given current research methodologies and the individualized nature of students’ needs (Wright, Dyson, & Moten, 2012).

However, because these are preliminary ideas that derive from multiple fields of research, some cautionary points exist. First, it should be established that this is a dynamic model, and throughout a youth’s participation in a sport program and sport experiences, one may go back and forth between steps. The nature of research that examines youth sport is that rarely do processes happen in a unidimensional way (Hellison & Walsh, 2002). Rather, this model represents the interplay and interaction between steps that make up the transfer of life skills process. It is also important to note that in practice, students may be involved in a sport program over extended periods of time. Therefore, their experience of transfer can take time to develop and evolve over time. More research should examine the role of time in students experiencing transfer, specifically whether effects from the program setting wear off over time or are enhanced. Furthermore, while Figure 1.1 is novel due to its focus on the cognitive elements in the transfer of life skills, ideas in this paper were based solely on SBYD and general education literature. Other well-developed areas that examine transfer of learning (i.e., adult education, see Mestre, 2002; business, see Mayer, Dale, Fraccastoro, & Moss, 2011; job training, see Hutchins, Nimon, Bates, & Holton, 2013; motor learning, see Lee, 1988) may be considered in future research on this topic for the continued improvement and refinement of how transfer can be graphically represented.

Future studies should expand on the transfer of life skills process by studying how students think about life skills, e.g., using Pugh and colleagues (2009) framework on
transformative learning. Qualitative methodologies such as interviews and case studies could provide insight on the specific cognitive bridging processes youth experience, as well as how time plays a role in this process. Additionally quantitative studies that examine how in-program experiences affect youth perceptions about their ability to make use of material outside of the sport program are needed. Studies such as these can be used to empirically validate and/or improve Figure 1.1. Overall, the rationale for more rigorous studies in this area is strong since transfer is a valued learning outcome that can promote youth development and have a positive impact on society.
Since it was first introduced to the school curriculum, physical education (PE) in the United States has served the purpose of promoting movement, fitness, and motor skill learning for youth participants in the academic setting (Swanson, 1995). In the present day, the goals of PE have broadened as psychomotor goals only comprise three of the five current Society for Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) America (2014) national content standards. According to SHAPE America, the National PE Standards describe what a physically literate student should understand and be able to do as a result of their participation in a PE program. Researchers who study sport-based youth development (Dyson, 2014; Hemphill, Templin, & Wright, 2015; Jacobs & Wright, 2014; Parker & Hellison, 2001) have placed a particular emphasis on Standards Four and Five, which focus on the non-physical, developmental outcomes that can be learned through PE. Standard Four calls for youth to demonstrate personally and socially responsible behaviors as a result of PE participation, while Standard Five emphasizes the importance of youth valuing physical activity for “health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and social interaction” (SHAPE, 2014). Unlike Standards One through Three that focus on delivering a straightforward curriculum that promotes fitness, movement, and motor skills, Standards Four and Five require teaching techniques that may be less obvious to physical educators in terms of how to effectively integrate responsibility and social skill lessons into the PE setting. For this reason, recent
research has sought to address how physical educators can incorporate personal and social responsibility into class activities while fostering self-expression, social interaction, and other positive outcomes (e.g., Gordon, 2010; Hemphill, Templin, & Wright, 2015; Pascual et al., 2011).

While this line of research has focused on the positive developmental outcomes that can be gained from PE programs designed to promote individual growth, various aspects of research design should be considered in order to assess their value to the field (Hellison & Martinek, 2006). First, PE teachers should first be evaluated for actually promoting these personal and social behaviors in their regular teaching practices. This includes the introduction of life skills education, or teaching students skills (e.g., leadership, respect, self-control) that can be useful and promote healthy choices outside of the PE setting. Second, these positive developmental factors that can result from PE participation must be studied directly to make an empirical case for PE experiences building life skills and fostering student growth. Valid and reliable instruments that examine which life skills students learn in the PE context that they believe will help them in everyday life should be utilized. The purpose of this current study, then, was to examine how students in a PE class with an emphasis on developing personal and social responsibility interpret their PE experience with respect to learning life skills and transferring them to other areas in life.

**The Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Model**

Sport and physical activity have been demonstrated as effective methods for teaching life skills because they are activities inherently enjoyed by youth (Chalip, Csikszentmihalyi, Kleiber,
& Larson, 1984; Gould & Carson, 2008) and they contain obvious opportunities to align personal and social responsibility lessons with skill acquisition, teambuilding, and the experiences of winning and losing (Gould & Carson, 2008). Given that the context of PE provides a natural opportunity to promote life skill education, effective PE teachers should seek out teaching strategies that intentionally address principles for developing youths’ character in prosocial ways (Jacobs & Wright, 2014). One most well-developed approach for implementing youth development principles into PE is the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility model (TPSR; Hellison, 2011), which is a pedagogical model that uses sport as a vehicle to teach life skills that can be transferred outside the sport context (Escarti, Gutiérrez, Pascual, & Llopis, 2010; Li, Wright, Rukavina, & Pickering, 2008; Wright & Burton, 2008).

In the TPSR model, sport and physical activity are used as vehicles to teach and improve life skills that students can develop in the PE setting and apply them in their schools, homes, and communities. Specifically, PE lessons informed by the TPSR model are designed to incorporate specific skills such as respect, self-control, effort, caring, and leadership so that students may develop and practice these behaviors in a supervised setting that encourages adoption of these skills in other life areas (Hellison & Walsh, 2002). For example, while giving directions for a soccer drill, a PE teacher might introduce the term “effort” and describe how effort means trying hard even when you do not want to. After the drill, the teacher could ask students to reflect on and rate their personal effort during the activity and then have a discussion about how using effort in soccer can be like using effort in school. The model also imparts the importance of
forming positive adult relationships with coaches so that a trusting environment is established and students can feel safe to practice and develop the goals of the model.

The ultimate goal of the TPSR model is for the teacher to provide intentional learning experiences that help youth develop life skills that can be transferred to other life contexts (Hellison, 2011). The empirical and theoretical literature supporting the TPSR model as a method promoting the transfer of life skills outside of the PE or sport context is rapidly expanding. Researchers have proposed a connection between TPSR programs and positive academic performance (Martinek & Lee, 2012; Martinek, McLaughlin, & Schilling, 1999; Martinek, Schilling, & Johnson, 2001; Walsh, Ozaeta, & Wright, 2010), civic behaviors (DeBusk & Hellison, 1989; Hellison, Martinek, & Cutforth, 1996), social skills (Liu, Karp, & Davis, 2010), and personal qualities such as resiliency (Martinek & Hellison, 1997) and leadership (Martinek, Schilling, & Hellison, 2006). Despite these connections being made between the model and the transfer outcomes, there is limited empirical support for what types of transfer experiences students have as a result of PE participation with a teacher who utilizes the TPSR framework.

Several articles have explored the design, implementation, and evaluation of the TPSR model within PE programming. Hastie and Buchanan (2000) developed a 26-lesson curriculum of a made-up game called “X-Ball” for 45 sixth-grade boys using a class format that included goal setting, reflection time, problem solving, teambuilding, and skill development. In this study, observations and interviews were used to gain student perspectives on the use of TPSR in PE. Results indicated that the students appropriately grasped the responsibility levels as defined by
the TPSR model and were able to transfer those values into the PE sport lessons. This study illustrates the effective use of TPSR within a PE program that also fulfills the requirements of learning physical sport competencies. However, despite youth finding life skills such as goal setting and problem solving as valuable within the PE setting, the study did not examine the ultimate goal of the model, transfer, or youths’ application of these skills outside of PE.

Escarti and colleagues (2010) explored the implementation of TPSR in an international PE setting with 30 adolescent students from Spain. In this study, participants were randomly assigned to control and intervention groups, with the intervention group receiving PE lessons informed by the TPSR framework while the control group received skill acquisition lessons with no responsibility-based education. Student interviews were conducted and participants in the intervention group described positive changes in peer self-control, problem-solving abilities, and levels of mutual respect after a year of receiving the intervention. Students in the control group did not observe these same changes. Additionally, the intervention teacher was also interviewed and confirmed the positive behaviors self-reported by the students, specifically noting a change in behavior, willingness to listen, and using communication to solve peer conflicts. This study demonstrates how TPSR can be effective in enhancing students’ beliefs about responsibility-based teaching; however, like in Hastie and Buchanan’s (2000) study, changes were not observed in other contexts.

Jung and Wright (2012) assessed the effect of a TPSR PE program on at-risk students in South Korea. Six eighth-grade students deemed as problematic based on their anti-social behavior, academic struggles, and propensity for violence were purposely sampled and delivered
TPSR-based sport lessons in their physical education classes. The six students were interviewed after 20 PE class periods that used the TPSR approach and the interviews demonstrated many instances of students recalling responsibility-based values (e.g., respect, self-motivation, caring, and self-control) and utilizing them during class. However, in this study there was a lack of focus on transfer as well. Jung and Wright’s (2012) findings are supported by Wright and Burton (2008), who demonstrated that the TPSR model can foster a positive learning environment and impact student behavior in the PE setting. Gordon (2010) also studied the experiences of a PE teacher implementing the TPSR model within a PE class as a result of professional development training. Through mixed methods of student self-assessments, observations, and interviews he demonstrated that students in the program exhibited more responsible behaviors and developed a strong awareness of personal and social responsibility’s value within PE. Taken together, these studies offer evidence of students seeing the relevance of and applying life skills within the PE context; however, the ultimate goal, transferring positive behavior outside of the program, has not been demonstrated in physical education (Gordon, 2010).

TPSR programs based in physical education classes have the benefit of reaching many children at once in a consistent and extended format. While the success of the TSPR program is largely defined by the training and execution of the PE teacher, even minimal implementation of a responsibility values system and deliberate class format is an improvement from a PE program based solely on skill acquisition. However, given that the ultimate goal of the model is to promote transfer and studies have not found any support for this, the implementation of the
model should be examined as a way to ascertain why PE programs do not demonstrate these outcomes.

**Implementation.** As evidenced by the review of literature, one reason the TPSR model is utilized in PE is because it provides a practical and comprehensive way to integrate developmental strategies into a curriculum that can benefit multiple students over extended periods of time. Practically, some PE teachers tend to employ the TPSR model formally during a set sport unit other teachers choose to incorporate specific components of the model throughout the academic year (Hellison, 2011). According to Dyson and Casey (2012), it is common for teachers to modify their models-based instruction to suit their preferences. Gordon and colleagues (2012) add that variation in teaching the model may be a result of teachers having a strong understanding of the foundations of the model that enables them to modify their implementation in a way that addresses student needs and context while still carrying out the goals of the model. As is crucial in any models-based instruction, best practices for implementation include understanding the needs of the students, connecting to greater schoolwide initiatives, and seeking ongoing professional support to ensure implementation fidelity (Metzler, 2011). In the TPSR context, two studies captured teachers’ feedback on implementation describing the need for having a strong commitment to a new teaching style. They observed that implementation of TPSR is most effective when ongoing support and feedback is provided throughout the implementation period (Escarti, Gutierrez, Pascual, & Llopis, 2010; Escarti, Gutierrez, Pascual, & Marin, 2010).
Another study examined the implementation of the TPSR model among two teachers in PE who received significant training on both the theoretical and practical elements of the model (Pascual et al., 2011). It was found that one teacher implemented the model with a high degree of alignment to its theoretical underpinnings and this was associated with positive student outcomes compared to the other teacher who demonstrated poor implementation and thus facilitated fewer positive student outcomes. Another important factor to consider in the implementation process is teacher core beliefs and philosophy. Related to this, the teacher who possessed core beliefs aligned with an emphasis on teaching for the transfer of life skills facilitated their successful implementation of the model. Also notable, the teacher in the intervention group suggested that implementing TPSR requires a strong commitment to a new teaching style and works best when ongoing support and feedback is given throughout the implementation period (Escarti, Gutierrez, Pascual, & Llopis, 2010; Escarti, Gutierrez, Pascual, & Marin, 2010). This study demonstrates the need for researchers to assess the degree to which teachers enact the model in a reliable and trustworthy way.

**Fidelity.** Researchers have also pointed to the importance of providing training to teachers that increases their awareness of their interactions with students (Dougherty, 1971) and provides them with practical and effective instructional strategies that reflect teaching models (Mancini, Wuest, & Van der Mars, 1985). One study demonstrated the importance of teachers participating in frequent and ongoing reflections while enacting models-based teaching strategies (Buchanan & Ulrich, 2001). This touches on the concept of fidelity, or the degree to which the
teacher’s implementation of the model matches the model’s inherent philosophy and applied components (Wright & Li, 2009).

Systematic observations have been demonstrated as one method for promoting fidelity and supporting responsibility-based professional development of PE teachers (Hemphill, Templin, & Wright, 2015). Hemphill and colleagues (2015) demonstrated that the use of a systematic observation tool was successful in both increasing teacher awareness about responsibility-based teaching strategies and increasing the likelihood of teachers implementing the teaching strategies. In the current study, an observation tool was first utilized to gain a baseline understanding of current teaching practices with respect to the TPSR model. The tool was then used as a professional development training instrument to help the PE teacher become more intentional about incorporating responsibility-based strategies into the curriculum, along with ensuring fidelity to the teaching model.

This observation tool, called the Tool for Assessing Responsibility-Based Education 2.0 (TARE), includes concrete instructional strategies that are consistent with the TPSR teaching philosophy (Escarti et al., 2015). Wright and Craig (2011), the authors of the first version of the TARE, acknowledged that while the TARE was originally designed for research purposes, it may also serve as an educational tool for teachers and practitioners learning to adopt the model.

The development of this instrument was informed by several years of the authors’ immersion in TPSR practice and research and resulted in the development of nine essential teaching strategies observed across model TPSR programs: modeling respect, setting expectations, providing opportunities for success, fostering social interaction, assigning
management tasks, promoting leadership, giving choices and voices, giving students a role in assessment, and addressing the transfer of life skills. Each teaching strategy can be implemented through various tactics that a teacher might use depending on the sport content, age of students, size of the group, etc. For example, giving choices and voices is a general strategy that could be implemented with tactics such as a) having students decide the scoring system of a game, b) allowing student leaders to evenly create teams, or c) giving students a say in what cool-down stretches to end class with. The authors of this instrument acknowledge that the teaching strategies are listed as a loose progression, with the later strategies being more difficult to implement (e.g., leadership, choices and voices, role in assessment, and transfer) and the earlier strategies being essential to any good teaching practice (e.g., modeling respect, setting expectations, giving opportunities for success; Wright & Craig, 2011). Thus, while all nine teaching strategies are essential to the goals of the TPSR model, even in model program settings it is not expected that teachers are implementing every strategy at every interval or even in every class.

The TARE 2.0 instrument also assesses youth behaviors through nine categories (i.e., participation, engagement, showing respect, cooperating with peers, encouraging others, helping others, leading, expressing voice, asking for help). These behaviors are presumed to result from high-quality responsibility-based teaching, as defined by the TPSR model. In the current study, the use of the TARE baseline observations was extensive in the training phase. As observed in previous studies, the TARE serves as an educational tool informing practitioners on the core teaching strategies of the model (Hemphill, Templin, & Wright, 2015; Wright & Craig, 2011).
Ratings from this portion of the instrument provided crucial information to the intervention teacher on how her students reacted to her teaching style and what type of experiences they had as a result of the model. Ratings from the teacher assessment part of the instrument served as feedback for what strategies she generally implemented well as a part of her normal practice and what strategies could use more focus and effort to better promote life skills transfer. This gave the teacher the opportunity to share her interpretations of the teaching strategies and compare them to the operational definitions as a way to enhance her understanding of the model (Hemphill, Templin, & Wright, 2015).

Despite the support for using the TPSR model as a method for promoting positive student outcomes in PE, there is a lack of research examining students’ perceptions of life skills and transfer while also measuring program fidelity. Specifically, there is a need for research to (a) describe how youths’ PE experiences affect beliefs about their ability to transfer life skills outside of the context in which they learn (Weiss et al., 2014) and (b) use a validated observation tool to examine how a teacher’s implementation of the model moderates this process. A focus on the youth perspective would result in a greater understanding of how to facilitate the transfer of life skills process through teaching in the PE setting. Furthermore, a greater understanding of this phenomenon will enhance both the PE experience for individual youth and the value of the PE subject area in the greater school curriculum (Goudas, Dermitzaki, Leondari, & Danish, 2006; Jacobs & Wright, 2014). Thus, the current study’s design was inspired by the literature that calls for a greater examination of how student exposure to responsibility-based education affects their PE experiences and perspectives on the transfer of life skills process. Therefore, the purpose of
this study was to explore the following research question: Does a teacher who utilizes the TPSR framework have an effect on youths’ perceived PE experiences and their perceptions about transferring life skills from pre- to post-intervention compared to a teacher who does not use the TPSR framework?

Methods

Research Design

The current study employed a quasi-experimental research design with intervention and control groups tested before and after the intervention period. Both the intervention teacher’s and control teacher’s students received a baseline survey assessing the extent to which their teacher provided responsibility-based experiences in the PE setting and the students’ transfer of life skills learned in PE. Next, baseline observational data using the Tool for Assessing Responsibility-Based Education 2.0 (TARE; Escartí, Wright, Pascual, & Gutiérrez, 2015) was collected daily for one week (five class sessions) for both teachers. For the intervention teacher, the observational data was used to describe her baseline use of responsibility-based teaching strategies in PE. Job-embedded PD training was then provided to her to enhance her use of TPSR teaching strategies and this style of teaching was implemented as an intervention for four weeks, spanning the volleyball unit. Systematic observations of both teachers were conducted over the intervention period, and students of both teachers received an identical post-survey instrument at the conclusion of the intervention. Both teachers delivered the volleyball unit at the same time, and the time period between the pre- and post-surveys lasted the duration of the unit, which was
four weeks or 15 class days, accounting for school holidays or special schedules for teacher meetings.

**Participants and Setting**

Participants in this study were 122 students from a middle school in a university town located in a small city in northern Illinois. The school has 644 sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students and the student body is 61% Caucasian, 19% Hispanic, 13% African American, 4% multi-racial, and 2% Asian. Forty-eight percent of the students in this school are identified as low income based on receiving free and reduced lunch.

The control teacher in this study is a Caucasian male and has been teaching PE for over 10 years at the middle-school level. The intervention teacher, a Caucasian female, has taught PE for 19 years at the middle-school level and has been a part of a professional development partnership with the local university for the past three years. The intervention teacher’s experience with the partnership consisted of co-teaching PE classes with two university faculty over the course of an academic year. Throughout this process, the intervention teacher received feedback on how to incorporate different instructional models (i.e., sport education, adventure education) geared toward student development. Because of this intensive training, the intervention teacher was then recruited for participation in the current study based on the prior knowledge that her ongoing PD relationships gave her experience with model-based teaching, not including the TPSR model.

All students from three of the intervention teacher’s and control teacher’s PE classes (i.e., a sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade class) were eligible to participate in the study. On average
there are 29 students in each of the six PE classes. Of the students invited to participate in this study (n= 173), the final sample consisted of 122 students who returned assent forms and completed both pre- and post-surveys. There were 20 students who submitted a consent form but did not complete both a pre- and post-survey due to being absent on survey distribution days or not wanting to participate in the follow-up survey. The majority of the participants were Caucasian (44%) with the remaining identifying as African American (20%), Hispanic (17%), two or more races (17%), or Asian (1.5%), reflective of the school’s overall ethnicity makeup. See Table 2.1 for a detailed breakdown of participant information.

Table 2.1. Student Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall (N=122)</th>
<th>Intervention Teacher Students (N=67)</th>
<th>Control Teacher Students (N=55)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender N (%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>62 (51)</td>
<td>30 (45)</td>
<td>30 (55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>60 (49)</td>
<td>37 (55)</td>
<td>25 (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age N (%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>19 (15)</td>
<td>8 (12)</td>
<td>11 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>49 (40)</td>
<td>25 (37)</td>
<td>24 (43.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 years</td>
<td>31 (25)</td>
<td>22 (33)</td>
<td>9 (16.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 years</td>
<td>23 (19)</td>
<td>12 (18)</td>
<td>11 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade N (%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th Graders</td>
<td>32 (26)</td>
<td>18 (27)</td>
<td>14 (25.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th Graders</td>
<td>54 (44)</td>
<td>27 (40)</td>
<td>27 (49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Graders</td>
<td>36 (30)</td>
<td>22 (33)</td>
<td>14 (25.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>54 (44)</td>
<td>27 (40)</td>
<td>27 (49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>24 (20)</td>
<td>14 (21)</td>
<td>10 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>21 (17)</td>
<td>13 (19)</td>
<td>8 (14.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2 (1.5)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (3.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 or more races</td>
<td>21 (17)</td>
<td>13 (19)</td>
<td>8 (14.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prior to data collection, approval was granted by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the school district, and the school principal to conduct the investigation. Letters were then distributed to all potential participants explaining the study’s purpose and procedure and also sent home to parents/guardians giving them the option to exclude their child from the study if they did not want them to participate. No parents requested their child be excluded from the study.

Before distributing the surveys, the researcher explained to students that the purpose of the study was to learn about what youth take away from their physical education program and use in their lives. Written assent was obtained from all participants before they started the survey. Students took between 10 and 20 minutes to complete the measures. Those students who did not wish to participate in the survey completed sport-related worksheets such as crossword puzzles.

**Overview of the Intervention**

The intervention teacher was trained by the author of the study and her faculty advisor, a prominent researcher in the sport-based youth development field. The training process consisted of an educational session on incorporating responsibility-based strategies from the TPSR model into PE class time. Specifically, empowerment-based teaching strategies such as giving students a say in class decisions, promoting student leadership through peer coaching, fostering student reflection through discussion, and teaching for transfer were the major components of the
training. A customized training manual consisting of directions for in-class volleyball activities, equipment needed, and discussion questions was devised by the author and given to the intervention teacher. Additionally, because the author of the study was observing daily class lessons, informal daily debriefing sessions were conducted before and after classes as a manner for providing formative feedback. These approaches to professional development (e.g., teaching model fidelity, providing sample lesson plans, having briefing and debriefing sessions) align with prior research on introducing model-based instruction through on-site professional development with a PE teacher (Sinelnikov, 2009).

Over the course of the volleyball unit, the intervention teacher incorporated at least one new responsibility-based activity that focused on a life skill (e.g., effort, respect, self-control) into her daily class content on volleyball competencies. It should be noted that she also chose to incorporate the responsibility-based activity into her other PE sections that were not being observed in order to gain practice and identify any necessary modifications for the classes she was being observed in. Table 2.2 describes the types of responsibility-based lessons that were integrated into class content, developed by the researcher. The control teacher participated in normal teaching practices on building sport competencies in volleyball (e.g., passing, setting, serving). Both classes were observed for three class periods daily during their volleyball unit, which totaled 30 teaching hours corresponding to 15 class sessions. Previous research has demonstrated students being exposed to responsibility-based sessions with a similar frequency and dosage is sufficient to affect students’ perceptions on personal and social responsibility curriculums (Wright & Burton, 2008; Wright, Li, Ding, & Pickering, 2010).
Table 2.2.
Sample Teaching Strategies Used by Intervention Teacher during Volleyball Unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Activity</th>
<th>Responsibility-Based Strategy Utilized</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer coaching using feedback sandwich approach of volleyball serves in partners</td>
<td>Promoting leadership&lt;br&gt;Role in assessment Fostering social interaction</td>
<td>In-class activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-designed passing drill in teams</td>
<td>Giving choices and voices Fostering social interaction Promoting leadership</td>
<td>In-class activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-led discussion on effort and periodic self-ratings of effort during class</td>
<td>Role in assessment Choices and voices Transfer</td>
<td>In-class discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-led discussion on self-control and self-control exit assignment</td>
<td>Role in assessment Choices and voices Transfer</td>
<td>In-class discussion&lt;br&gt;In-class worksheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running warmup with reflective questions on role of PE in school and at home</td>
<td>Transfer Fostering social interaction Choices and voices</td>
<td>In-class activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz questions on class themes of effort, self-control, and respect</td>
<td>Choices and voices Transfer</td>
<td>Online quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball warmup with getting to know you icebreaker</td>
<td>Fostering social interaction Modeling respect</td>
<td>In-class activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Procedures and Instrumentation**

At baseline, an 85-item survey containing demographic questions, the 41-item Youth Experience Survey 2.0 (YES 2.0; Hansen & Larson, 2005), and the 44-item Life Skills Transfer Survey (LSTS; Weiss, Bolter, & Kipp, 2014) were administered in paper-and-pencil format in a regularly scheduled PE class at the start of both teachers’ volleyball units. The post-survey with identical questions was also distributed at the end of the volleyball unit in order to examine changes over time across the two teachers.

**In-program experiences.** The YES 2.0 (Hansen & Larson, 2005) was developed to measure what experiences adolescents report having in a specific program. The survey has been used in a variety of settings including sports, arts, service groups, and school-based and community-based programs. Selected scales were taken from the original 70-item survey. Scales were selected based on their relevance to the PE setting and connection to the study’s purpose. Selected scales included items focused on identify experiences (i.e., identify exploration, identify reflection), initiative experiences (i.e., goal setting, effort, problem solving, time management), physical skills, interpersonal relationships (i.e., diverse peer relationships, prosocial norms), teamwork and social skills (i.e., group process skills, feedback, leadership and responsibility). Example items included, “PE got me thinking about who I am” (identify reflection), or “In PE I learned to push myself” (effort). For each item, participants rated whether they had a given experience during their last two weeks in PE class (i.e., pre-survey) or during their volleyball unit (i.e., post-survey). Responses included a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from “not at all” (1) to “yes, definitely” (4). The scale was developed and validated with a sample of 2,280 high-
school students from nineteen diverse high schools from Illinois. Internal consistency for the YES 2.0 has been demonstrated in previous studies with Cronbach $\alpha$ values ranging from 0.77 to 0.94 (Larson, Hansen, & Moneta, 2006; Strachan, Côté, & Deakin, 2009). Internal consistency for this measure in the current study was conducted with Cronbach $\alpha$ values ranging from .73 to .94.

**Life skills transfer.** The LSTS (Weiss, Bolter, & Kipp, 2014) included 50 items that measured the transfer of life skills from a program setting to other areas in a youth’s life. For the final version, one scale called “Meeting and Greeting” was omitted since those skills were not taught in the PE setting. The final measure included items related to seven life skills presumed to be taught in quality sport-based youth development programs (i.e., managing emotions, goal setting, resolving conflicts, making healthy choices, appreciating diversity, getting help from others, and helping others). The original scale begins with the prompt, “Because of this sport program,” but for the sake of the current sample, it was amended to, “Because of my PE class in the last two weeks” (i.e., pre-survey) or “Because of my PE class volleyball unit” (i.e., post-survey). The prompt was followed by an example of a life skill. Sample items included, “I stay positive when I am frustrated with my homework” (*managing emotions*), “I do sports or exercise every day” (*making healthy choices*), and “I go to people who will help me solve a problem” (*getting help from others*). Each item was set to a 5-point rating scale ranging from “really not true for me” (1) to “really true for me” (5). Construct validity for the LSTS was demonstrated through a confirmatory factor analysis and Cronbach’s $\alpha$ values for each of the subscales ranged
from .80 to .92 (Weiss, Bolter, & Kipp, 2014). Internal consistency in the current study was assessed as well and Crobach’s α values ranged from .81 to .91.

**TARE observations.** The TARE 2.0 (Escartí, Wright, Pascual, & Gutiérrez, 2015) was used as a systematic observation instrument to assess the teaching styles of both PE teachers in accordance with the sport-based youth development principles from the TPSR model. The TARE has been proven effective in previous studies assessing sport and physical education programs (Coulson, Irwin, & Wright, 2012; Hemphill, Templin, & Wright, 2015). The instrument uses direct observation and time sampling ratings in 3-minute intervals for nine responsibility-based teaching strategies based off the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility model (Hellison, 2011). In the instrument, the teacher’s uses of strategies and the students’ observation of behaviors are rated on a 5-point scale ranging from the strategy being absent (0) to strongly implemented (5). The inter-rater reliability of this measure is high, ranging from .78 to 1.0 for each item (Escartí, Wright, Pascual, & Gutiérrez, 2015). Furthermore, the author of this study was trained to use this instrument by the developer and achieved greater than 80% inter-rater agreement.

In the current study, the TARE was first utilized to collect baseline data from both teachers to examine their differences in implementing youth development strategies. TARE ratings for four class observations for the intervention teacher and five observations for the control teacher were collected at this time. Then, after the teacher received professional development training on responsibility-based teaching in PE, the TARE was used to observe all lessons during the volleyball unit, one per day with both teachers. Thirteen total TARE
observations were collected for the intervention teacher and eight TARE observations were collected for the control teacher. Both teacher and student behaviors were rated and are displayed in Tables 2.3 and 2.4. Supplemental field notes were also collected in conjunction with TARE observations and focused on the implementation of responsibility-based teaching strategies for the intervention teacher and general student and teacher interactions for the control teacher.

Table 2.3.
TARE 2.0 Ratings of Teaching Strategies Used by the Intervention Teacher and Control Teacher Before and After Survey Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Intervention Teacher</th>
<th>Control Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-Survey Post-Survey</td>
<td>Pre-Survey Post-Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeling Respect</td>
<td>3.70 (.46) 3.83 (.4)</td>
<td>2.5 (.66) 2.78 (.59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting Expectations</td>
<td>3.72 (.53) 3.71 (.54)</td>
<td>2.4 (.88) 3.41 (.84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for Success</td>
<td>3.13 (.62) 3.59 (.57)</td>
<td>1.79 (.76) 2.51 (.79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostering Social Interaction</td>
<td>3.19 (.59) 3.56 (.65)</td>
<td>1.59 (.97) 2.82 (.81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigning Tasks</td>
<td>3.43 (.69) 3.53 (.56)</td>
<td>2.04 (.2) 2.76 (.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>.69 (.97) 3.02 (.80)</td>
<td>.19 (.58) 1.00 (1.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving Choices and Voices</td>
<td>.94 (1.20) 3.04 (1.13)</td>
<td>.15 (.47) .63 (1.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role in Assessment Transfer</td>
<td>0 1.31 (1.53)</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Rating Scale: (0) Absent: None of the teacher’s words or actions convey or align with this strategy. (1) Weak: Not generally implemented but may be reflected in some isolated words or actions on the teacher’s part. (2) Moderate: Some of the teachers’ words and actions connect to this strategy during the lesson. (3) Strong: Implemented well and evidenced at several points in the lesson through the words and actions of the teacher. (4) Very Strong: Seamlessly implemented in multiple ways throughout the lesson through the words and actions of the teacher.
Table 2.4.
TARE 2.0 Ratings of Student Behaviors in the Intervention Class and Control Class Before and After Survey Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Intervention Teacher</th>
<th>Control Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-Survey M (SD)</td>
<td>Post-Survey M (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-Survey M (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>3.89 (.32)</td>
<td>3.82 (.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>3.74 (.48)</td>
<td>3.65 (.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing Respect</td>
<td>3.41 (.71)</td>
<td>3.40 (.74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperating w/ peers</td>
<td>3.31 (.67)</td>
<td>3.40 (.70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging Others</td>
<td>2.65 (.76)</td>
<td>3.19 (.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping Others</td>
<td>2.17 (.97)</td>
<td>2.71 (.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading</td>
<td>.81 (1.07)</td>
<td>2.76 (.84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing Voice</td>
<td>1.00 (1.20)</td>
<td>3.14 (.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for Help</td>
<td>.46 (.79)</td>
<td>1.22 (1.03)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Rating Scale: (0) Absent: No students displayed this responsible behavior. (1) Weak: A few students displayed this responsible behavior, but most did not. (2) Moderate: 1/2 of the students displayed this responsible behavior. (3) Strong: Most students displayed this responsible behavior throughout the lesson but a few did not. (4) Very Strong: All students displayed this responsible behavior throughout the lesson with no observed exceptions.

Data Analysis

Steps were taken to ensure that the final sample includes data that is accurate and reliable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Student data was excluded that showed evidence of incomplete responses more than once throughout the questionnaire or if they did not have both a complete pre- and post-survey (n = 20). Researchers also checked for errors in data entry by conducting tests of outliers (i.e., box plots, stem and leaf graphs). Additionally, before running the primary data analyses, the researcher conducted standard diagnostic tests to check for normality, linearity, and homogeneity of variance (Gastwirth, Gel, & Miao, 2009). Finally, internal
consistency assessments for all scales and subscales were conducted using Cronbach’s (1951) coefficient alpha. Items were averaged into constructs and both descriptive statistics and bivariable correlations were calculated.

The primary analyses for this study were 2 x 2 (Time x Intervention) mixed ANOVAs for each subscale of the LSTS and YES 2.0. Specifically, this analysis examined the influence of the main effects (i.e., time and teacher type) and the interaction effect on students’ perceptions of youth development principles and the transfer of life skills. Partial-\(\eta^2\) were used as a measure of effect size in the mixed ANOVA models. A partial-\(\eta^2\) value between .01 and .06 is associated with a small effect, between .06 and .14 with a medium effect, and > .14 with a large effect (Warner, 2012). Significant interaction effects were followed up with tests for simple effects using paired-samples \(t\) tests and Cohen’s D for measure of effect size. Profile plots were also analyzed to determine significant interactions and post hoc tests were conducted to determine which levels within time and teacher type were significant. All statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS 23.0 (IBM Corporation, 2015).

**Results**

In order to document the fidelity of the intervention, the TARE 2.0 was used and those results are reported in Tables 2.3 and 2.4. In general, the results of this study support the notion that (1) the intervention was carried out with fidelity and (2) participants in the intervention group perceived significant opportunities in the PE setting to demonstrate responsible behaviors
over time. Table 2.5 overviews the results of 2x2 (Time x Teacher) mixed ANOVAs that examined changes in the LSTS subscales of managing emotions, goal setting, resolving conflicts, making healthy choices, appreciating diversity, getting help from others, and helping others. Table 2.6 describes 2x2 mixed ANOVA results that examined changes in the YES 2.0 subscales of identify exploration, identify reflection, goal setting, effort, problem solving, time management, physical skills, diverse peer relationships, prosocial norms, group processing skills, feedback, and leadership/responsibility. Mixed ANOVAs were conducted to examine the changes from pre- to post-intervention for each subscale of the LSTS and YES 2.0 while considering teacher type as a moderating variable. Tests related to each of the two measures are presented below.
Table 2.5.
ANOVA Table for the Subscales of the LSTS by Teacher Type and Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale Time</th>
<th>Teacher Type</th>
<th>ANOVA Interaction Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|               | Intervention Teacher $M(SD)$ | Control Teacher $M(SD)$ | $F$ | $p$ | Partial-$\eta^2$
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manag Emo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>3.57(.76)</td>
<td>3.20(88)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>3.52(.77)</td>
<td>3.13(1.03)</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.872</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Setting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>3.59(.96)</td>
<td>3.37(1.06)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>3.66(.98)</td>
<td>3.24(1.06)</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolv Confl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>3.04(.87)</td>
<td>2.82(88)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>3.22(.99)</td>
<td>2.84(98)</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Choic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>3.29(.76)</td>
<td>3.21(79)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>3.42(.80)</td>
<td>3.30(81)</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.739</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appre Diver</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>4.07(.63)</td>
<td>3.83(81)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>4.06(.72)</td>
<td>3.81(79)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.995</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>3.73(.93)</td>
<td>4.43(1.15)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>3.90(.88)</td>
<td>3.38(1.09)</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give Help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>4.06(.71)</td>
<td>3.61(98)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>4.09(.77)</td>
<td>3.64(85)</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.910</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Manag Emo = Managing Emotions, Resolv Confl= Resolving Conflict, Healthy Choic-Healthy Choices, Appre Diver = Appreciating Diversity, Get Help= Getting Help, Give Help= Giving Help, *p < .05, **p < .001
Table 2.6.
ANOVA Table for the Subscales of the YES 2.0 by Teacher Type and Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale Time</th>
<th>Teacher Type</th>
<th>ANOVA Interaction Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intervention Teacher M(SD)</td>
<td>Control Teacher M(SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifier Exp</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>2.51(.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>2.79(.79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity Refl</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>2.00(.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>1.85(.86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Setting</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>2.44(.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>2.66(.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>2.71(.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>2.84(.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solve</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>2.27(.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>2.54(.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Mang</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>2.38(.97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>2.64(.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emo Regulat</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>2.20(.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>2.48(.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhySkills</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>2.88(.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>3.00(.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DiverPeerRelt</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>2.63(.82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>2.60(.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ProSocNorm</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>2.21(.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>2.54(.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GroupProcc</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>2.71(.80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>2.84(.86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>2.54(.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>2.69(.98)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.6 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Teacher Type</th>
<th>ANOVA Interaction Statistics</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intervention Teacher</td>
<td>Control Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M(SD)</td>
<td>M(SD)</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LeaderResp Pre</td>
<td>2.56(.98)</td>
<td>2.52(.99)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>2.70(1.00)</td>
<td>2.35(.96)</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Identity Exps = Identity Experiences, Iden Refl = Identity Reflection, Problem Solve = Problem Solving, Time Mang = Time Management, Emo Regulat = Emotional Regulation, Phy Skills= Physical Skills, Diver Peer Relt = Diverse Peer Relations, ProSocNorms = Promoting Social Norms, Group Procc= Group Processing Skills, Leader Resp= Leadership and Responsibility, *p < .05, **p < .01

**Implementation Fidelity**

**Pre-survey.** The Tool for Assessing Responsibility-Based Education 2.0 (Escarti et al., 2015) was used to determine the fidelity of the intervention. Systematic observations were conducted one week pre-intervention with both teachers daily (see Tables 2.3 and 2.4) and indicated that in general the intervention teacher scored consistently strong ratings (i.e., rating of 3 or above) on five of the nine responsibility-based teaching strategies (i.e., *modeling respect, setting expectations, opportunities for success, fostering social interaction, and assigning tasks*). For the control teacher, observational data indicated he scored consistently moderate ratings (e.g., rating of 2) across the same five teaching strategies. Both teachers scored an average of a 1 or below on *leadership and giving choices and voices*, indicating a weak implementation of those teaching strategies, and neither teacher implemented *role in assessment* or *transfer* into their lessons during baseline data collection.
Related to student behaviors, *participation* and *engagement* were generally strong across both teachers’ classes, while *showing respect* and *cooperating with peers* were strongly observed in the intervention teacher’s class (i.e., average rating of 3) and moderately observed (average rating of 2) in the control teacher’s class at baseline based on TARE ratings. Furthermore, the intervention teacher’s students received moderate ratings for *encouraging others* and *helping others* while the control teacher’s students received weak ratings. Finally, both groups of students were not generally observed *leading*, *expressing voice*, or *asking for help* during baseline observations.

**Post-survey.** The intervention teacher’s ratings after the intervention remained consistently strong for five teaching strategies (i.e., *modeling respect*, *setting expectations*, *opportunities for success*, *fostering social interaction*, and *assigning tasks*), while the control teacher’s ratings remained generally weak or moderate with the exception of *setting expectations*, which increased. Additionally, the control teacher’s ratings of *leadership* and *giving choices and voices* remained weak, and *role in assessment* and *transfer* continued not to be observed at any intervals throughout the lesson overtime. Contrastingly, the intervention teacher’s ratings for *leadership* and *giving choices and voices* increased from being weakly implemented to strongly implemented over the course of the intervention. Furthermore, the ratings for *role in assessment* and *transfer* increased from not being implemented at all to showing signs of being weakly reflected in the teacher’s lessons.

The ratings of student behaviors after the intervention remained generally the same across the control teacher’s classes, with a small increase in *encouraging others*. The intervention
teacher’s students showed slight increases in encouraging others and helping others, with the largest increases being observed with leading, expressing voice, and asking for help.

**Life Skills Transfer Survey**

For each scale on the LSTS, (i.e., giving help, getting help, appreciating diversity, managing emotions, goal setting, resolving conflicts, and healthy choices) no significant effects were observed, meaning students did not demonstrate differences in their perceptions on these topics from pre- to post- survey between the two teachers.

**Youth Experience Survey**

For problem solving, there was a moderate interaction (partial-\( \eta^2 = .108 \)) for Time x Teacher, Wilks’ lambda = .89, \( F(1,120) = 14.60, p < .001 \). Figure 2.1(a) displays a means plot indicating that students in the intervention class perceived an increase in their problem-solving skill, while students from the control class perceived a decrease. Paired-samples \( t \) tests were conducted to examine change over time for both teachers separately. For the intervention teacher, there was a significant increase over time on students’ perceptions of problem solving, \( t(66) = 2.78, p = .007, d = .48 \). For the control group, the \( t \) test was also significant and indicated a decrease over time on students’ perceptions of problem solving, \( t(54) = -2.69, p = .010, d = .52 \).
Figure 2.1. Means plots displaying interactions between (a) problem solving and time, (b) effort and time, (c) goal setting and time and (d) emotional regulation and time.
Related to effort, there was a small (partial-\(\eta^2 = .042\)) and significant interaction effect of Time x Teacher, Wilks’ lambda = .96, \(F(1,120) = 5.20, p = .024\). Figure 2.1(b) indicates that students in the intervention class perceived an increase in their effort, compared to students in the control group, who perceived a decrease in their effort. Because the interaction effect was significant, paired-samples \(t\) tests were run to examine change over time for students with each teacher but returned no significant differences.

Related to goal setting, the interaction of Time x Teacher was small (partial-\(\eta^2 = .043\)) and significant, Wilks’ lambda = .96, \(F(1,120) = 5.34, p = .023\). The means plot in Figure 2.1(c) indicates that students in the intervention class perceived a small increase in identity experiences, while those in the control class perceived a decrease. \(T\) tests were conducted to examine changes over time, and for students of the intervention teacher, there was a significant increase over time on students’ perceptions of identity experiences, \(t(66) = 2.07, p = .043, d = .36\). For the control group the \(t\) test was not significant.

Related to emotional regulation, there was a small interaction (partial-\(\eta^2 = .054\)) of Time x Teacher, Wilks’ lambda = .946, \(F(1,120) = 6.86, p < .010\). The means plot in Figure 2.1(d) indicates that students in the intervention class perceived an increase in their emotional regulation, while the control group perceived a decrease. A paired-samples \(t\) test was run to examine change over time for students of both teachers separately. With the intervention teacher, there was a significant increase over time on students’ perceptions of emotional regulation, \(t(66) = 2.86, p = .006, d = .50\). With the control teacher, the \(t\) test was not significant.
Figure 2.2. Means plots displaying interactions between (a) physical skills and time, (b) identity experiences and time, (c) promoting social norms and time and (d) time management and time.
For physical skills, the interaction of Time x Teacher was moderately (partial-\(\eta^2 = .102\)) significant, Wilks’ lambda = 0.90, \(F(1,120) = 13.66, p <.001\). The means plot in Figure 2.2(a) indicates that students in the intervention class perceived a moderate increase in their physical skills, while those in the control class perceived a moderate decrease. Paired-samples \(t\) tests were run to examine change over time for the control and intervention teachers separately and demonstrated that for the intervention teacher, the \(t\) test was not significant. Furthermore, for the control teacher there was a significant decrease over time on students’ perceptions of physical skills, \(t(54) = -3.65, p = .001, d = .70\).

Related to identity experiences, there was a small interaction effect (partial-\(\eta^2 = .037\)) of Time x Teacher, Wilks’ lambda = .96, \(F(1,120) = 4.65, p =.033\). The means plot in Figure 2.2(b) indicates that students in the intervention class perceived an increase in identity experiences pre- to post- survey, while those in the control class perceived a decrease. Because the interaction effect was significant, paired-samples \(t\) tests were run to examine change over time for both teachers separately. For the intervention teacher, there was a medium significant increase over time on students’ perceptions of identity experiences, \(t(66) = 2.95, p = .004, d = .51\). For the control teacher, the \(t\) test was not significant.

Related to prosocial norms, the interaction of Time x Teacher was moderately significant (partial-\(\eta^2 = .068\)), Wilks’ lambda = .93, \(F(1,120) = 8.71, p = .004\). The means plot in Figure 2.2(c) indicates that students in the intervention class perceived an increase in their prosocial norms, while those in the control class perceived a decrease. Paired-samples \(t\) tests were conducted to examine change over time for students of both teachers separately. Students in the
intervention teachers’ classes showed a significant increase over time on their perceptions of prosocial norms, $t(66) = 3.62, p = .001, d = .63$ and the control group’s $t$ test was not significant.

Regarding time management, there was a moderate interaction (partial-$\eta^2 = .060$) of Time x Teacher, Wilks’ lambda = .940, $F(1,120) = 7.67, p = .006$. In Figure 2.2(d), the graph indicates that students in the intervention class perceived an increase in time management, and the control class perceived a decrease. Because the interaction effect was significant, paired-samples $t$ tests were run to examine change over time for both teachers separately. For the intervention teacher, there was a significant increase over time on students’ perceptions of identity experiences $t(66) = 2.21, p = .030, d = .38$. For the control teacher, the $t$ test was not significant.

Related to group processing, feedback, identity reflection and leadership and responsibility, the interaction effects for Time x Teacher were not significant. No significant effects were observed over time or between teachers for reflecting on identify or leadership and responsibility.

**Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to examine how responsibility-based teaching in PE affects students’ in-class experiences with respect to learning life skills and transferring them to other areas in life. Results from the TARE 2.0 indicated that the intervention was implemented with fidelity on the part of the intervention teacher. Similar to other studies, it was observed that the responsibility-based teaching fostered a positive learning atmosphere and promoted responsible behaviors (Cutforth & Puckett, 1999; Hellison & Wright, 2003; Wright & Burton, 2008). Regarding the LSTS, several teacher effects were observed which indicated that the quality of
the intervention teacher’s practices impacted students’ beliefs about their ability to transfer life
skills learned in PE to other life domains. The YES 2.0 demonstrated that there were numerous
significant interactions of teacher and time effects on in-program youth experiences with life
skills in PE. However, there were no interaction effects of time and teacher found for youths’
perceptions on the transfer of life skills out of PE.

Regarding the implementation of the intervention, the TARE 2.0 was effective in
demonstrating that when foundational teaching practices are being implemented with regularity
(e.g., modeling respect, setting expectations, giving opportunities for success), and when the
more advanced strategies (e.g., giving choices and voices, role in assessment, leadership,
transfer) were implemented in high-quality, purposeful, and intentional ways, significant
improvements in student interactions and student perceptions are observed. Given that the
purpose of the intervention teacher’s training was to integrate those strategies, which were
relatively low at baseline, this was seen as a success. It was expected that the more foundational
teaching strategies (e.g., modeling respect, setting expectations, and providing opportunities for
success) would remain consistent between baseline and post-intervention ratings. Escarti and
colleagues (2015) support this finding as they established that in order for programs to have the
intended positive effects on youth, the implementation must be documented with fidelity.

It is notable that the intervention teacher’s ratings on role in assessment and transfer
improved from being non-existent at baseline to being implemented somewhat throughout the
intervention. Although the final ratings were relatively low, this reflects the frequency with
which these strategies were observed rather than the quality of implementation. For example,
TARE ratings and supplemental field notes indicated that either role in assessment or transfer were implemented at least once per class period over the course of the intervention with high ratings of at least a “3” (i.e., strong implementation) or “4” (i.e., seamless implementation). The authors of the original TARE (Wright & Craig, 2011) revealed that while the TARE represents a mix of teaching strategies that high-quality PE teachers utilizing youth development principles might employ, it is expected that the more advanced strategies do not happen in every observation interval or even in every class period. To this point, the claim can be made that PE teachers do not need to make sweeping changes to teaching practices in order to see positive results. Rather, targeted attention to higher level responsibility-based strategies can result in more positive student experiences in PE.

Another noteworthy finding in the current study is the concept that teacher practices in the TARE strongly link to student interactions and experiences in PE. According to the TARE 2.0 authors, significant correlations have been observed between the teacher’s use of responsibility-based teaching strategies and students’ display of responsible behaviors. Specifically, associations between teachers providing leadership opportunities and students taking leadership and teachers giving choices and voices and students expressing voices were noted in Escarti and colleague’s (2015) investigation of the TARE 2.0 and in the current study. This strengthens the role of the teacher in the process of youth experiencing positive outcomes rather than the type of the activity being taught. It is interesting to note that the control teacher’s ratings did reflect some minor increases in utilizing responsibility-based teaching strategies (e.g., setting expectations, opportunities for success, fostering social interaction) despite not receiving
any training. While it is possible there was some intervention contamination due to the proximity and interaction between the two teachers, it is also possible, and perhaps more likely, that these increases coincided with the natural progression of the sport unit being taught, i.e., volleyball. Teachers often rely more heavily on direct instruction in the introductory phase of a unit and, after students have acquired the basic skills, shift more time to student-centered teaching approaches and game play. Nonetheless, even with these observed increases in the control teacher’s use of teaching strategies, no student behaviors generally changed over time. This indicated that students’ behaviors in the control group did not appear to be impacted by the teacher. The author could postulate that this has to do with the nature of the overall class goals being focused on sport skill acquisition, compared to building personal and social skills. Field notes indicated that the content of the control teacher’s lessons focused solely on developing technical volleyball skills. It may be that in order for students to have meaningful interactions and demonstrate responsible behaviors, there should be a focus on teacher factors such as relationship building and creating an environment where reflection and discussion are valued (Beaudoin, 2012). It may also be the case that other teacher factors played a role in facilitating positive student behaviors, as Hellison (2011) argued that a teacher’s ability to effectively implement responsibility-based teaching is greatly impacted by one’s personal philosophy and style of teaching.

The findings on the Youth Experience Survey suggested that immediate changes to youth experiences in the PE program were observed for the students in the intervention group over time. Participants reported having experiences related to problem solving, physical skills,
emotional regulation, effort, goal setting, identity experiences, time management, and promoting social norms. The findings related to problem solving, physical skills, and effort are supported by TARE data which demonstrated students in the intervention group consistently participated, were engaged, and cooperated with peers during activities throughout the intervention. The finding that students’ experiences with emotional regulation increased over time is highlighted in other responsibility-based research where an improved capacity for self-control (Escarti et al., 2010a) and increases in self-regulation behaviors (Escarti et al., 2010b) were reported by participants. In general, these findings align with the concept that intentionally designed sport experiences can foster self-control and promote teamwork and effort (Gould & Carson, 2008; Hellison, 2011).

It should be acknowledged that although the focus of the intervention was building personal and social responsibility behaviors, the YES 2.0 instrument did not capture changes in the intervention teacher’s student leadership and responsibility experiences. This was an unexpected finding and warrants exploration. According to researcher field notes from the intervention teacher’s initial training session and daily follow-up sessions, the intervention teacher consistently expressed concern about putting youth in charge of others during activities because she did not feel they were ready to handle the high level of responsibility in addition to accomplishing lessons tasks. This is a commonly held belief in TPSR and other PE-based instructional models where teachers are hesitant to shift control and power to students because it conflicts with traditional authoritarian pedagogy (Haberman, 1991; Hellison, 2011; Sinelnikov, 2009). This concept is supported in previous research that demonstrated one challenge of utilizing a student-centered model is that both students and teachers must learn to practice non-
traditional roles (Casey & Dyson, 2009; Hastie & Curtner-Smith, 2006). It may be that due to the short implementation period of the intervention, the teacher was not prepared to make this change without further professional development training. Furthermore, logistical obstacles such as time and group size may have served as a barrier to incorporating leadership experiences (Buchanan & Ulrich, 2001).

Data gathered with the LSTS (Weiss, Bolter, & Kipp, 2014) did not indicate significant changes to youth reporting transfer experiences after the intervention. While there is some support that transfer does occur (Hellison & Walsh, 2002; Walsh et al., 2010), the impact of a TPSR program on promoting transfer for youth has been a longtime challenge of TPSR literature (Lee & Martinek, 2013; Wright & Burton, 2008; Wright et al., 2010). In the current study, it was clear that the transfer process was not increasing at the same rate or within the same time frame as their in-program experiences with building life skills. This points to the idea that transfer is not automatic, and just because teachers are promoting life skills in the PE setting does not mean that students see the relevance of these skills outside of the gym (Gordon, Thevenard, & Hodis, 2012; Wright & Burton, 2008). Instead, explicit connections between life skills being taught and practiced in PE need to be referenced as being useful in specific life contexts such as at home and in school (Hellison, 2011). One way to facilitate this process is to call for the integration of TPSR values into the greater school curriculum so that a unified message is being sent to students about how and when life skills can be used (Escarti et al., 2010a; Wright & Burton, 2008).
Research also suggests that teachers should be deliberate about incorporating transfer into structured activities through discussion, written assignments, and other opportunities for reflection (Holt, Tink, Mandigo, & Fox, 2008; Martinek & Lee; 2012). In the current study, a focus on promoting transfer was part of the intervention teacher’s training process and TARE observations revealed that the intervention teacher explicitly discussed the role of life skills outside of PE in many class lessons. Thus, due to the brevity of the teacher training and intervention period, the author of this study postulates that time may play a crucial role in the transfer process. Martinek, Schilling, and Johnson (2001) underscored the impact of time on transfer of life skills to other life domains in concluding that transfer is a complex process that often occurs over long periods of time. Other studies utilizing a responsibility-based intervention design in the PE setting vary in length of the intervention duration. Jung and Wright (2012) reported inconclusive results on transfer in their study on the implementation of TPSR across 20 lessons in a South Korean middle-school PE program and concluded that the transfer process was not dramatic but gradual. Most other TPSR implementation studies included a longer time frame with the program extending over a semester or full school year yet still returned inconclusive results about being able to identify transfer outcomes for youth (Escarti et al., 2010a; Escarti at al., 2010b; Pascual et al., 2011).

The mixed results reported in the literature, as well as those reported here, highlight that transfer is a complex process that warrants further study. It may be that transfer is a process that takes time for youth in responsibility-based programs to first become aware of and then understand the relevance of the life skills taught to other settings. It is possible that in the current
study design, three weeks was not enough time for students to fully grasp the importance of transfer, both because of teacher factors (e.g., implementation fidelity, pedagogical philosophy) and personal factors (e.g., age, maturity level, cognitive abilities). This is supported by educational research on transfer that recognizes the hardest part of the transfer process for youth is noticing when the skill could be used or needed in an alternative environment from which it was learned in (Halpern, 1998). Based on this, the concept should be explored that before a teacher encourages youth to change their behaviors and participate in transferring life skills outside of the PE setting, the teacher should first attempt to ensure that youth actually see the potential and relevance of transfer. A similar suggestion was proposed by Wright and Burton (2008).

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study extends TPSR literature through exploring student experiences of life skill learning and transfer through a PE-based responsibility intervention. Previous literature has not yet examined the link between teacher practice and student interactions and experiences in PE. Along with this contribution, the limitations of the study should be acknowledged. As in other studies (Dusenbury, Brannigan, Falco, & Hansen, 2003; Pascual et al., 2011), the current study did not assess the intervention teacher’s training in a systematic way. Furthermore, the students’ responses on the YES 2.0 and LSTS were dependent on the intervention teacher’s understanding of TPSR after a short-term professional development training. Future studies should incorporate a validated process to assess the impact of the training in terms of promoting desired student outcomes both inside and outside of the program setting. Additionally, the role of time was
introduced as a potential mediator in the transfer process and should be explored through similar studies employing implementation using varied time frames.

In general, this study provides support for the idea that PE teachers can easily integrate targeted responsibility-based teaching strategies into their regular teaching practices and see increases in responsible student interactions and experiences as a result (Romar, Haag, & Dyson, 2015). Researchers should look for ways to study how the transfer process can better be facilitated in the PE setting. Furthermore, practitioners could consider the opportunity to make small changes to their teaching routine such as incorporating reflection and discussion and providing opportunities for social interaction and peer assessment as a way to build personally and socially responsible youth. Finally, this study demonstrates the feasibility and direct benefit on student learning outcomes as required by all PE teachers (SHAPE, 2014), which further supports the use of integrating responsibility-based strategies.

**Conclusion**

Based on the results of this study, there is strong evidence for the notion that responsibility-based teaching in PE enhanced participants’ in-program experiences over time. The results regarding students transferring life skills learned in PE to other areas in life were not supported, but that may be explained by many possible factors. Therefore, it appears that responsibility-based teaching plays a significant role in the quality interactions and experiences students have in PE related to life skills such as effort, problem solving, time management, and emotional regulation. This study also highlighted that the role of time in the transfer process should be explored further, as the length of a teaching intervention may impact the likelihood of
students perceiving transfer experiences. Longitudinal, follow-up, and qualitative research designs may help to illuminate the mediating effect of time on this process (Wright & Li, 2009). Overall, this study suggests that if teachers use specific and tailored strategies, youth may develop positive and immediate learning outcomes in the PE setting that are directly tied to the current national content standards. This study extends research on the TPSR model as well as standards-based PE. With regard to both bodies of literature, these findings validate the effectiveness of responsibility-based teaching practices as they promote desired experiences and learning outcomes related to personally and socially responsible behavior and corresponding life skills. Next steps in this line of inquiry should delve more deeply into the conditions and practices that are most effective in promoting the transfer of life skills and responsibility.
YOUTH PERCEPTIONS OF THE TRANSFER OF LIFE SKILLS IN A SPORT-BASED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Introduction

The belief that intentionally designed sport programs foster positive developmental outcomes for youth participants has gained momentum in the last ten years. Traditional sport research that has focused on enhancing athletic development for high-level athletes now complements newer research that examines how social and psychological assets may be developed through sport programs for all youth (Gould & Carson, 2008; Petipas, Cornelius, Van Raalte, & Jones, 2005). This concept has led to the emergence of the field of sport-based youth development (SBYD), where out-of-school sport programs are used as a vehicle for teaching youth to build life skills (e.g., respect, leadership, responsibility) and transfer these skills to other important life domains such as school and the community (Petipas et al., 2005). SBYD draws largely from the positive youth development framework (Larson, 2000) in addition to borrowing parts of other educational frameworks including the five Cs of positive development (competence, confidence, character, connections, and compassion/caring; Lerner et al., 2000), and social and emotional learning (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).

While both community and school-based sport programs have received considerable attention for addressing the challenges adolescents face on their path towards adulthood, the SBYD approach is rooted in the perspective that fostering youths’ strengths and competencies should be the focus of program content rather than minimizing and treating deficits like popular
“anti-gang” programs that target behaviorally challenged youth (Benson, 2006; Jones & Laravee, 2009). Studies show that even youth who do not display delinquent and unhealthy behaviors are not prepared for being able to cope with the demands of adulthood (Pittman, 1991). Adolescence, in particular, is regarded as an important period for youth to define their identities as they start to explore their competencies and roles within society (Erikson, 1994; Jones & Laravee, 2009). Oftentimes, the period of adolescence brings with it opportunities for youth to engage in negative or risky behaviors such as drug/alcohol use, unsafe sexual behaviors, and interpersonal conflicts (Lerner et al., 2005). Furthermore, these years mark a time when youth are forming their identities, adopting self-chosen values, and developing insight and judgments about their school, home, and social lives (Erikson, 1994). For these reasons, a strong case is made for youth of all backgrounds to participate in SBYD programs because they expose youth to a value system aimed at healthy decision making, positive self-identity, as well as success in their school, community, and home lives.

Given that SBYD program philosophies can benefit the development of all youth, community-based programs are one ideal format for promoting this framework because they are widespread and inclusive (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Out-of-school programs have become increasingly important in recent years as households often have one or both parents working long hours and after-school care is needed (Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005). In urban areas, the absence of parental supervision outside of school hours is exacerbated as youth become vulnerable targets for entry into the gang lifestyle or subject to participating in illegal activities. As a result of these circumstances, parents are generally attracted to community-based
programs due to their convenience and numerous opportunities for youth to socialize. On the other hand, youth are generally attracted to these same programs if they have a sport focus due to the inherent enjoyment adolescents report experiencing through playing sports (Csikszentmihalyi, Larson, & Prescott, 1977; Gould & Carson, 2008).

**SBYD Programs**

Several well-known SBYD programs with clearly defined goals for teaching life skills have been developed in the community setting, including *The First Tee Program* (Weiss, 2006), *Sports United to Promote Education and Recreation* (SUPER; Danish, 2002), and the *Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility model* (TPSR; Hellison, 2011). Key components to these programs include a focus on building interpersonal relationships between youth and adults; an emphasis on effort in activities over skill/performance; the inclusion of social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral competencies into lessons; and a stress on developing social and personal responsibility (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 1998).

**Life skills.** Central to this field of study is the term *life skill*, which has varying definitions across research and various applied organizations. As the word describes, life skills are those skills that are most essential for surviving in different life settings. Prominent international organizations have included the life skills definition in their policy documents as it connects with greater organizational health, humanitarian, and educational initiatives. While UNICEF describes “life skills” as fundamental “psychosocial abilities” necessary for thriving in life (UNICEF, 2003), the World Health Organization expands on this definition by specifying that these psychosocial skills encompass the personal, social, interpersonal, cognitive, and
affective domains (WHO, 1999). From a research perspective, sport skills and life skills share similarities, in that they are both taught through demonstration, modeling, and practice (Danish & Hale, 1981). Broadly speaking, life skills can fall under three categories: a) physical, such as throwing a ball or getting dressed; b) behavioral, such as resolving a conflict or communicating with a friend; or c) cognitive, such as thinking through consequences of an action or controlling one’s temper (Danish & Hale, 1981).

While sport programs usually teach physical skills as part of their technical instruction, the real value of the SBYD approach comes from programs that structure behavioral and cognitive life skill building into their activities. Gould and Carson (2008) discuss life skills in the sport setting as internal personal assets “that can be facilitated or developed in sport and transferred for use in non-sport settings” (p.60). This introduces another essential concept in the life skill definition, transfer, or the idea that a life skill should be useful outside of the original environment it is taught in (Jones & Laravee, 2009). The concept of transfer is highly relevant to the period of adolescence when youth are being taught to navigate between the demands of different life contexts such as school, home, and social settings (Lerner, Boyd, & Du, 1998). Therefore, the inclusion of life skill lessons in adolescent sport programs provides an opportunity for youth to develop habits and skills that can help support progression into adulthood (Lerner et al., 2006).

**Current State of Transfer of Life Skills Research**

Despite many high-quality applied efforts of SBYD programs, Gould and Carson (2008) contend there is still a lack of theoretical support for how youth learn life skills as well as if and
how they eventually transfer them to other contexts. While several studies have provided insight on what life skills are (Jones & Laravee, 2009) and how programs can be intentionally designed for life skill development (Camire, Trudel, & Forneris, 2011; Petipas et al., 2005), studies examining transfer specifically have been inconsistent about how and why youth chose to use life skills. This may be due to limited methodologies that do not accurately assess students’ perceptions about the transfer process but rather focus on outcomes and behaviors that are difficult to attribute to a sport program’s impact. For example, some studies have relied on participant self-report for identifying what life skills youth transfer, which assumes they are aware of the skill content being taught and can accurately identify its use outside of the sport setting. In one study, youth reported learning life skills that were not explicitly taught in the program setting (Holt, Tink, Mandigo, & Fox, 2008). Another study concluded that youth often miss the relevance and utility value of life skills for application into the real world (Allen, Rhind, & Koshy, 2015). In order for sport programs to claim they employ an SBYD approach, they must intentionally incorporate instruction on life skills into the program in a way that youth can understand, find relevant, and be motivated to use. In their paper on life development interventions for athletes, Danish and colleagues (1993) cite this as one of the main barriers to sport programs- that participants do not know and are not made aware of the skills they have learned. Without an awareness and understanding by youth, this assumes learning and development happen as a natural byproduct of sport. This is refuted by research showing sport programs not operated within a youth development framework can have an equal chance of
imparting negative sport values (e.g., aggression, stress/anxiety, excessive competition, perfectionism) as positive values (Merkel, 2013).

Other studies have relied on adult observations of youth in the sport program, school setting, or home to address whether they view youth transferring life skills learned in the sport program (Wright & Burton, 2008; Wright, Li, Ding, & Pickering, 2010). Behavioral outcomes such as classroom conduct, grades, and truancy were used as proxy measures of life skills transfer in these studies. However, for such reports to be meaningful, the observer must have prior knowledge of youths’ behaviors, as well as an insider perspective on the content taught in the sport program. These studies illustrate the often unstated assumption in SBYD literature that transfer of life skills is most accurately assessed by evidence of observable behavior change. To date, little is known about the cognitive aspects that comprise the transfer process or whether youth develop an awareness of, find relevant, and are motivated to use the life skill lessons being taught to them before attempting to apply them outside of the sport context. More attention should be paid to these crucial cognitive elements from the youth perspective in order to strengthen the argument that SBYD programs foster life skill development.

Some studies on transfer of life skills in youth sport programs have examined youth perceptions and beliefs with greater rigor. Camire, Trudel, and Forneris (2009) studied high-school students in school-sponsored sport programs and examined their beliefs about life skill transfer. Their results indicated that while youth strongly believed they learned relevant life skills, the sport programs in this study were run by coaches who had not received any SBYD training on how to incorporate life skills into the sport context. Similarly, Goudas and colleagues
(2006) asked students about their knowledge and beliefs about goal setting, positive decision making, and positive thinking as a result of their participation in physical education (PE), again, without any indication that the PE program utilized SBYD principles. Also in the PE context, Gordon (2010) reported positive youth outcomes resulting from a PE program that did utilize a youth development approach. Most notably, in this study participants described an increased understanding of personal and social responsibility being taught in the context of PE. However, this data also indicated that students had little understanding of the potential for the transfer of these skills to other contexts. Furthermore, similar to other studies, Gordon (2010) did not include a validated method for assessing the fidelity of the program in alignment with the SBYD approach.

While the aforementioned studies contribute to the SBYD field in that they demonstrate life skill learning as an important outcome of sport programs, they also highlight the need for research studies to establish fidelity of SBYD program development and implementation. This concept may have been overlooked in prior studies due to the lack of instruments that exist for assessing sport-based programs with a youth development approach. One such measure that has been validated in the sport context is the Tool for Assessing Responsibility-Based Education (TARE; Wright & Craig, 2011). This measure includes nine responsibility-based teaching strategies (i.e., modeling respect, setting expectations, providing opportunities for success, fostering social interaction, assigning management tasks, promoting leadership, giving choices and voices, giving students a role in assessment, and addressing the transfer of life skills) that reflect implementation of youth development principles in a sport or physical activity program.
based on the Hellison’s (2011) TPSR model. The TPSR model is a widely accepted pedagogical model in SBYD that is utilized in programs across the United States (Wright & Burton, 2008), New Zealand (Gordon, 2010), South Korea (Jung & Wright, 2012), and Spain (Carbonell, 2012). In the current study, an updated version of this instrument was used to assess the extent to which the sport program utilized the SBYD approach (Escarti et al., 2015).

Transformative Experience

Transformative experience is one framework developed in educational literature that helps to illucidate how the conceptualization of the transfer of life skills can take students’ thoughts and perceptions into account. Rooted in Dewey’s (1933) and Mezirow’s (2000) teachings on transformative learning, the term transformative experience was proposed by Pugh and colleagues to explain how youth learn content in a way that makes it meaningful in everyday life. While Pugh and colleagues (2010) examined how this framework fits within the science education context, it is the basic fundamental learning process that is relevant to the current study, with the transfer of life skills through sport applied as the subject matter. While sport life skill content (e.g., developing leadership and self-control) differs from the science skill content (e.g., developing inquiry skills and real-world application), the mechanism for utilizing and transferring the learned material between varied life contexts is similar in that it requires an understanding and perceived relevance for using the skill (Pugh et al. 2008; Wright & Burton, 2008). Furthermore, science education closely relates to life skill education because it fosters a highly versatile skill set (e.g., observation, inquiry, contextual insight) that applies to real world situations (King & Ritchie, 2012). Thus, as Dewey (1933) describes, transformative learning
occurs when a student learns material that causes her to see aspects of her world in a different way with new meaning and value. Pugh and colleagues (2010) redefine this process in terms of what factors lead to transformative learning occurring.

According to Pugh and colleagues (2010), transformative experience is defined by three major features that describe how youth think about and connect with learning content in one setting for the purpose of applying it in another: (a) motivated use, (b) expansion of perception, and (c) experiential value. Motivated use describes “the application of learning in a context in which such use is not required” (Pugh et al., 2009, p.3). In the SBYD context, this would look like a student being motivated to utilize the life skills despite environmental barriers. Examples of barriers include clashes between program and personal values (Hellison & Martinek, 2006) or students not feeling like they can safely adopt new behaviors in a way that would bring about positive results. This can be particularly true for those youth who live in underserved communities with prevalent gang violence (Buckle & Walsh, 2013). Expansion of perception is a cognitive component of transfer that includes “seeing and understanding aspects of the world in new ways” (Pugh et al., 2009, p.3). For example, a student might come to see playing soccer as an ideal setting for working on his self-control in a way that expands his original thinking about the sport. The final component, experiential value, refers to students valuing content for use in everyday life (Pugh et al., 2009). In a sport program, this could include a student reflecting on how helpful the program has been in teaching goal setting in sports which they also view as helpful at school.
Based on a review of the SBYD literature and transformative experience framework, the purpose of this study is to examine youth perceptions on transfer of life skills from sport to life, particularly how youth cognitively experience this process. Specific attention was paid to how youth describe the relevance of the life skills taught in the program to other areas in their lives, as well as their motivation for reflecting on and using the life skills taught in their program. As in sport, transformative experiences result from meaningful instances where students interact with the subject matter at a deeper level. This line of thinking (i.e., how students interpret, reflect on, and make use of learning material) strongly aligns with the argument that transfer is a process that may be linked to, but not understood simply in terms of, behavioral outcomes. Exploration of these topics can provide valuable insight on the youth perspective that could enhance the SBYD body of research examining the transfer of life skills phenomenon. Furthermore, this research study has practical implications for impacting SBYD program design to help facilitate positive development and overcome barriers that discourage youth from adopting positive life choices.

**Methods**

**Research Approach**

Qualitative research has gained widespread acceptance in the field of sport and exercise psychology. However, in order to promote high-quality research using this methodology, there is a need for researchers to consider how their epistemological and ontological viewpoints guide the research process and their theoretical perspectives (Holt & Tamminen, 2010; Mayan, 2009; Morse, 1999). Specifically, researchers should have an established process for how they view
knowledge and how their methodological approach aligns with their theoretical philosophy. The current study utilizes a phenomenographic approach, which examines how people experience and give meaning to a concept in their world (Barnard et al., 1999; Ornek, 2008). Barnard and colleagues (1999) further define phenomenography as emphasizing collective meaning and the understanding of a phenomenon rather than focusing on individual experience. The current study is well suited for a phenomenographic approach as it focuses on participants’ understanding of the phenomenon of transfer of life skills and uses the shared sport program experience of participants to continually define this process.

Context

Participants were recruited from a community-based sport organization located in Little Village, a neighborhood encompassing four and a half square miles, geographically located 20 minutes west of downtown Chicago, IL. Little Village is primarily made up of Hispanic families (83%), followed by African Americans (13%) and Caucasians (4%) (US Census Bureau, 2010). Several problem factors exist in this neighborhood that increase the importance of quality youth programs. Little Village has the least amount of green space per capita in the city, limiting youth to playing inside or in overcrowded areas that may be unsafe (LISC Chicago, 2005). Educational factors are also lacking in Little Village, with over 50% of high-school students dropping out before graduation (LISC Chicago, 2005). Most alarmingly, the neighborhood contains more than 2,000 gang members who are responsible for making Little Village one of the highest rated crime-ridden neighborhoods in the country, with a murder risk of three times the national average (LISC Chicago, 2005). When coupled with a struggling education system and a lack of
recreational activities, there is little question that youth in this area are a vulnerable population for falling into an unhealthy lifestyle.

The current program was selected due to its reputation for being an evidence-based, high-quality youth program. A systematic observation instrument, the Tool for Assessing Responsibility-Based Education 2.0 (TARE; Escartí, Wright, Pascual, & Gutiérrez, 2015) was used to support this claim by assessing the teaching style of program instructors and subsequent student behaviors in accordance with the TPSR model (Hellison, 2011). The inter-rater reliability of items on this scale ranged from .785 and 1.0. A full description of the instrument is available in the “Observations” section. Table 3.1 displays the descriptive statistics for teacher and student behaviors as assessed by the TARE 2.0.

**Program description.** For over 15 years, the youth sport organization has served over 1,000 youth annually through its comprehensive sport-based outreach programs. The programs draw youth between the ages of 5-18 years old from the neighborhood and attract members through offering different sports such as soccer, basketball, and volleyball. The mission of the organization is to use sport to develop the community and educate youth on building life skills
Table 3.1.
Means and Standard Deviations on Teaching and Student Observations using Tool for Assessing Responsibility-Based Education (TARE) 2.0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Observations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeling Respect</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting Expectations</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for Success</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostering Social Interaction</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigning Management Tasks</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving Choices and Voices</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role in Assessment</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Observations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing Respect</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperating with Peers</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging Others</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping Others</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing Voice</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for Help</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
that will make them productive and contributing citizens of the neighborhood. Different from other youth programs, the organization stresses the importance of developing leaders that will remain in their community and enhance it, rather than “getting out” to abandon what is perceived as the problem area.

The current organization has four program coaches as part of their organizational staff. Two of the coaches have been involved with the program for more than a decade as they originally started out as program members; and the other two coaches have worked with the program for at least two years. The coaches have received annual training through a national youth development sports organization focusing on how to address the relevance of lessons learned in sport in order to improve life outside of sport. Components of coach training include instruction on how to incorporate the organization’s core values (i.e., perseverance, leadership, responsibility, community, respect, and teamwork) into structured sport activities and games, create an emotionally and physically safe environment, and foster healthy decision making about drugs, alcohol, and other life issues. Coaches also participated in ongoing training through weekly meetings where evidence-based strategies and techniques on how to handle situations were discussed.

**Participants**

Participants in the current study were recruited from the sport program for adolescents. This program attracted middle and high school students who have attended the organization’s programming for several years and have demonstrated the potential to serve as student-coaches for younger youth in the program. Altogether, the adolescent program consisted of 120 middle
schoolers and 60 high schoolers, and according to the program director, approximately 40% of students in this program have consistently attended for three years or more.

Five male and six female Hispanic participants between the ages of 12 and 18 years old participated in this study. Based on previous studies using a multiple interview approach (Drake & Hebert, 2002; Gilbert & Trudel, 2004; Tracey, 2003), this amount of participants was deemed sufficient to gather the amount of data that would allow the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions. Furthermore, Morse (1994) suggests that for phenomenological studies, a minimum of six individuals or 12 separate adult interviews are necessary to reach theoretical saturation. Given that the current sample included youth who likely have limited reflections compared to adults, it was determined that a sample of 11 youth, participating in three interview sessions each, would be sufficient to examine this phenomenon with depth and rigor.

Participants were selected by purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002) with the assistance of the organization’s program director. The researcher asked the program director to identify members of the adolescent sport program who (a) regularly attended the program for three years or more, (b) showed a strong understanding of program values and life skills, and (c) demonstrated English language proficiency. The researcher determined these to be ideal qualities for in-depth interviews on topics due to the need for higher order thinking and substantial exposure to the program (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, it was decided that the sample should focus on youth who have a strong understanding of life skills usage because the purpose of the study was to study transfer experiences, and it was assumed these youth would be the best representation of describing these experiences compared to youth who do not understand
transfer. IRB approval was obtained in addition to collecting signed assent forms from participants and consent forms from their parents and the coaches. A Spanish-language version of the parental consent form was made available for parents/guardians.

**Data Sources and Procedures**

The primary data sources in this study were interviews and a focus group with 11 youth participants in the adolescent program. Additionally, complementary data sources were utilized to help understand the program context and triangulate with the interviews. The complimentary data sources included (a) systematic observations using a time sampling methodology, (b) ethnographic field notes, and (c) informal interviews with program coaches.

The protocol for this research project included four phases. Phase 1 consisted of initial observations of the program with ethnographic field note taking to gain an understanding of the context and refine prompts and probes that would enhance the interview process. Phase 2 included a focus group with seven participants and was supplemented with observations of the youth during the program (four participants were not able to attend the initial focus group and participated in a “makeup” group interview at a later date). A second round of systematic observations and ethnographic field notes made up Phase 3 as a way to look for confirmation of what participants discussed in their focus group interviews. Finally, Phase 4 included two follow-up one-on-one or partner interviews with each participant. Because interviews were conducted outside of school and programs hours, students’ limited availability led to the interviewer conducting some sessions with partners. The interviews took place one week apart and were also supplemented with observations of the sport program sessions.
round of observations was conducted after the focus groups, this allowed the researcher to look for validation of the concepts the students described. Conversely, the researcher used the interview protocol to discuss specific events observed during the program to reflect on the potential transfer of life skills.

All interviews were recorded by a digital recorder and began with a statement about the purpose of the study (i.e., to learn about the youth perspective on life skills taught in sport programs). The individual/partner interviews ranged from 5 to 24 minutes (12 minutes on average) and the focus group lasted approximately 35 minutes. In total, the four phases of the project returned 21 interview sessions totaling about five hours of recorded interviews and 150 pages of transcribed data. The focus group and the interviews were conducted in a private room at the school where the program is hosted and took place before or after program time.

**Interviews and focus group.** Consistent with Seidman’s (2013) approach for interviewing, a series of three interview exchanges were conducted with participants to examine their perceptions of the program, their awareness of the life skills taught in the program, and the relevance of the sport program and these life skills to other areas in their lives. The three series interview methodology is a more rigorous approach to interviewing compared to most SBYD studies that only include one round of interviews (Camire, Trudel, & Forneris, 2009; Hayden et al., 2015). Previous research has demonstrated other benefits of multiple interviews, including enhancing rapport (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 1990) and providing opportunities for the researcher to check understanding (Stewart, 1990). Consistent with Seidman’s recommendations, the series of interviews were conducted one week apart.
Based on Seidman (2013), the first interview (focused life history) allowed participants to tell as much as possible about themselves in light of the research topic. In this study, a focus group approach was elected as the format for the first interview as previous research demonstrates that focus groups are desirable in order to get youth talking and establish a strong rapport for future interactions (Kruger & Casey, 2014). Another benefit of the focus group approach is that youth have a natural tendency to disclose things about themselves through socialization and building off others’ thoughts through comparison, agreement, or disagreement (Carey & Smith, 1994).

Based on the recommendation of Krueger and Casey (2000), the focus group and interviews were moderated by the researcher so that her background on transfer of life skills and the SBYD approach facilitated and informed follow-up questions on critical areas of discussion. All interviews contained a structured sequence of questions, but different prompts, probes, and wording were used to follow youths’ lead and best capture their points of view (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). The focus group guide contained sections related to demographic information and general program factors (e.g., describing the program, likes, dislikes). These sections were designed to establish rapport with the participants and enhance trust between the researcher and the group members. An additional section contained interview questions related to various aspects of transformative learning (Pugh, 2004), as this framework is particularly aligned with the cognitive processes known to be associated with the transfer of life skills. Sample prompts aligned with three major topics from this construct, a) motivated use, b) expansion of perception, and c) experiential value. Motivated use questions related to students thinking about life skills
and their applications outside of the program, for example, Do you look for chances to apply what you’ve learned in the program in everyday life? *Expansion of perception* questions referred to students seeing and understanding life skills taught in the program as connecting to other life situations (e.g., Do you look for examples of people using life skills outside of the program?). Lastly *experiential value* questions attempted to capture participants’ perceived relevance of life skills taught in the program to other areas in their lives (e.g., Do you find what you’ve learned in the program is interesting/useful?).

Focus group studies have used follow-up interviews with individual participants to explore experience in more depth (Duncan & Morgan, 1994). Thus, two follow-up interviews either one-on-one or in partners were conducted to elicit greater depth of the participants’ views related to transfer of life skills. Seidman’s (2013) three interview approach recommends that the final two interviews focus on the details of experience and the reflection on the meaning of the experience. Thus, these interviews included questions designed to gather concrete details of participants’ experiences related to transfer of life skills. Specifically, the focus of the first interview was to probe on relevant issues introduced in the focus group. The second interview was conducted to reach saturation of data, confirming and validating ideas brought up in the prior two sessions. The third interview was also used to clarify any lingering questions that still existed in the interview data. These follow-up interviews were also used for member-checking. Participants were given a one-page summary of notes containing initial researcher interpretations and they were asked to review them for accuracy.
Observations. Four program sessions were observed using systematic observation methods and six sessions were observed using ethnographic field-note taking methods during this study. Systematic observations were conducted using the Tool for Assessing Responsibility-Based Education 2.0 (TARE; Escartí, Wright, Pascual, & Gutiérrez, 2015) in order to ensure program fidelity to quality sport-based youth development program principles. The original TARE has been proven effective in several studies (Hemphill, Templin, & Wright, 2015; Wright, Dyson, & Moten, 2012), but the TARE 2.0 was developed to gather more precise data including a greater number of data points and rating scales with more gradations than the original scale.

The TARE 2.0 includes time sampling ratings in 3-minute intervals for nine responsibility-based teaching strategies (i.e., modeling respect, setting expectations, providing opportunities for success, fostering social interaction, assigning management tasks, promoting leadership, giving choices and voices, giving students a role in assessment, and addressing the transfer of life skills). These strategies reflect implementation of youth development principles in a sport or physical activity program (Wright & Craig, 2011). Use of strategies are rated on a 5-point, Likert-type scale ranging from the strategy being absent (0) to strong implemented (4). The inter-rater reliability of this measure is high, ranging from .78 to 1.0 for each item (Escarti et al., 2015). Additionally, the TARE 2.0 assesses youth behaviors and interactions along with the program leader’s teaching/coaching strategies. The nine categories of youth behaviors (i.e., participation, engagement, showing respect, cooperating with peers, encouraging others, helping others, leading, expressing voice, asking for help) are also rated on a 5-point, Likert-type scale at 3-minute intervals, and therefore provide parallel data to the teaching strategies. Taken together,
these data indicate the extent to which youth development principles were being promoted by the coaches and experienced by participants. In addition to documenting and assessing program fidelity, the TARE 2.0 ratings informed prompts and questions in follow-up interviews with participants.

Informal observations in the form of ethnographic field notes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011) were also collected in order to gain an overall understanding of the program setting and develop rapport and trust with the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The primary researcher spent four observational sessions of one hour each collecting ethnographic field notes on the sport program sessions. Field notes were organized into four categories as they related to a) observations, b) theory, c) methodology, and d) reflexivity. Observational notes documented context, informal interactions, perceptions of participants, and the events that occurred in the program during the study. Notes on theory were focused on observations that connect to the conceptual framework (e.g., transformative learning, SBYD) of the study. As these confirmed or contradicted assumptions, they stimulated thinking about related theories that should be considered. Methodological notes were also taken to document the research process, any variations or adaptations to the planned procedures, practical issues to consider, decisions made regarding the development of interview protocols, etc. Finally, reflexivity notes provided an opportunity for the researcher to reflect on biases, assumptions, emotional reactions, and other thoughts or feelings that may influence the research process and interpretation of data. These ethnographic field notes complemented the structured and quantifiable observational data gathered with the TARE 2.0 and were transcribed to facilitate analysis.
Data Analysis

All interviews were transcribed verbatim and uploaded into the research software NVivo 11.0 to code data so appropriate themes and subthemes could be assigned. The NVivo software was used to manage the 21 interview sessions that were recorded so that categories and supporting quotations could be organized and located efficiently. Before the coding process began, audio files were listened to and transcripts were read two times to build familiarity with the participants and their responses. Next, *a priori* codes based on motivated use, expansion of perception, and experiential value constructs were applied (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data were analyzed from those three categories to build a coding system using an inductive process where brief descriptive labels were generated for units of meaning (Thomas, 2006). After several rounds of coding through an iterative process of collapsing, combining, and revising codes, a list of discrete and complementary codes were used to form themes and subthemes that characterized the data within and across the *a priori* categories (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2002).

To enhance the trustworthiness of the data collection and analysis, several strategies were employed including peer debriefing, triangulation, member checks, and reflexivity. Themes were cross-checked for accuracy and agreement through a series of peer debriefing sessions with a faculty advisor (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The peer debrief session included discussions of methodological insights and alternative conclusions and interpretations of the data analysis (Schwandt, 1997). Similar evaluation designs have generated important insights in previous SBYD studies (Cutforth & Puckett, 1999; Walsh, Ozaeta & Wright, 2010; Wright & Burton, 2008). Triangulation was achieved by collecting separate data sources (i.e., interviews,
systematic observations, ethnographic field notes) to confirm consistency and agreement.

Member checks were also utilized to confirm the validity of the interviews (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994). These took place during the second and third interviews and consisted of presenting a one-page report of reflections and findings to participants.

Reflexivity (Krefting, 1991) issues should also be acknowledged in the current study. Because the researcher has supported and been involved in previous evaluations of this organization’s programming, it was necessary to recognize the potential impact of researcher bias on the results. For example, the researcher had a personal relationship with the directors of the program and could have been influenced to present the program and interpret the data in a favorable light. Furthermore, researcher assumptions about the participants could have been influenced by the knowledge that they live in a crime-ridden neighborhood. Discomfort over cultural and linguistic differences could also have tempered researcher interactions with participants. Despite the potential threats to validity, when coupled with the trustworthiness measures taken in this study, the researcher’s involvement in the program could instead be viewed as advantageous through the trusting relationships established with the program personnel and the overall familiarity of the program context. Easterby-Smith and Malina (1999) lend support to this claim by concluding that having an intimate knowledge of the study setting helps to better understand the context and enhance the study design.

Results

Results are organized around four sections related to participant perceptions about the transfer of life skills from their sport program to other settings. The first section describes the
personal impact the participants reported as a result of belonging to the sport program. The second and third sections discuss participants’ perceived emphases of the program (i.e., social responsibility, life skills) and how these concepts are applied to their lives. The final section examines how youth thought about using life skills outside of the program based on their situational insights of their immediate environment. The higher order themes and their supporting lower order themes with the number of participants that showed direct evidence of the theme are presented in Table 3.2. Supporting quotations for each theme are offered and include pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants. It should be noted that all participants were raised in Spanish-speaking households, so in some instances, proper grammatical English was not observed in responses. However, in order to ensure the tone and authenticity of the reflections, quotations were left as they were spoken.

Table 3.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes Related to Participants’ Perceptions of the Transfer of Life Skills (n=11)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal impact</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Situational insights</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Personal Impact of Program

All 11 participants shared reflections on how the sport program had personally impacted them by developing their core values or inspiring them to explore their identity. Across the three interview sessions, youth shared opinions on the benefits of the program with respect to its influence on their thoughts, perceptions, and mindset. For example, one participant stated, “the program kind of becomes a part of us,” (Mariana). Tomas described the program’s impact on a more global level: “It allowed me to become a more responsible man. It allowed me to accomplish a lot of things with my family and … it opened a lot of doors for me.” One key finding was that participants were receptive to the impact that the program had both on them individually as well as other members in the program. A participant said, “we’re positive people because of [the program]. It makes me feel like this [program] is actually helping out, like not only now, but for our future,” (Mariana). Another participant described the potential impact of the program on those not directly involved:

Especially in this community, where people are getting shot, killed, like, you don’t even know what’s going to happen here. If some of these gangbanger kids would have come to [the program]… I kind of feel like [the program] would, like, make them think about not doing those things. (David).

Core values. Given that a program description is a necessary component to understanding a program’s impact, participants were asked to describe what they do and learn in the program setting. Most participants felt the program’s core values were the defining feature that distinguished it from other sport or community programs. Discussions with the coaches supported this idea, as they shared how they were trained to discuss the core values in each practice session. One youth participant described that core values were taught “usually when
you’re playing sports” (Andres), which was supported by the researcher’s observations that coaches regularly discussed life skills both at practices and games. Five core values were consistently referenced across the interviews (i.e., leadership, respect, responsibility, teamwork, and community) which matched the five of the six values listed as part of the curriculum on the program website. Perseverance, the final core value, was also referenced by several, but not all, participants through terminology such as “not giving up.” Throughout participant reflections, these core values appeared to be shared among members, as well as in alignment with their own personal philosophies and moral codes for how to think and behave in society. For example, Martin said, “Well, most importantly, the thing that [the coaches] teach us is respect… how we have to talk to each other,” while Juanita described another core value: “One of the core values, like teamwork… you use it all your life.” Tomas added his reflection on responsibility,

[The program] teaches you responsibility. Like for us, we usually help out in the summer with the different sports leagues that [the program does]. And it shows you a lot of responsibility. Like you have to take it seriously, like a job. So [the coaches] can take you seriously.

It is important to note the context of the neighborhood and culture of violence that is the norm when referencing the program’s impact on youth. One participant made this connection, suggesting how the program values could alleviate negative thoughts about the community: “[The program] kind of helps… make you think positively. Because sometimes, you know, living… in a neighborhood where there’s a lot of gangbangers, you kind of get… a negative way of thinking about things. But [the program] teaches us values that kind of helps” (Isabel).
Identity exploration. Participants consistently referred to their identity and sense of self being affected by the program. In general, participants demonstrated an awareness of the program impact on identity through sharing self-reflections of personal strengths and overcoming weaknesses as a result of program participation. One participant described:

[The program] really has an impact on me because I have a really bad attitude. So it’s like, okay, you know what? If someone says something to me… that’s their opinion, we’re all entitled to them, so I can’t do anything about it. But I know that I’m not going to go and like shout out whatever I want just because I’m in a bad mood. (Tomas)

This quote demonstrates that it was not necessary for participants to have personality traits that perfectly aligned with program core values in order for the positive effects to be felt. Rather, a student can be aware of her personal challenges (e.g., having a bad attitude) and still be receptive to program values in a way that promotes growth and positive decision making.

Participants also discussed the learning outcomes and personal development they experienced through the program. This was often described through taking on a new or changed mindset over the course of their participation in the program. Isabel reflected, “You learn a lot at [the program] and it kind of changes who you are. It’s like, maybe if you hadn’t come here, maybe you’d be meaner to people or not as understanding.” Juanita shared the program’s impact on her perception of the community: “[Being in the program has] changed me by now taking the point of view of like of the community. It feels more, like, positive.” Tomas echoed this shared mindset on the community in stating “[Because of the program] I have been thinking more positive than negative. So like, I [say to myself] ‘how can we solve things now?’ ‘How can we prevent bad things?’”
Social Responsibility

Because the program is situated in an at-risk environment with feuding gangs and widespread violence, a strong commitment to improving the community was observed in the majority of participants’ responses. Juanita explained the importance of the community context in this way: “Before [the program] was in Little Village, it was like … fearful, because, like, people wouldn’t respect each other. They wouldn’t like be responsible in the community.” Tomas stated, “I mean, I care about where I’m from so… I’d like it to be better. I’m one person, but I can make, like, more difference.” In general, participants’ reflections reflected that they strived to have a positive impact on others in the community. Their civic duty and service to others were seen as crucial parts of this contribution. In an interview with one program coach, they shared that no matter how long students are in the programs, they quickly realize they are not just learning to kick a soccer ball; they are learning to be good citizens. Related to this, one participant stated:

Personally, I think it’s like our job to like help others and like help the community grow into and become something big and beautiful and something that we can all be proud of. Like not just at [this program], but like the entire community. (Gabriella)

Commitment to community. Participants noted a strong sense of community pride and demonstrated a desire for improving their surroundings through taking action. Many noted how the program was responsible for bringing an outdoor, multi-million dollar soccer turf field to the community through large sport corporations getting word of the program’s impact. The majority of participants referenced this soccer field in their responses, mentioning how their personal role in preserving it is through volunteering to pick up garbage on the turf, discouraging people from
littering or tagging in that area, and telling kids to get off the turf while riding their bike. Interactions with coaches reflected this idea, as they described several examples of students asking to clean up the soccer turf as part of their practice time. Mariana described the variety of ways “bike incidents” on the turf typically played out, and how her response exemplified her commitment to the community: “They can get off [their bikes] and listen to you, or… they’re like ‘no, you’re not the boss of me.’ But you know that you’ve tried, and that’s kind of like the biggest thing [in the program]. Like, trying.” In another example, a participant shared an instance of getting angry when he saw people disrespecting the soccer field:

I see a lot of people like just walking and throwing out trash. Right here in front of [school name]! Especially we are, like, noticing that because we’ve became really responsible. Because when you have to do a lot of work to get that soccer field... [shakes head]. So me, some friends, [and the coaches], we usually clean [the field] like every three months. (Tomas)

Several instances were shared of participants taking action to improve their community with the motivation of increasing community member pride; improving the physical image of buildings, streets, and parks; and promoting the neighborhood’s overall safety. All five male participants included descriptions of trying to break up fights among their peers, which often yielded negative results. Tomas shared a lengthy story of encountering a homeless man asking for money when he and some friends from the program walked home after soccer practice. He described the man: “He looked like really hungry, he was like really thirsty,” but rather than giving the homeless man money, he demonstrated his commitment to the man beyond just that moment in time. He shared:

We all decided to go in the store and buy him some ham, some bread – we didn’t buy him pop because that was going to make him thirstier. So instead we bought him some protein bars and
some milk. So then we gave it to him and he’s all like, ‘thank you.’ So we were like, we’re taking responsibility for that man.

**Role model.** Participants’ motivation for improving the community extended to educating and guiding youth in the area as well. Many participants described how setting a good example and being a role model for youth was a core component of the program experience. Coaches described how students in the adolescent program were given many opportunities to get involved with sports practices for younger program members between the ages of five and eight years old. In many instances, participants related their role model identity to the life skill and core value of responsibility. Tomas shared, “For me, responsibility is a big one. Because like everything that I mostly do involves responsibility. Because like I’m always helping little kids, I’m always helping coach. So I have to be responsible for every single one of those things.” One participant noted, “If I could coach little kids, I know I’m going to teach things that [the program] taught me. And definitely if I had kids, I would teach my kids too” (Diego). This instance described how a participant not only wanted to pass on program values within the program setting but to carry on and transfer those values to his own potential parenting experiences. Some participants believed mentoring youth when they were at their youngest was the most crucial time for relationship building to take place. Juanita shared, “With the little kids, they get harder to teach, because we don’t want them to grow up and be bad like the people they see and watch. So I believe if you [address] a problem when it’s small, then it’s not going to be as bad.”
Overall, having a role model mentality was cited as a central take away from the program. Many discussed how this was a self-appointed role, or an important part of fulfilling their identity and responsibility as a member of the program. One female said:

I think that the biggest part we all share is like being a role model for the younger kids. Like I know, when I go to like after school programs, all the little kids that I teach are now in fifth grade, sixth grade, and they see me and they’re like, ‘oh my God, it’s Coach!’ And it has a big impact on you … because you see them change and you see them grow up and it’s like, you really learn to appreciate that. (Mariana)

**Life Skills**

All participants reported that the program taught a variety of life skills that could help with life outside of sport. It should be noted that “life skills” was not a term familiar to all participants when prompted about the topic. In these instances, the researcher asked the participant what they learned in the program that did not have to do with sports, and besides life skills, terms that were referenced included “life lessons,” “core values,” and “leadership skills.” This matched researcher observations of the program curriculum as coaches used a variety of descriptive terms when talking about respect, leadership, teamwork, and responsibility. In general, participants demonstrated an awareness of these life skills as being integrated throughout the sport lessons and noticed the effect they had on their behavior and decision-making in other contexts.

**Integration.** Responses indicated that all participants had an awareness of how the life skills are taught in the program setting using sport as a delivery method. As an example, Mariana
shared how this program helped her develop life skills in lasting ways compared to another
program whose effects seemed more finite:

[The program] ties a lot of life skills into a sport… I used to go to church, well I still do… like a
youth group, and that really didn’t help [me]. I didn’t see it helping me cope with stress or
anything… Like it would help for like 20-30 seconds while they taught us like a life lesson or
something, but it didn’t really interest me because it wasn’t something that was sustaining and it
wasn’t something like anyone can do.

The fact that the current program integrated life skills into the sport lessons rather than
teaching them separately was viewed as an important tactic for helping youth learn, holding their
interest, and making the lessons have a lasting effect. Tomas shared his experience at another
community-based sport program, where they would do an activity about life skills and “[The
coaches] would let you do whatever you want after that.” This is in contrast to the current
program where, “[The coaches] do it in a fun way. It’s not just like us sitting in a classroom and
they just tell us, ‘Don’t do this and that.’ We use [life skills] in sports and activities which it
appeals to us” (David). Observational field notes supported this idea as practice formats included
sport drills and games, where coaches would periodically pause play and reflect on an incident as
a learning experience. For example, the researcher’s field notes described one instance during a
practice where a male student repeatedly messed up his volleyball serve and one coach
interrupted the practice to ask if he was distracted about something. The student shared that he
had received a bad grade on a test during the school day and his teammates then offered advice
on how to overcome the situation (e.g., get a study partner, take deep breaths, think about
something happy).
The role of the coaches was essential in the teaching of life skills through sport process. When discussing this, Mariana concluded that the coaches integrate lessons on leadership “so professionally that it doesn’t even make the kids know that it’s like a life lesson.” Among most participants, the value of using sport as an activity that attracts youth was noted, although they understood this was not at the core of the program’s worth. Juanita shared:

[The program] is not basically about sports, it’s to help you more in the community. Because… [the coaches] don’t basically tell you like ‘oh, just come and play sports.’ We also clean the community, we go to like help people out if someone is in trouble. It’s basically we’re here for each other.

Application. Beyond an awareness of how life skills are integrated into the program setting, it was also evident participants shared the belief that the skills were useful in life. Mariana reflected on the program’s lasting effect: “It just basically teaches us stuff that we’re going to keep with us for the rest of our lives… I always like to think that everything that’s applied here is going to be applied to like later on.” There were several instances of participants describing how they made positive decisions or changed their behavior based on learning lessons from the program. Diego offered this example: “My friends have told me, ‘hey let’s ditch school’ and stuff like that. I thought about it, if I was a bad kid [I would]… but [the program] kept me straight.” Tomas shared how his prolonged membership in the program has had a long term effect on his behavior:

I’ve been in this program like, for what is it? Nine years now? Since first grade? Like for the first three years, I [acted out] a lot. So then after that… I started getting the hang of it. So if I want to be in [the program], I have to become more responsible and do the things the way they’re supposed to be done.
Participants described the importance of applying life skills within the program setting as well. Examples of showing respect to friends, promoting good teamwork, and including everyone during activities were offered. Tomas summarized, “When we’re playing sports, we encourage each other. And every single person has a role in the game. So you have to take responsibility for your role.” Observational ratings supported this idea, as TARE 2.0 data reflected that students consistently displayed high ratings on the behaviors “helping others,” “cooperating with peers,” and “encouraging others.” Other examples of life skill application were shared outside of the program setting, including showing respect to people in the community through good deeds. Sofia mentioned, “Whenever I, like, cross the street, I always say thank you to the crossing guard, or good morning. I always smile at her. And when I’m in school, I always say good morning to my teachers or, like, thank him that he’s always there to teach us.” Another participant shared how the program helped him demonstrate responsibility through managing his time. Tomas described a story where he used to avoid his responsibilities at home despite his mother’s requests and consequently not be able to participate in social activities later because he put off his chores. Due to a core value taught in the program, he was able to remedy this issue moving forward:

So then [the program] started teaching me all about responsibility, so I started like memorizing like what I had to do… Like a year later, once I mastered like responsibility, my mom said you’ve got to come home right after school. I would go home. And then if there’s something [to do] like for an hour, I would do whatever she told me to. And then I would have all my free time.
Furthermore, there were many instances that participants reported changed thoughts or perceptions regarding life outside of the program setting as well. Mariana shared how learning about a life skill in the program kept her mindset and motivation on track in academics:

I know that perseverance really helped me last year because we’re taking the constitution test and I failed it like twice and we had one more try and I was like, ‘You know what? I feel like right now’s a really good time for me to like keep persevering in my head.’ Especially because if I didn’t pass that [test], I was going to stay in seventh grade again.

Some participants were receptive to seeing how others in their environment neglected to demonstrate responsible behavior and this was a motivating factor for setting a good example. Tomas reported, “I usually see, like, people not being responsible. And then I think to myself, ‘that used to be me.’ And then like I reflect like for five seconds… so like I try to take what they did wrong to make it right.” David shared how his internal voice assessed situations where a positive or negative choice could be made, taking into account the gravity of the situation and what he learned from the program: “I think about the consequence. Like if I do something, like… if I get caught… Something like big, then I really think about it first.”

Situational Insights

Based on the responses, the students appeared to be cognizant of the barriers and facilitators that contributed to using life skills learned in the program. They described making decisions based on their safety, needs, and immediate environment while balancing that with their core values and beliefs. For example, Daniela shared, “If you’re walking down the street and you don’t know that neighborhood, it’s like, ‘I don’t know anyone here.’ So then you act a different way.” David echoed this awareness of surroundings when he stated, “Especially in this
community, like with people getting shot, killed, like you don’t even know what’s going to happen here.” With the prevalence of gangs and multitude of opportunities to take the wrong path, the participants still managed to demonstrate insight on how their decision-making was affected by what was going on in their community. For example, David noted:

Like everybody here like knows that gangs are bad… Even kids like 13 years old. And you never know what’s going to happen to you… Some people join [gangs] because like they don’t have anything else to do. And they’re not thinking. Or like they think they’re going to be safe if they join a gang. But actually like not at all.

Based on their situational insights, participants identified two specific scenarios that affected how they chose to act based on the lessons learned in the program. On the one hand, participants described being surrounded by individuals with values that did not match their own, and they made the decision to adapt based on the demands of the immediate situation. This is termed “incongruent values” in the next section. Alternatively, participants described several situations where peers and coaches from the program provided a safe space to express themselves and make decisions based on their values, later described as “social acceptance.”

**Incongruent values.** Participants were prompted to discuss how others in the community viewed the program and its impact. Despite the overwhelming belief that the program had a positive impact on their lives, the youth were keenly aware this was not a shared belief among everyone outside of the program setting. It should be noted that due to the program’s reach, enrollment, and tenure in the neighborhood, participants felt most members of the community were aware of the program’s existence. This was supported by coach testimonies through
informal interactions with the researcher (e.g., email correspondence, discussions before and after practices and games). While participants specified that this community awareness was often met with support, all youth also shared instances where they experienced a lack of support toward program values among peers and other members of the community. Andres stated that some take the program setting “As a joke” and “Don’t live disciplined.” Others described how students at their school stole school property, ditched classes, and tagged buildings in the neighborhood. As shared previously, the program values had a very personal impact on participants and were integral in defining their identity and sense of self. Despite this, participants were strongly aware of the incongruent values held by people outside of the program setting and this negatively impacted them. Mariana shared, “When people say, ‘oh [the program] is boring because we have to learn all these things,’ it’s like – it kind of hurts because we know that [the program] is family, you know?” Andres added, “I feel like a lot of people don’t see us like cool, or describe the program as ‘lame and all that’” (Tomas).

Despite others’ opposition toward the program, it did not appear to affect participants’ commitment to it. Daniela shared, “I guess [others outside the program] have like a different way of seeing things… they’ve never really been here and were never really involved. They don’t really know it, don’t really care about it like we do.” Martin shared how his friends’ different ideologies did not impact his choices. He said, “I don’t think my friends would, like, use any of the [life skills]... I guess they just expect me to do it because they know I will.” Many relied on the positive impact of the program on community safety as fueling their continued commitment to it. Juanita shared her perception on the gang violence and its personal impact on her family:
If [the program] wouldn’t be here, obviously our community wouldn’t be the same. It would be kind of like it was before… like gangbangers. But since [the program] started, there’s less gangbangers… Like this summer there’s like none of them gangbangers or anything. And if [the program] wouldn’t be here, I think it would be like more violence, and the little kids wouldn’t feel safe. Or I wouldn’t feel safe. Because I have a little sister. It’d be like, no, don’t go to the park, don’t go outside.

While some participant reflections described individuals actively not buying into the program lifestyle, others included examples of people who demonstrated a lack of caring or sense of apathy towards being in the program. Martin commented how this may be due to a lack of knowledge: “I don’t think [people outside of the program] believe in it. But if they came, and then they would be in it for a day and they see how it is, then I think they would.” Sofia also suggested this doubt could come from a lack of awareness: “Friends who haven’t been to [the program], like they don’t know like what it’s about and they like doubt that it’s going to help.” Isabel added that it’s a lack of understanding that might prompt individuals in the community to behave inappropriately: “Some of [the people outside of the program], they’re not really that respectful, and they don’t really understand how like these things are important, so they don’t really try like to carry out those values.” In general, participants demonstrated attentiveness to how certain community members fostered a culture of gang violence and negative behaviors, and this made it challenging to gain full support for the program philosophy.

**Social support/acceptance.** Most participants felt individuals inside the program promoted a strong sense of social acceptance due to the relationships and shared belief system between members. Andres described the program as being “Like a family, where we’re a team.” Their relationships with coaches played a large role in this feeling. The youth believed they
could go to coaches for help with a variety of issues such as homework assistance, family problems, or when they needed a safe place to be. Tomas described an instance where he was being chased by gang members in the neighborhood while walking home from school and he choose to run to one of the program offices to seek out help. Sofia confided that the program coaches were the first people she told about participating in self-harm behaviors. Juanita emphasized that the staff would drop anything to help out: ‘They’re like a second family. Like if you’re in trouble, it doesn’t matter like what time it is. [The director of the program] is like right here.” She shared a personal anecdote about how her best friend was killed during her freshman year of high school and even though she wanted to push people away, she felt like the director of the program was the only person she could talk to. All coaches described incidents where they had to provide assistance to students outside of the formal program setting ranging from walking them home to providing a safe place for them to sleep.

The impact of the coaches was particularly noted when participants shared how things could have been different if they had not been a part of the program. David disclosed that the program, helped him “stay off the streets… And the streets are pretty dangerous… Some of my friends like, they act a fool, they’re always in the street and like some of them are dead already.” Andres described a realization he had about one particular coach and how his influence inspired him to apply life skills to his decisions:

We live in like a really violent neighborhood, so I mean, just being in sports, and [My] coach, he like means a lot to me. He’s changed my life like crazy… If I didn’t get in [the program], I’d probably be on the wrong steps. I don’t think I would have gone to school. Now I’m just thinking about persevering and responsibility and all that.
It was clear participants felt like the program setting was a physically and psychologically safe place for them to express themselves. Martin stated, “The staff here, like all of them, I’ve known them since the longest – and I mean, I feel confident around them.” Juanita echoed this, “I feel comfortable at [the program] because it’s like a safe environment.” Many gave credit to the coaches for the impact they had on their decisions and desire to be accountable. For example, Diego shared that “none of [the coaches] would approve of me ditching [school]. I never did before. I knew if I did, they would give me a talking to. And I wouldn’t have made them proud.”

In addition to support from coaches, support from peers was also described as a pillar of the program that helped influence their decision making. Peers provided a sense of shared beliefs and common philosophies regarding situations adolescents faced in their daily lives (e.g., ditching school, sexual behaviors, getting into fights). Mariana described, “I feel like [support is] one of the biggest things that you can take from [this program]. Like you find friendships that actually last. Like you know that wherever you go, you’re always going to have one thing in common.” Oftentimes, it was a sense of freedom and comfort with being able to be oneself that participants captured in their responses. Gabriella, a soft-spoken participant, shared, ‘I came in [to the program] and I was really, really shy. I would never ever talk to anyone. And when I came here and I made a couple friends and everything got better.’

Discussion
The four themes identified (personal impact, social responsibility, life skills, and situational insights) describe how youth viewed the impact of the sport program on their beliefs about transferring life skills to other settings. There appeared to be strong evidence for participants not only understanding the role of life skills within the program setting, but demonstrating motivation for both thinking about and using those life skills outside of the program setting as well. The factors that shaped and contributed to their thinking on this topic are discussed in this section and related to existing research in the SBYD field and the transformative experience framework.

Transfer of life skills learned from sport and applied to other life settings is a complex process that typically transpires over long periods of time (Martinek, Schilling, & Johnson, 2001). The current program lends support for the idea that long-term membership in a SBYD program setting fosters positive developmental outcomes for use both inside and outside of sport. Each youth interviewed had been a member of the program for at least three years and could demonstrate understanding of what skills were taught in the program context, describe their potential relevance and use in other contexts, and provide specific examples of that use in various life situations. Other studies have speculated that these are key components for youth being able to transfer life skills even when empirical support for these claims was limited (Allen, Rhind, & Koshy, 2015; Danish et al., 1993; Holt, Tink, Mandigo, & Fox, 2008).

Halpern (1998) has noted that one major challenge to transfer is youth being able to recognize or notice when a skill learned in one context could be used or needed in another context. It is possible that for these youth, repeated exposure over several years to the relevance
of these skills outside of sport served as a facilitator in the transfer process. Because this was the first study of its kind to follow youth belonging to a SBYD program for an extended period of time, further studies should examine the impact of long-term program membership on the transfer process.

The manner in which life skill lessons were integrated with the sport experience was observed by participants as vital to their understanding, enjoyment, and commitment to the program. There is extensive theoretical and empirical support for the use of sport as an ideal environment for teaching life skills to youth (Brunelle, Danish, & Forneris, 2007; Danish, Petipas, & Hale, 1993; Gould & Carson, 2008; Hellison, 2011). Youth in this environment were strong advocates of how sport facilitated positive relationships with coaches and peers (Walsh, Ozaeta, & Wright, 2010) and fostered a physically and psychologically safe space (Zimmerman et al., 2013). These factors are viewed as particularly important for interventions with youth in high-risk environments in terms of building resiliency and developing positive social skills (Zolkoski & Bullock, 2012). Beyond youths’ belief that sport was an ideal context for teaching life skills, several participants viewed the sport environment as being superior to other program contexts they participated in. This could be explained by youth seeing sport as both a distraction and escape from everyday stressors (Whitely & Massey, 2015) or because youth inherently enjoy the sport experience of interacting with peers and building physical competencies (McCarthy, Jones, & Clark-Carter, 2008). Other research (Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003; MacDonald, Cote, Eys, & Deakin, 2012) has explored the impact of sport programs compared to other youth extracurricular activities (e.g., service, faith-based, community, vocational activities) for
delivering positive developmental experiences; however, this finding should be explored further to pinpoint what it is about the sport setting that youth perceive to be most ideal for teaching the transfer of life skills.

Youths’ motivation for transferring life skills outside of the program context appeared to be mediated by their awareness other community members’ core values as in alignment or in conflict with the program. Specifically, the behaviors and values of leadership, respect toward others, and making good decisions when faced with risky behaviors were pillars of the program setting that did not correspond with participants’ perceptions of how gang members in the community conducted themselves. Whitley and Massey (2015) suggest that when using sport as a vehicle for fostering positive outcomes for youth from under-resourced or crime-ridden communities, the environment must be considered as a mitigating factor in the process of youth development. Thus, these cultural differences between the program setting and surrounding community introduce how the transfer process may be impeded by program values clashing with cultural norms (Lee & Martinek, 2009). It has also been documented that perceived similarity, influenced by environmental context, is one determinant for youth deciding to transfer behaviors (Gick & Holyoak, 1987). While differences in the learned context and new context has been framed as a barrier previously (Lee & Martinek, 2009), participants in the current study demonstrated a heightened awareness of these contextual factors and responded by choosing to modify their behavior based on balancing their thoughts of what is appropriate, safe, and true to their values. Drawing from adolescent development literature, being able to navigate what is appropriate behavior in multiple contexts is an integral skill to possess for successful entry into
adulthood (Erikson, 1994) and can be viewed as a successful developmental outcome related to
the program setting.

One goal of the present study was to examine how the transformative experience
framework (Pugh et al., 2010) related to youths’ responses about transferring life skills based on
three methods of knowledge utilization (experiential value, expansion of perception, motivated
use). Participants described several instances of thinking about the relevance of program life
lessons in their school, home, and social lives (experiential value), which has been identified as a
necessary step in order for transfer to occur (Danish et al., 1993; Jones & Laravee, 2009). Prior
research contends that this can be facilitated by coaches making intentional connections between
sports and life (Walsh, Ozaeta, & Wright, 2010), which was evident in the current program. Pugh
and colleagues (2010) also point to students having expanded perceptions about subject material
as a way to facilitate transfer. In this study, participants situated these perceptions in the context
of their environment, namely in thinking about how the program’s lessons fit within their future
and life outside of the program. It became clear that youth thought about life skills as being a
ticket to successful future academic and employment opportunities. This is related to Walsh’s
(2008) research that examined how SBYD programs can help youth envision their possible
futures. Youth thinking how life skills can help them achieve their potential futures appears to be
one component that connects life in the program to life outside the program.

Finally, the role of motivation (or motivated use; Pugh et al., 2010) in the transfer process
is one topic that has been largely unexplored in the literature. Participants shared several
instances of applying prosocial behaviors through helping members of the community, keeping
the program’s property maintained, and making positive decisions to stay in school or resist other negative choices. However, motivated use as a phenomenon implies that youth must only be motivated to apply learning in a new context, aside from actually executing the behavior. This is an important distinction to make because, as noted previously, the environmental context may serve as a barrier for youth to actually carry out the intended behavior (Lee & Martinek, 2009). But in situations where the intention and motivation to execute a behavior was present, program leaders and researchers should view the youth’s changed thought process as a successful outcome of the program’s lessons. This may address the lack of findings in many SBYD accessing transfer outcomes that relied solely on independent observations of youth transferring behaviors (Wright & Burton, 2011; Wright, Li, Ding, & Pickering, 2010) or youth reporting using the behavior themselves (Camire, Trudel, and Forneris, 2009; Gordon, 2010). Instead future research should consider transfer as a more comprehensive process starting with Pugh’s transformative experience features: valuing, expanding thoughts on, and being motivated to use life skills in other settings.

**Limitations and Future Directions**

While promising, the results of this study had several limitations. With interview data from 11 participants, it is unreasonable to assume that these themes apply across other samples. Future studies should be conducted in other high-quality SBYD settings to see if similar patterns emerge. Furthermore, youth in this study were purposefully sampled based on coach recommendations. It may be that this sample included youth who do not represent the greater
program population, so research with random sampling of students is encouraged. It is also important to note the relatively short length of some interviews with the participants. While some of this can be explained by adolescents demonstrating limited communication skills with adults related to complex topics (Jackson, Bijstra, Oostra, & Bosma, 1998), there is no denying more time and more talk would strengthen one’s confidence in the conclusions. Alternative interviewing methodologies such as using vignettes or photographic representations of transfer concepts (Lerner, Liben, & Mueller, 2015) could be utilized in future qualitative studies. Finally, because the researcher had previous involvement in the program setting as a consultant, participants may have felt compelled to respond to interview questions in ways that reflected a favorable attitude toward the program as not to be viewed as against the program in any way.

Despite these limitations, this study is unique in its focus of examining transfer in terms of how youth approach the transfer process rather than a mere reporting of behavior changes. For practitioners, insight can be gained on how to intentionally design high-quality programs that foster long-term membership for youth to continue through programs and take on new leadership roles in the process. Special attention should be placed on how program leaders can encourage youth to consider the use of life skills outside of the program setting, accounting for lessons on how to navigate through potential environmental barriers. Developing relationships between peers and with coaches was also a factor that enhanced the transfer process, as youth felt like they belonged to a group that valued the same beliefs and morals. Based on this, practitioners should consider in what ways they can create a physically and emotionally safe program context, particularly for those programs situated in marginalized or violent communities.
Moving forward, there is a need for researchers to consider the importance of conceptualizing transfer as a process rather than a set of outcomes. Particularly, future studies should focus on how youth think about the life skills they learn in their program, specifically in applying them to other life contexts. Several research designs could employ this suggestion such as interviews, focus groups, or measures that examine the cognitive components of the transfer process. Furthermore, there is rationale to examine the effect of time on transfer, which could be accomplished through comparing the experiences of youth who belong to the same program for different durations of time. Additionally, the effect of age could be studied to determine if transfer corresponds to cognitive development and maturity.

**Conclusion**

The purpose this study was to examine youth perceptions of life skills transfer from a model community-based sport program to other life contexts. In general, youth described how the program made a personal impact on their core belief systems and the development of their identities. Participants reflected that the program fostered their sense of social responsibility through being a role model to other youth and committing to improving the community. Likely due to their extended membership in the program, participants demonstrated a strong understanding of how life skills were integrated into sport content and how these skills could be applied to their lives. These findings can be crossed with Pugh and colleagues’ transformative experience framework in order to enhance the understanding of life skills transfer as both a cognitive and behavioral process within the sport context.
OVERALL CONCLUSION

The three papers taken together provide a more critical look at the transfer of life skills process in sport and physical education programs. Paper 1 presented a conceptual model for transfer based on findings from SBYD and educational literature. The main contribution of this proposed framework is that crucial cognitive components make up the transfer process and Pugh and colleagues’ transformative experience framework can greatly inform how to conceptualize these factors. Paper 2 captured youths’ perceptions of transfer using current methodologies (i.e., LSTS and YES 2.0 scales) and results indicate that despite evidence of youth reporting learning life skills in the PE program, the transfer effect was not observed. This finding demonstrates that there is a missing link between learning life skills and deciding to make use of the learned material in other contexts, strengthening the argument that key cognitive processes are being overlooked in the research process. Finally, Paper 3 sought to apply the proposed conceptual framework to a high-quality SBYD program through interviews with youth who had extended membership in the program and demonstrated understanding life skills and transfer. Results from this study strongly support the idea that there are several cognitive components that appear to facilitate the transfer process.

Two overarching conclusions can be drawn from this dissertation as a whole. First, given that transfer involves cognition, these papers highlight the importance of practitioners incorporating reflection and discussion into lessons. Previous research supports the concept that reflective experiences are a strong facilitator of transfer in physical activity programs (Leberman & Martin, 2004; Lucas & Fleming, 2012) and this was substantiated in both empirical studies.
Practitioners should look to providing reflective experiences integrated into the sport lessons, such as connecting how leadership learned in sport can be used in school or with friends. Students should be given structured opportunities to make connections between contexts in their lives and self-assess how they are learning and exhibiting life skills in the program. These types of experiences have been shown to foster the transfer experience and encourage the use of life skills in other relevant situations.

Additionally, this dissertation provides a more comprehensive model for researchers to expand on while identifying specific components that occur in the process. Significant research was reviewed to formulate a working model that represents how the current literature conceptualizes the transfer process, with the addition of a new stage in the process being the transformative experience framework. This contribution charges researchers with a more advanced and nuanced way of examining transfer, specifically examining the role of youths’ thoughts in the process. Future transfer studies in the SBYD field should include methodologies that address this concept and put more emphasis on youths’ role. Framing transfer in this way is ultimately a more empowering experience for youth, as researchers are crediting youth with making advanced cognitive connections and developing situational insights about their environments before deciding to apply what they have learned. This aligns with the positive youth development framework (Lerner et al., 2005) that seeks to build on youths’ strengths and develop them further. Rather than conceptualizing transfer as a phenomenon that takes place because adults instruct youth to use what they’ve learned, transformative experience gives them autonomy and ownership over the process.
Some remaining questions and new directions for research have resulted from this line of inquiry. First, the role of time in the transfer process was introduced but left undeveloped in this dissertation. Future research should examine time related to how long youth belong to a program before life skill lessons become relevant and meaningful. Furthermore, the role of time in the transfer process has been largely unexplored, including how long it takes for youth to learn a life skill, reflect on it, and then elect to use it. Another remaining question is how the program setting affects the transfer experience. Prior research has demonstrated program context differs significantly for youth (Larson, Hansen, & Dworkin, 2003), so future research should examine how PE, community-based, and after-school program contexts affect the transfer process. Finally, given that the central conclusion from this dissertation is that youths’ cognition has been overlooked in transfer, the question remains in what other ways researchers can study youth thinking about this topic. One study in the collection utilized the multiple interview approach along with teacher and student observations. Future studies should employ alternative methodologies such as case studies, surveys, and using vignettes or artistic experiences to get youth talking about this topic.
COMPREHENSIVE REFERENCES


Whitley, M. A., & Massey, W. V. (2015). *Saving grace or destructive force? The role of sport in violent and under-resourced communities.* In J. Stebbings (Chair), Sport and coaching within socio-economically disadvantaged communities. Symposium at the European Federation of Sport Psychology Congress (FEPSAC), Bern, Switzerland, July 15.


APPENDIX A
IRB APPROVAL
Approval Notice

Initial Review

16-Nov-2015

TO: Jennifer Jacobs

Kinesiology and Physical Education

RE: Protocol # HS15-0352 “Life skills learned in a physical education setting”

RE: Protocol # HS15-0353 “Students’ perceptions on the transfer of life skills through a sport-based youth development program”

Your Initial Review submission was reviewed and approved under Expedited procedures by Institutional Review Board #2 on 16-Nov-2015. Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:


If your project will continue beyond that date, or if you intend to make modifications to the study, you will need additional approval and should contact the Office of Research Compliance and Integrity for assistance. Continuing review of the project, conducted at least annually, will be necessary until you no longer retain any identifiers that could link the subjects to the data collected. Please remember to use your protocol number (HS15-0353) on any documents or correspondence with the IRB concerning your research protocol.
APPENDIX B
DEKALB SCHOOL DISTRICT APPROVAL
Hi Jenn-

Thank you for your efforts in addressing our final questions/suggestions regarding your research project. You now have full district approval to proceed with your project once your Spanish consent forms are ready.

Please note that this is the district level approval. Principals and teachers have the right to agree or not agree to participate in this research project with no repercussions.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Good luck with your project!

-Amy

***************

Amy Luckner, Ph.D.
Assessment, Research, and MTSS Coordinator
DeKalb School District #428
815.754.2953
APPENDIX C
TOOL FOR ASSESSING RESPONSIBILITY-BASED EDUCATION 2.0
TARE 2.0 Teacher Observation Category Definitions

**Modeling Respect:** Teacher models respectful communication. This would involve communication with the whole group and individual students. Examples include: using students’ names; active listening; making eye contact; recognizing individuality; maintaining composure; developmentally appropriate instruction; talking ‘with’ rather than ‘at’ students; showing an interest in students; unconditional positive regard. Counter examples include: indifference; disengagement; losing temper; deliberately embarrassing a student.

**Setting Expectations:** Teacher explains or refers to explicit behavioral expectations during the program. Examples include: making sure all students know where they should be and what they should be doing at any given time; giving explicit expectations for activity or performance; explaining and reinforcing safe practices, rules and procedures, or etiquette.

**Opportunities for Success:** Teacher structures lesson so that all students have the opportunity to successfully participate and be included regardless of individual differences. PE examples include: making appropriated adaptations for inclusion; providing opportunities for practice, skill refinement, and game play. Classroom examples include allowing students to answer questions, participate in discussions, or succeed in a learning task.

**Fostering Social Interaction:** Teacher structures activities that foster positive social interaction. Examples include fostering student-student interaction through cooperation, teamwork, problem solving, peer-coaching, partner drills where communication is encouraged, conflict resolution or debriefing. Counter examples include: random student interactions not fostered or supported by the teacher; pseudo group discussions that only involve student-teacher exchanges.

**Assigning Responsibility:** Teacher assigns specific responsibilities that facilitate the organization of the program or a specific activity. Examples include asking students to: take attendance, serve as timekeeper, set up equipment, keep score/records, erase the chalkboard, give out materials, or maintain facilities.

**Leadership:** Teacher allows students to lead or be in charge of a group. Examples include allowing students to: demonstrate for the class, lead a station, teach/lead exercises for the whole class, or coaching a team.

**Giving Choices and Voices:** Teacher gives students a voice in the program. Examples include letting students: engage in group discussions, vote as a group; make individual choices, invite student questions or suggestions, eliciting student opinions, letting students evaluate the teacher or program.

**Role in Assessment:** Teacher allows students to have a formal role in evaluation. Examples include: self- or peer-evaluations as well as individual contracts related to skill development, learning, behavior, or attitude.

**Transfer:** Teacher directly addresses the transfer of life skills or responsibilities from the lesson beyond the program. Examples of topics include: the need to work hard and persevere in school; the importance of being a leader in your community; keeping self-control to avoid a fight after
school; setting goals to achieve what students want in sports or life in general.

**TARE 2.0 Student Observation Category Definitions with Examples**

*Participation*: Student is ‘on task’, i.e. following directions and participating in activities or tasks organized by the teacher. This could involve working independently or in a group. During management or transition times this may simply involve waiting for directions, standing in line, etc. Participation should be assessed independently of engagement (see below).

*Engagement*: Student seems to have a high level of interest and motivation for the task or educational activity which could be evidenced in their level of effort, focus, and active contribution. In a class setting this could look like raising a hand to answer a question, asking a question or actively contributing to a class discussion. The focus here is how the student engages with the educational material, tasks, and activities.

*Showing Respect*: Student is actively showing respect to others, i.e. making eye contact, using names, including/accepting others, paying attention to others, or active listening. This would apply to their interactions with peers and/or the teacher.

*Cooperation*: Student demonstrates the social skills needed to work effectively with others in accomplishing a common task or objective. This would look like collaborating with peers on a group task, contributing to team or group success, taking turns, and/or communicating well with others regarding the group task.

*Encouraging Others*: Student offers social support to others in proactive ways. This could include clapping, cheering, complimenting, praising, and/or patting on the back.

*Helping Others*: Student takes on helping roles either voluntarily or when asked. This could include helping the teacher with organizational tasks, assisting peers with their work, or expressing concern for someone who is having a problem.

*Leading*: Student takes on a leadership role with regard to an educational task. This could involve being in charge of or responsible for a group, giving instructions to peers, and/or gives directions to peers. This would often be a role assigned by the teacher but could be student-initiated.

*Expressing Voice*: Student makes suggestions, shares opinions, and/or reflects in ways that express their personality and individuality. This often goes beyond questions and answers about academic material but may address the program overall, goals, issues, or problems students are facing, etc. Could occur in individual conversations with the teacher or group discussions.

*Asking for Help*: Student seeks out assistance and asks for help from teacher, program leader, or peers.
APPENDIX D
LIFE SKILLS TRANSFER SURVEY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Really not true for me</th>
<th>Not true for me</th>
<th>Sort of true for me</th>
<th>True for me</th>
<th>Really true for me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I calm myself down after receiving a bad grade.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. After I receive a poor test grade, I take a deep breath to stop from getting angry.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I take a deep breath to calm myself after I receive a bad test grade.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I stay positive when I am frustrated with my homework.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I have a positive attitude when faced with a challenge at school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. In school, I think positively even if I am having trouble learning.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. I am patient and keep trying when I am learning a difficult subject in school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. I keep trying when I am having difficulty with my schoolwork.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. When I get a bad grade, I try harder to improve next time.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Really not true for me</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>I set goals to achieve my personal best in school subjects.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>I set goals to get better grades in school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>I outline the steps toward getting a better grade in school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>I set goals based on my own ability level in school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>I create a plan for getting better grades in school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>I set specific goals to improve my grades at school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<thead>
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<th>Really not true for me</th>
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<th>True for me</th>
<th>Really true for me</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>I sit down and work out a disagreement with my friend.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>I work out a conflict with my friend by talking about it.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>When I have a conflict with my friend, I look for a solution that benefits both of us.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>If my friend and I argue, I try to resolve our differences by talking them out.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>When I have a conflict with my brother/sister, I look for a solution that benefits both of us.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>If my brother/sister and I argue, I try to resolve our differences by talking them out.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>I work out a conflict with my brother/sister by talking about it.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>I sit down and work out a disagreement with my brother/sister.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Really not true for me</td>
<td>Not true for me</td>
<td>Sort of true for me</td>
<td>True for me</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>24. I go to bed on time the evening before a big test.</th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25. I drink lots of water throughout the day.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. I avoid unhealthy behaviors.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. I eat a balanced diet on a daily basis.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. I do sports or exercise every day.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. I choose healthy foods to eat.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Really not true for me</th>
<th>Not true for me</th>
<th>Sort of true for me</th>
<th>True for me</th>
<th>Really true for me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>30. I learn things from people who are different from me.</th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31. I feel comfortable interacting with people of different cultures.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. I get along with kids who are of different backgrounds than mine.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. I have learned many things from individuals of different cultures.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. I relate to kids with different backgrounds than mine.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Really not true for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. I find good role models to help me.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. I look for people who have good listening skills to help me.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. I seek help from others who provide me with encouragement.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. I go to people who will help me solve a problem.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. I go to people who I can trust when I need help.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. I give good advice to my friends.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. I can reach out to people when they have a problem.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. I comfort a friend when they are upset.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. I help others by listening to their problems.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. I am a positive role model for others to follow.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E
YOUTH EXPERIENCE SURVEY 2.0

In my PE volleyball unit I…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
<th>Yes, Definitely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Tried doing new things</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tried a new way of acting around people</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I do things here I don’t get to do anywhere else</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Starting thinking more about my future because of this activity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. This activity got me thinking about who I am</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. This activity has been a positive turning point in my life</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I set goals for myself in this activity.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Learned to find ways to achieve my goals.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Learned to consider possible obstacles when making plans.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I put all my energy into this activity.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Learned to push myself.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Learned to focus my attention</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Observed how others solved problems and learned from them.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Learned about developing plans for solving problems.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Used my imagination to solve a problem.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Learned about organizing time and not procrastinating (not putting things off)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Learned about setting priorities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Practiced self discipline</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Learned about controlling my temper.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Became better at dealing with my fear and anxiety.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In my PE volleyball unit I…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
<th>Yes, Definitely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. Became better at handling stress.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Learned that emotions affect how I perform.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. In this program I have improved athletic or physical skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Made friends with someone of the opposite gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Learned I had a lot in common with people from different backgrounds</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. Got to know someone from a different ethnic group</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. Made friends with someone from a different social class (someone richer or poorer)</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Learned about helping others.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>29. I was able to change my school or community for the better.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Learned to stand up for something I believe is morally right.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. We discussed morals and values.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Learned that working together requires some compromising</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Became better at sharing responsibility</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Learned how to be patient with other group members</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Learned how my emotions and attitude affect others in the group</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Learned that it is not necessary to like people in order to work with them</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. I became better at giving feedback</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. I became better at taking feedback</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Learned about the challenges of being a leader.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Others in this activity counted on me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Had an opportunity to be in charge of a group of peers.</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX F
PAPER 3 INTERVIEW GUIDE
Individual context

- Tell me about your family – who’s in your family?
- How did you come to be involved in Btb?

Program questions

- When people ask you about Beyond the Ball (Btb), what do you tell them?
- What do you do at Btb?
- What do you like about Btb? What don’t you like about Btb?
- What do you learn about at Btb?
- What do the Btb themes mean to you?
- Do you ever use what you’ve learned in Btb in life?

Motivated use

- Do you ever think about what’s taught in the program outside of the program? Where?
- What do you think about?
- Do you apply what you’ve learned in the program during the program?
- Do you talk about what you learn during the program with others at Beyond the Ball?
- What do people in your life think about you being in the club? How supportive are they to what you learn at BtB?
- How do you feel when you think about what you’ve learned at Btb?
- Do you look for chances to apply what you’ve learned in Btb in everyday life?
- Are there times you use what you’ve learned in the program when you don’t have to?

Expansion of perception

- When you’re participating in activities at Btb, what types of things do you think about?
- Do you notice others or yourself using life skills at Beyond the Ball?
- Do you look for examples of people using life skills outside of Btb? What do you see?
- How has learning life skills at Btb changed your thinking? Your behavior?

Experiential Value

- Do you feel what you’ve learned in the program is useful? How?
- Do you find what you’ve learned in the program is interesting?
- Do you think about this outside of the program?
- Do you find the life skills useful outside of the program?

Interview 1: Details of the experience

Goals: Get details on specific stories or contexts brought up in the Focus Group or observed by the researcher. This interview will focus on the concrete details of participants’ experiences with transfer as brought up in the Focus Group and as observed by the researcher in the program setting.

Sample questions will include:

Take me through the details of [event].
Based on [event], what were you thinking about at the time?
What were you feeling?
What did you learn from this?
Do you think about this event in other parts of life?

**Interview 2: Making Meaning**

**Goals:** Interview 2 will enable participants to consider the meaning of their experiences with transfer of life skills. This will also be used as an opportunity to clarify any potentially confusing elements of a first interview and focus group.

**Sample questions will include:**

Given what you have said about [event], how do you understand the role Btb plays in your life?
Given what you have said in these first 2 interviews about transfer of life skills, where do you see yourself going in the future?
How has Btb gotten you to where you are now?
APPENDIX G
PAPER 3 PARENTAL CONSENT DOCUMENT
Dear Parents/Guardians,

Your child is being asked to participate in a research project through Beyond the Ball being conducted by me, Jennifer Jacobs, graduate student at Northern Illinois University. I would like to interview your child about their experiences at Beyond the Ball and what they take away from the program to help them in life. The purpose of this study is to see what youth think about the life skills they learn in their program (like respect, leadership, etc.).

If your child participates in this study, I will observe your child during their normal Beyond the Ball programming, and I will take notes on what happens. I would also ask your child to answer questions about the program in a series of three interviews. If I interview your child, I would record it audio-tape and the interview session will take place outside of the Beyond the Ball program time, on school grounds. These audio tapes will be locked up and not shared with anyone except for research/professional purposes.

Your child will not be exposed to any physical, emotional, or social risks other than those normally associated with being a part of the Beyond the Ball program. Your child may benefit in several ways from participating. Talking about lessons learned from Beyond the Ball can be a beneficial reflective experience that helps students think about what they’ve learned and how they can use it in their life.

We will keep all your child’s information as private as we can within the limits of the law. Your child’s name will not be used and no sensitive or harmful information that could be associated with him/her will be shared. Information will be stored in a locked file cabinet at Northern Illinois University. Data will only be viewed and analyzed by me and other research investigators working on the project. Data gathered in this project may be shared with other people in the form of reports, presentations, and publications but only summary data would be presented. No participant in the project will be identified by name.

Your child’s participation in this study is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which your child is otherwise entitled. Your child may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which your child is otherwise entitled. If you have questions regarding your child’s rights as a research subject, please contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at the Northern Illinois University at (815) 753-7102.

In order for your child to participate in this study, this consent form must be completed and returned to their Beyond the Ball instructor by Dec 1st. If you have any questions regarding anything else, feel free to contact me at (773) 875-2587.

Sincerely,

Jenn Jacobs, M.S.

Date:_______ I, __________________________, as the parent/legal guardian for ____________________________ (Child’s Date of Birth:____________) permit my child to participate in the research study entitled, “Transfer of Life Skills” being conducted by Jenn Jacobs through Beyond the Ball.

Parent’s Signature:__________________________________

In addition, I give permission for my child to be audiorecorded as part of the project.

Signature:__________________________________
Dear Student,

I would like to know if you’d be willing to participate in my research study looking at what youth learn about life skills (respect, leadership, responsibility) from Beyond the Ball. I will be trying to understand how youth think and talk about what they learn from their Beyond the Ball program so that I can improve other programs to help youth positively grow as well.

If you would be willing to participate in the study, I would ask that you let me take notes on how you’re doing in the program during two or three Beyond the Ball sessions. Also, I would ask if you’d be willing to let me interview you three times outside of the program but at the school where Beyond the Ball meets. I would audio-record those interviews but the tapes would be locked up and not shared with anyone except for people on my research team.

Before you give your permission, I want to make sure you understand your participation in this research project is up to you. We do not think anything bad will happen to you because of this research. In fact, it might actually do you some good because you will spend more time thinking about life skills and how you might use them. Also you will be part of an important research project that can help future Beyond the Ball students and might even be shared with researchers across the country.

I will keep all of your information as private as I can and when I share information from you I will not use your real name. Participating in this study is your choice and nothing bad will happen to you if you choose not to. Also, if you start participating and change your mind, nothing bad will happen to you if you decide to stop. I am sharing all if this information about the project with your parents or guardians as well. I will only include you in this study if you AND your parents give permission. Beyond the Ball and Northern Illinois University have approved this study already. If you want to ask any questions about this study before you decide, you can ask me now or take the time to talk with your parents or guardians about it.

Sincerely,

Jenn Jacobs, M.S.

Date:__________________________________

I, __________________________________, (please print your name) agree to participate in the research study entitled, “Transfer of Life Skills” being conducted by Jenn Jacobs through Beyond the Ball.

Signature:__________________________________

Date of Birth: ______________________________

In addition, I give permission for me to be audiorecorded as part of the project.

Signature:__________________________________
APPENDIX I
PAPER 2 PARENTAL WAIVER
Dear Parents,

Six of Clinton Rosette Middle School’s Physical Education classes were randomly selected to participate in a survey by Jenn Jacobs from Northern Illinois University on “Life Skills Learned in the Physical Education Setting.” Your child belongs to a class that was randomly selected.

The purpose of the survey is to understand what types of positive experiences students have in their PE classes at CRMS and if they believe they learn life skills from their participation in PE. Individual student identities on the surveys will not be disclosed to any CRMS personnel, and only the researchers associated with the study will know identifying information. This study has been approved by the DeKalb School District.

Participation in the survey is voluntary. If you have any questions, please contact Principal Tim Vincent at (815) 754-2226

If you would NOT like your student to participate in this study, please return this signed form. Otherwise, you may keep this form for your records.

Date:_________

I, ____________________________, as the parent/legal guardian for ____________________________ DO NOT want my child to participate in the study entitled, “Transfer of Life Skills” being conducted by Jenn Jacobs through Northern Illinois University.

Parent’s Signature:__________________________________
APPENDIX J
PAPER 2 STUDENT ASSENT DOCUMENT
Dear Student,

I would like to know if you’d be willing to participate in my research study looking at what youth learn about life skills (respect, leadership, responsibility) from your Clinton Rosette Middle School Physical Education (PE) class. I will be trying to understand what experiences students have in PE and how they think about learning life skills so that I can improve other programs to help youth positively grow as well.

If you would be willing to participate in the study, I would ask that you fill out two surveys that will take about 15 minutes at the start of your volleyball unit in PE and then weeks later at the end of your volleyball unit.

Before you give your permission, I want to make sure you understand your participation in this research project is up to you. We do not think anything bad will happen to you because of this research. In fact, it might actually do you some good because you will spend more time thinking about life skills and how you might use them. Also you will be part of an important research project that can help future CRMS students and might even be shared with researchers across the country.

I will keep all of your information as private as I can and when I share information from you I will not use your real name. Participating in this study is your choice and nothing bad will happen to you if you choose not to. Also, if you start participating and change your mind, nothing bad will happen to you if you decide to stop. I am sharing all if this information about the project with your parents or guardians as well. I will only include you in this study if you AND your parents give permission. CRMS and Northern Illinois University have approved this study already. If you want to ask any questions about this study before you decide, you can ask me now or take the time to talk with your parents or guardians about it.

Sincerely,

Jenn Jacobs, M.S.

Date:__________________________________

I, __________________________________, (please print your name) agree to participate in the research study entitled, “Transfer of Life Skills” being conducted by Jenn Jacobs through CRMS.

Signature:__________________________________

Date of Birth: ______________________________