Exploring Life Skill Development, Leadership and Transfer: Experiences of young sportspeople in a youth leadership development programme, within a specific community based sports setting.

Stacey M. Cannon

Thesis submitted to Maynooth University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the Faculty of the Department of Education

Research Supervisor

Dr. Rose Dolan

Head of Department

Prof. Aislinn O' Donnell

2021

Abstract

Objective: The purpose of this study is to explore whether participation in a youth leadership development programme proved effective in the development of four foundational leadership components (i.e., social, and emotional intelligence, collaborate, articulate, insight and knowledge), within a specific community based sports setting and whether participants utilised these skills in other life domains**.**

Research Design: A qualitative case study methodology.

Method: Nine semi-structured interviews, participant journals, mentor notes.

Data Analysis: Involved an iterative process of open coding, axial coding, and theoretical integration, using Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2019) six step thematic analysis framework.

Results: The findings of this study revealed that a variety of mechanisms and factors contribute to the development and transfer of key life skills and leadership capabilities. Such antecedents were underpinned by multiple interrelated factors (e.g. learning context, opportunities to practice, individual learner, time, programmatic features, transfer context factors and other social agents). While some skills developed better (self-perception, teamwork, decision making, communication and leadership skills) than others (critical thinking and problem solving), the predominant modes of skill transfer found were proximal transfer (in-programme outcomes) and distal outcomes (out of programme outcomes – predominantly sport and college). The findings also revealed that the socioecological context in which the leadership programme was facilitated in provided supportive conditions for positive youth development outcomes. This study illustrates the complexity of exploring transference through a multiple of underlying factors that are interrelated in the transfer process. Taken together, findings indicate that life skill, leadership development, and transfer is most effectively promoted through a multi-systems approach.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the late Dermot Earley Senior and his beloved family.

"Your attitude is more important than your ability, your motives are more important than your methods, your courage is more important than your cleverness and always have your heart in the right place" - Dermot Earley Snr.

Acknowledgements

There are a number of people who contributed to the timely completion of this thesis. I must start by saying a massive thank you to my supervisor Dr. Rose Dolan, whose dedication to her students is commendable. The opportunities you have given me throughout my Doctorate journey has allowed me to develop as a researcher but most importantly as a person. I must thank the GAA, Foróige, NUIG and the Earley family for allowing me to study the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative.

I am very grateful for the financial support provided by the GAA and to my husband DJDobbo (particularly our 90's and 00's collaboration nights in Dowling's nightclub 😊). I would also like to thank the research participants who committed their time to be part of my thesis. I am grateful for having extra support from academic staff members from the Department of Education who provided valuable and thorough feedback which ultimately led to a stronger thesis. I would like to acknowledge the support received by all my Doctoral colleagues who have made the journey of completing a Doctorate in Education that bit more enjoyable.

I want to acknowledge that four days after submitting my thesis, I lost my biggest supporter in life my dad. He suddenly passed away on November 22nd, 2021, at the tender age of 58. He is sorely missed every day. During this four year journey I have experienced significant life moments and deep personal and professional transformative shifts. It is a journey I am incredible proud of and I'm sure it is one that my dad would be proud of too. Finally, I would not be where I am today without the love and support of my husband Diarmuid, my daughter Cassie and my family. You have been with me throughout this long and arduous process and I will be forever grateful.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Olenik (2019) Positive Youth Development Domains Framework

Figure 1.2 Redmond and Dolan (2010) Youth Leadership Conceptual Model

Figure 2.1 Bronfenbrenner's and Morris (1998) Process-Person-Context-Time Model

Figure 2.2 Lee and Martinek (2013) Bioecological Value-Transfer Model

Figure 3.1. Lerner et al. (2005) relational developmental systems model

Figure 4.1 Research design strategy

Figure 4.2 study timeline in table format

List of Tables

Table 4.1: Initial open codes

Table 4.2 transfer outcomes

Table 4.3 Transfer examples per setting

Table 4.4: Generate initial sub themes

Table 4.5 Generating examples per sub theme

Table 5.1 Number of transfer examples per setting

"Teach me and I'll forget, show me and I will remember, involve me and I'll learn."

- *Benjamin Franklin*

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) is a national voluntary sporting and community based organisation in Ireland that aims to strengthen Irish identity through the preservation and promotion of Gaelic Games, with an aspiration of nurturing the potentialities of its members and wider communities, both on and off the field of play. In 2014, the GAA set up the Dermot Earley Youth leadership Initiative (DEYLI) in partnership with Foróige (a leading youth organisation in Ireland) and National University of Galway (NUIG). The programme aims to empower young people aged 15 to 18 years to enhance their life skills and leadership capabilities to better enable them to reach their full potential. The youth leadership development programme is dedicated and named after the late Dermot Earley, one of Irelands most inspirational leaders. Dermot was one of the all-time great GAA players and one of Ireland's most distinguished public servants, serving forty years in the Defence Forces.

The leadership programme was developed using theories and principles of youth work and positive youth development and is centrally designed around Redmond and Dolan's youth leadership conceptual model (2010). This model highlights the key components necessary in cultivating young leaders, including life skill development and environmental factors. Within the skill development section of the model, important factors include social and emotional intelligence, collaboration, articulation, and the capability to gain insight into a particular area. The environmental conditions include having mentor access and authentic opportunities to practice and hone life skills and leadership capabilities.

The leadership programme is comprised of three modules, two of which are facilitated by trained mentors, and one which is undertaken by the young people independently. Module one focuses on individual life skill development such as communication skills, self-awareness, teamwork, decision making and goal setting. Module two focuses on the young person's ability to lead as part of a team, enabling them to cultivate their skills further. Module three focuses on individual leadership aspirations and provides the young person with the opportunity to lead their own project within their club and community, from conception to completion. Throughout the programme there is a focus on the acquisition of skills and the

method applied is 'learning by doing'. During workshops young people are actively engaged in group activities, but time is also set aside for individual exploration and reflection.

Over the last six years, approximately one hundred GAA clubs across Ireland have participated in the leadership programme. However, one club in particular has consistently participated since the inception of the leadership programme in 2014. Not only has this club consistently participated, but it has consistently produced the highest number of participant completions and trained more mentors than any other club in Ireland. Information from the club indicated that it incorporated supportive factors, operational structures and developmental processes that enabled the leadership programme to be both sustainable and successful. This club appeared to nurture positive youth development and augment programme outcomes. Therefore, this case study research seeks to explore this in-depth, multi-faceted phenomenon, in order to gain insights into the social ecology of positive youth development and transference of skills beyond the programme itself.

As the GAA's national coordinator for the leadership programme, my professional role is to develop, plan, implement and evaluate the leadership programme. My relationship to the leadership programme is at a national level, but when required I provide support at grass-roots level. As this thesis is a professional Doctorate, throughout this paper I use the term 'I' and at other times, I use the term 'researcher'. The rationale for this is at certain times throughout the thesis I needed to distance myself from the research to detach from any potential biases and at other times I needed to bring forward my insider knowledge. The value of this insider/outsider positionality stance will be expanded on in chapter 4. The next section sets the study's research context, policy and landscape.

1.1 Research context: positive youth development, youth leadership and life skills

As young people enter adolescence, they experience a rapid increase in their skills and abilities as the many systems (e.g. home, school, sport, community, etc.) in which they belong offer numerous opportunities to learn and grow (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). Researchers and practitioners have long deemed that sport settings, when structured appropriately, can produce experiences conductive to the development of life skills and leadership capabilities of young people to prepare them to be productive members of society (Holt et al. 2017; Gold and Carson, 2008). The life skill process involves three interrelated yet distinct processes: (1) skill acquisition, (2) skill transfer and (3) skill application (Kendellen, 2019). Life skills are broadly defined as the skills that enable young people to succeed in the different environments in which they live in e.g., home, college, sport, community (Danish et al. 2002), whereas leadership capabilities are defined by Northhouse (2004) as a process whereby a young person influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. For a life skill to qualify as a life skill, it must transfer and be applied successfully in at least one domain beyond the setting where it was learned. Therefore, transfer is fundamental to life skills and leadership learning and is defined as the ongoing process by which an individual further develops or learns and internalises a personal asset (i.e., psychosocial skills, knowledge, disposition, identity construction, or transformation) and then experiences personal change through the application of the asset in one or more life domains beyond the context where it was originally learned (Pierce, Gould and Camiré, 2017, p. 194).

This doctoral study examines the developmental processes of life skill transfer from a particular youth leadership development programme (DEYLI), within a specific community based sport setting (GAA club) to other life domains (college, sport, home, community), using Redmond and Dolan's youth leadership conceptual model (2010), as a framework for exploring skill development. The overall orientation of this thesis is situated within positive youth development in a particular community based sport setting but moves beyond the young person to explain relational and supportive conditions that encourage life skills and leadership capabilities to be activated, and which are then in turn shaped by the young person. Of the few studies that have been solely dedicated to examining transfer in sport domains (e.g., Allen and Rhind, 2019; Chinkov and Holt, 2016; Walsh, Ozaeta, and Wright, 2010, Holt et al., 2008), very few have been theoretically-based. Consequently, there is a lack

of exhaustive knowledge explaining how and when life skills and leadership capabilities learned in youth leadership development programme within a community based sports setting transfer to other life domains. This doctoral thesis will address this gap in the research.

Furthermore, many sport and educational practitioners assume that the positive youth development skills learned through a sports setting, such as leadership, communication and teamwork, inevitably equip young people to be successful in other areas of their life (Trottier and Robitaille, 2014). This notion is reinforced by sport and community based organisations' mission statements and strategic plans, which communicate that life skill development and leadership capabilities, and the ability to transfer those skills are two critical constructs at the forefront of the organisations perceived sociocultural values. However, some researchers (e.g. Coakley, 2011) have critiqued the current lack of research to validate those claims on life skills development, questioning whether life skills and leadership capabilities are learned in sport settings and if learnt, whether they actually transfer to other life domains. This doctoral thesis will also address this gap in the research.

1.2 Policy Context: youth development work in Ireland

As countries consider their legacy to young people, it is important for governments to consider their contribution to effectively enabling young people to deal with the challenges they face today and in the future (Foróige, 2010). John Dewey (1897) states that all young people must interact with their environment in order to adapt and learn and believed that young people learn through a 'hands-on' approach. More than 100 years ago, he noted that education is a process of living and not a preparation for future living. Yet, formal educational and policy goals are based on 'preparing' students for global economy and enabling them with skills to be successful for future living (Dewey, 1897 p.44). Within an Irish context, the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (2014) highlighted that "education should provide learners with the knowledge, dispositions, skills and values that will motivate and empower them to become active citizens and take measures to live more sustainably" (DES, 2014, p.12). The realisation of this objective within education is to be

achieved through existing and extracurricular and pedagogical approaches in order to develop key skills, dispositions, knowledge and values (DES, 2014).

Since the 1970's, Ireland's state policy in the area of youth work has progressively increased (McMahon, 2009). Policy makers, private foundations, educational, sporting and community organisations all play their part to support the development of these broad 21st century skills. To this end there have been substantial advances in Irish youth development policies since the establishment of Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) in 2011. Between 2014-2016, several new youth policy documents were announced. Firstly, the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures 2014 – 2020 acted as an umbrella framework for coordinating all policy dealing with young people from birth to 24 years of age. The National Youth Strategy provided priority objectives and actions for implementing Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures for people aged 10 – 24 years of age. The National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015 – 2020, provided details of policy ambitions to ensure young people under the age of 18 had a voice in relation to the five national outcomes identified by Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures National Policy Framework for Children and Young People.

In 2014, the Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Programmes (VFMPR) conducted an economic assessment of certain youth development programmes and provided a range of reform recommendations (McMahon, 2019). In particular, it recommended that one targeted scheme should replace the existing three major funding schemes and that this new scheme should be based on evidence of what works for young people. This review did not include any non-funded schemes such as the GAA's youth leadership development programme (DEYLI). Interestly, in its work to implement the VFMPR recommendations, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs used the term 'proximal outcomes' in place of 'potent mechanisms'. Proximal outcomes included communication skills, confidence and agency, planning and problem solving, relationships emotional intelligence, resilience and creativity (McMahon, 2019). These new proximal outcomes reflect the content of the youth leadership development programme, as well as the traditions of positive youth development.

Interestingly, only two academic contributions have examined what these policy developments might mean for youth development work in Ireland (Kiely and Meade, 2018; McMahon, 2019). These studies suggested that these new policy and funding arrangements led to the production of a bifurcated model, dividing youth development programmes into 'targeted' and 'mainstream' provision (Kiely and Meade, 2018). They found that these targeted schemes operated within a set of broad objectives and rules that allowed youth development organisations discretion to apply principles and values to inform the nature of the work with young people, based on their own founding purposes and practice ideologies. Particularly, sport and community based organisations, most specifically the GAA, have been used as a policy tool in an attempt to alleviate a range of non-sport social matters such as public health, social exclusion and academic performances (Green, 2008). These non-funded schemes usually work within their own remit and are consistent with the view that these programmes operate within traditions and ideologies of the organisation, applying broad objective principles. This position has been significantly problematised and the tightening of the administrative rules and regulations, and greater prescriptive conditionalities associated with youth development policy has been recommended (McMahon, 2019). The understanding and measurement of positive youth development across young people at all societal levels rests on having a valid, consistent and equivalent policy for all stakeholders involved.

1.3 A positive youth development approach

This study is rooted within a positive youth development (PYD) paradigm as an established theoretical tradition of applied developmental science, rooted in the theoretical traditions of developmental psychology. Positive youth development supports young people in building a foundation of skills needed to develop self-concept, healthy relationships, and the motivation to engage in meaningful way if their communities (Olenik, 2019). Figure 1.1 outlines the four domains essential for positive youth development: assets, agency, contribution, and an enabling environment (Olenik, 2019). The reason for situating the research in this paradigm is positive youth development is fuelled with newer emphases on nurturing the potentialities of young people rather than addressing their supposed deficits, and on addressing and

helping to shape the roles of developmental contexts, especially that of the community, and young people themselves as agents of their own development (Benson et al, 2004). Furthermore, life skills and leadership capabilities are concepts that falls under the umbrella term of positive youth development.
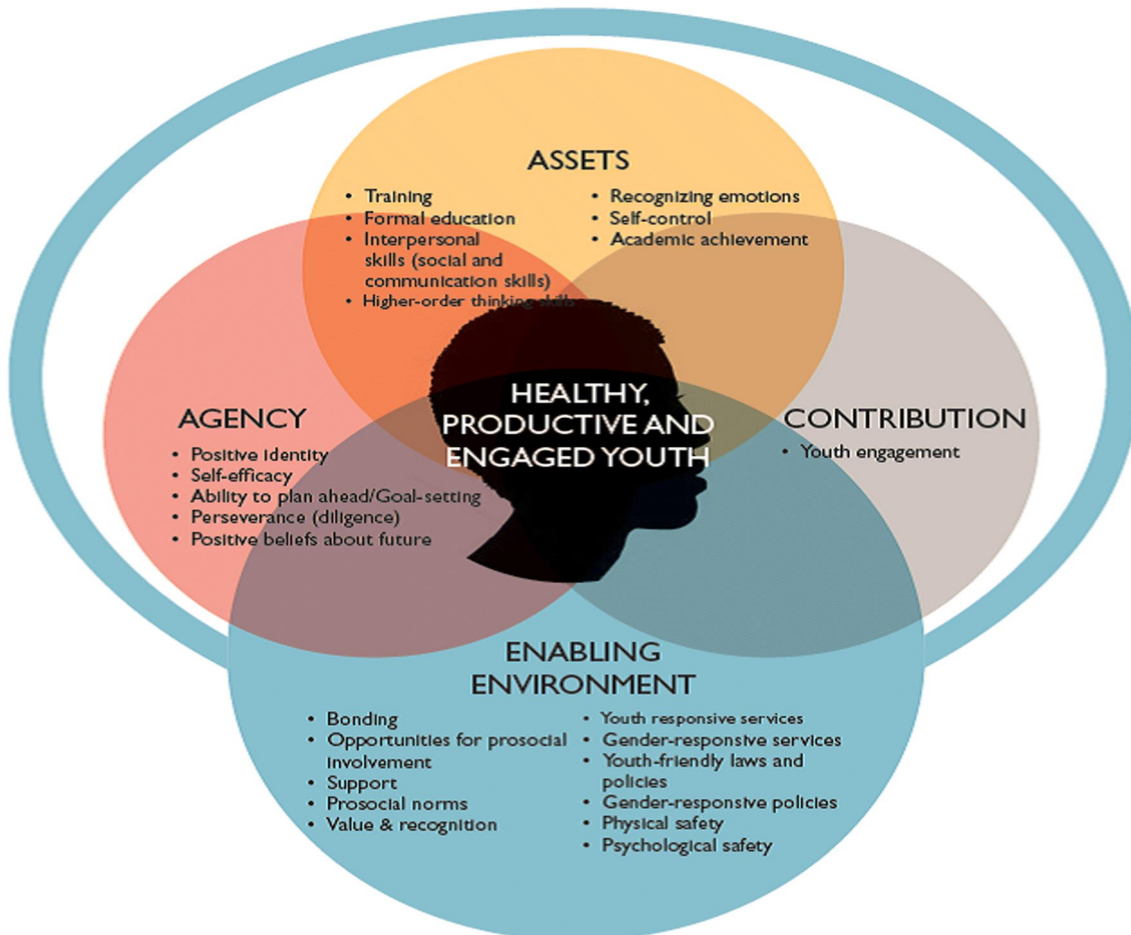
Figure 1.1 Positive Youth Development Domains Framework (Olenik, 2019)

Positive youth development is a strength-based conception of development in which young people are viewed as having 'resources to be developed' rather than 'problems to be solved' (Lerner, Brown and Kier, 2005, p.10). Theorists of positive youth development search for characteristics of young people and their social environments that can be harnessed to build strengths and foster positive development change (Lerner and Castellino, 2002). This approach prioritises plasticity, the ability of young people to be influenced and nurtured through 'mutually beneficial relationships with the people and contexts of their social world' in pursuit of 'positive contributions to self, family, community and civil society' (Lerner et al.,

2005 p.12). Youth leadership elaborates upon a theory of positive youth development in which young people gain skills and knowledge necessary to lead civic engagement, education reform, and community organised activities (Dolan, 2014). It is based on the contextualisation that positive youth leadership will strengthen individual and community capacity. Developing leadership in young people can enhance self-actualisation, prevent risky behaviour and serve as a springboard for successful adulthood (Van Linden and Fertman, 1998). Yet, many young people are never offered the chance to act as leaders and often, adult leadership models are inappropriately adapted to youth leadership models, who have unique developmental needs.

Within a socioecological context, a young person's ability to apply a life skill is shaped by the contextual features of the learning context in which they engage in (Kendellen, 2019). Specifically, contextual factors include (a) similarity of initial context and the transfer context, (b) opportunities to use skills, (c) support for transfer, and (d) rewards for transfer (Kendellen, 2019). Evidence also validates the significance of peers, mentors and communities to the functioning of any individual (Huston and Bentley, 2010). However, existing research on the social ecology, or the relationships between people and their environments, remains limited (Hamby et al., 2019). Even though a few concepts, such as social support (Chu, Saucier, and Hafner, 2010), collective efficacy (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls, 1997), sense of community (Stewart and Townley, 2019), and empowerment (Lardier, Garcia-Reed, and Reed, 2018), have received extensive study, the operationalisation of more malleable elements of social ecology such as the proximal processes that influence person and context, has remained surprisingly limited (Hamby et al, 2019). To explore these ideas and move from an individualistic focus on skill development to the developmental processes and transferability elements across domains, Lee and Martinek's bioecological value transfer model (2013) was applied as a guiding theoretical framework in this study. This framework is grounded in Bronfenbrenner and Morris's ecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998), allowing the exploration of operationalisation and context specification of human development. To explore this in depth, this study employed a case study approach to identify social ecological factors that are potentially relevant to the development of life skills, and leadership capabilities to explore how these features support skill transference to other life domains.

1.4 Rationale for this study

Structured activities within community based sport settings in which young people can voluntarily engage can be a fertile environment for positive youth development, since they combine intrinsic motivation and high levels of concentration (Larson et al., 2005). Over the last 20 years, positive youth development research has created a new context for considering the benefits of sport and non-sporting extra circular activities (Damon, 2004; Lerner et al., 2002, 2005, 2015). The vast majority of research shows that positive youth development approaches through sport has been a positive developmental activity, but it must be noted that this is not the case for all young people, with a minority of studies reporting negative outcomes (e.g. poor relationship between coaches and peers) (Allen, 2013). However, the general consensus within the literature is that sport contexts can and do teach various life skills. Mahoney, Eccles and Larson (2004) argue that the structure and context of the activity are important to determine whether participation leads to positive or negative outcomes. Furthermore, developmental psychologists (Larson et al., 2004) have suggested that researchers must assess "what goes on within programmes, what young people experience, how development occurs, or what can effective youth development practitioners do to support development" (p.541). Similar sports psychologists (Danish et al., 2005) suggest that researchers must establish "what sport can teach, how it can be taught, and where it best can be taught" (p.48). Following these suggestions, the purpose of this study is to explore if young people learn specific life skills and leadership capabilities in a youth leadership development programme, within a specific community based sports context, and if so, do they transfer those skills into other life domains.

Over the last decade, there has been constructive dialogue about whether programmes in sport settings should rely on life skills being gained implicitly, as an automatic outcome of sport participation, or explicitly, as a result of international and deliberate integration of life skill lessons taught in conjunction with sport skills content and contexts (Turnidge, Cóté, and Handcock, 2014; Hodge, 1989). Interestingly, the focus of youth development programmes have shifted from intervention and prevention approaches towards positive assets and competency building (Benson, 1997; Pittman and Cahill, 1991). Youth development programmes have shifted from a focus on measuring the reduction of problem behaviour to

the transference of developmental programme goals. Therefore, an important area of research is to examine the effects of positive youth development programmes on the lives of its participants and beyond it. As researchers continue to gain understanding of the factors that contribute to positive and negative outcomes in youth sport settings, and as more comprehensive positive youth development and transfer models evolve, it is important that policy makers, sport and community organisations, coaches, and parents stay abreast of current research.

Although such interventions through sport have become increasingly popular over the last decade, this has happened mainly in the United States (Allen, 2013). While organised sport has the potential to play a significant role in contributing to youth development, it is necessary to recognise that positive youth development through sport is not automatic, but to the contrary, is dependent upon a multitude of factors that must be considered when planning and designing positive youth development programmes (Fraser-Thomas and Coté, 2009). There is very limited evidence that such interventions would be beneficial or effective in other countries other than the USA. This particularly includes the limited evidence within the Irish sport context. Furthermore, Holt and Neely (2011) note that various scholars, particularly in the United States, question the potential for positive youth development through sport programmes. Therefore, a greater understanding of the processes that contribute to the attainment of positive youth development outcomes are needed (Holt, Deal and Smyth, 2016; Holt and Jones, 2008).

There still remains a significant gap between research and practice, in terms of operationalisation on how to deliver positive youth development intervention programmes into coaching and sport pedagogies (Vella, Oades and Crowe, 2011). For instances, positive youth development related training remains largely absent from coach education programmes (Coté and Gilbert, 2009; Vargus-Tonsing, 2007; Vella, Oades and Crowe, 2011). There is a lack of sufficient theory in positive youth development research which practically restricts the field, as practitioners do not have an overarching universal framework to guide their interventions (Gould and Carson, 2008). Knowledge synthesis in positive youth development would contribute to addressing some of the challenges mentioned above, in

particular, understanding all the processes and socioecological features that contribute to the developmental of youth development outcomes. Bridging the gap between research and practice is crucial and synthesising knowledge will provide a foundation for future knowledge. This will be particularly invaluable for practitioners by providing evidence of effective approaches and the proximal processes that produce positive youth developmental outcomes.

This study fits into the current trend of positive youth development programmes as it focuses on developing life skills and leadership capabilities rather than reducing single targeted problem behaviour. Furthermore, it explores the context specificity and supportive conditions beyond the individual. It provides an excellent opportunity to conduct such research through a focused qualitative case study, whilst adding to the body of knowledge within Irish and international sport context. In summary, this thesis explores if young people learn specific life skills and leadership capabilities within a specific youth leadership development programme and context, and if so, do the young people transfer those skills into other life domains. As the answer to this question is not fully understood, this research study is timely, as it provides some insights into this phenomenon and addresses the current existing gaps within the literature, whilst contributing to the body of knowledge.

1.5 Programme background: the development of a research question

One area of focus within the GAA's six-year strategic plan (2009 – 2015) was to create an environment that enabled its members, particularly its youth, to reach their full potential. To respond to this need, the GAA in partnership with Foróige (Ireland's leading youth development organisation) and the National University of Ireland Galway, developed the innovative Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative (DEYLI) in 2014, which honours and evokes the leadership skills epitomised by the late Dermot Earley Senior. This initiative is based on the same principles of Foróige's Leadership for Life programme and aims to enable young GAA members, male and female, aged 15 to 18 years, to develop leadership and life skills to be effective leaders and to empower them to make a positive difference in their club, county and communities.

Since the inception of the leadership programme, over 600 young people from various GAA clubs across Ireland, have taken part in the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Programme, with approximately 300 of those young people going on to complete the Foundation Certificate in Youth Leadership and Community Action, which is accredited by the National University of Ireland, Galway at NFQ level 6. The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) is a system used to describe levels of educational qualifications in Ireland. The programme has also seen over 60 mentors receive a NFQ Level 7 Diploma in Training and Education from National University of Ireland Galway, enabling them to deliver the programme at an exceptionally high standard. This makes the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative a very unique and attractive programme, as it is the only accredited youth leadership development programme available through sport in Ireland. The youth leadership conceptual model that underpins the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative was developed by Dr Sue Redmond and Professor Pat Dolan, who holds the prestigious UNESCO Chair in Children, Youth and Civic Engagement, the first to be awarded in Ireland. The conceptual model (Redmond and Dolan, 2010) (Figure 1.2) focuses on the development of key leadership and life skills, environmental conditions, and commitment to action necessary to develop young leaders. It highlights the foundational components of leadership development, such as social and emotional intelligence, collaboration, communication and insight and knowledge. It outlines the need for authentic leadership opportunities for young people to practice their skills and the presence of mentors or knowledgeable others to assist young people in their development. The final component of the youth leadership conceptual model focuses on commitment to action in the forms of both the ability to motivate others and lead out on a project in a particular area.
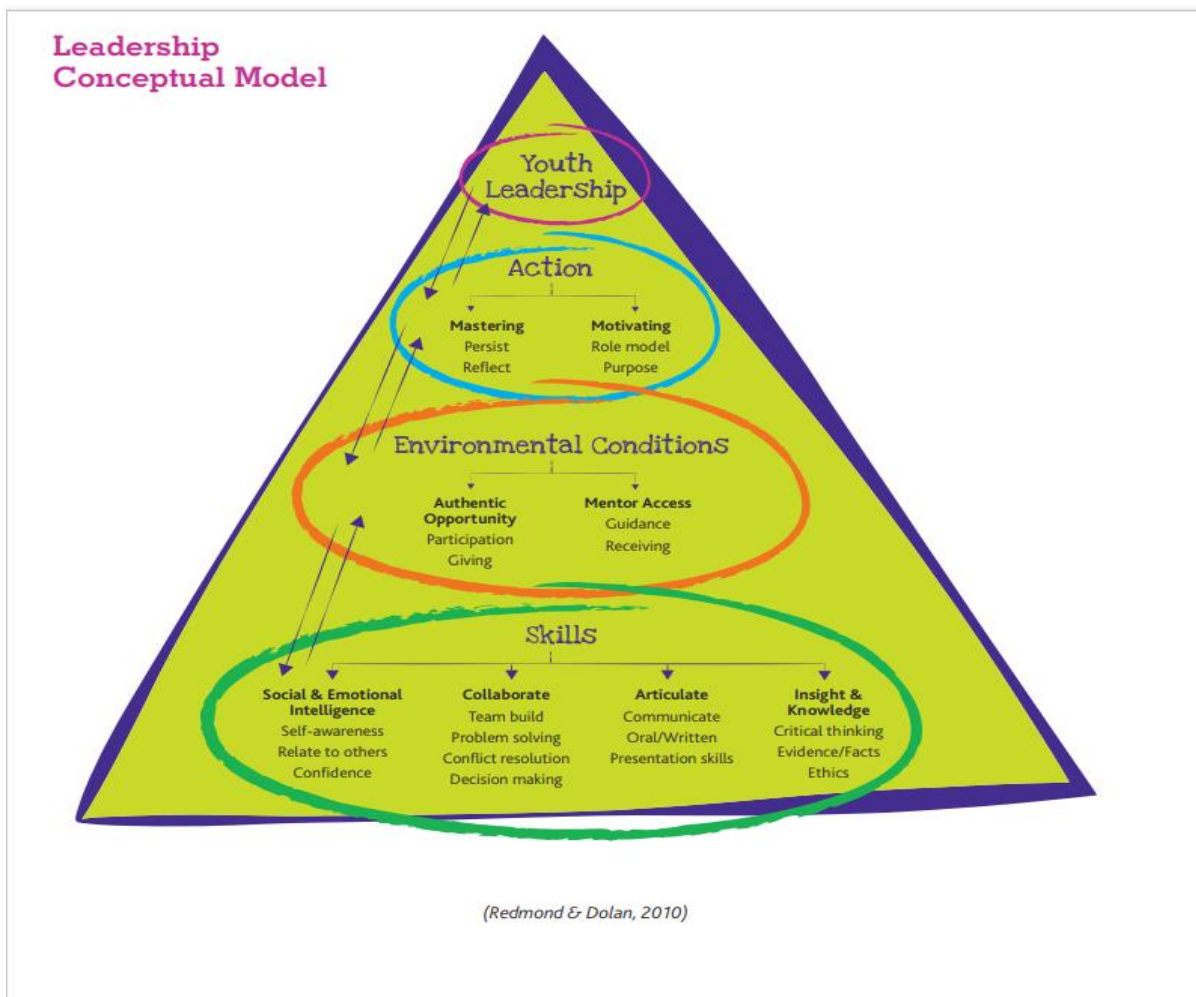
Figure 1.2 Youth Leadership Conceptual Model (2010) (taken from Foróige Leadership for Life Programme p.6)

This youth leadership conceptual model has been piloted nationally (Redmond and Dolan, 2014), and the research indicates that it achieves an increase in skill development upon programme completion, and as such cultivates key competencies necessary for youth leadership. However, on reviewing the literature, it is evident that the youth leadership conceptual model has never been explored before within a community based sports setting, such as the GAA. In addition, the research has never explored whether the four foundational leadership components (social and emotional intelligence, collaborate, articulate and insight and knowledge) within the youth leadership conceptual model are transferable beyond the boundaries of the leadership programme. This highlights a significant gap within the model and literature, providing an opportunity to explore this phenomenon further.

Therefore, this study seeks to explore the following research question:

1. **Does participation in a leadership programme prove effective in the development of four foundational leadership components (i.e., social, and emotional intelligence, collaborate, articulate, insight and knowledge), within a specific community based sports setting and whether participants utilised these skills in other life domains?**

The objectives of the study are to ascertain the following:

1. **Does participation in a youth leadership programme prove effective in developing and sustaining the four foundational leadership components?**

2. **Do the participants utilise these skills in other life domains?**

3. **Does the interplay of environmental conditions and the young person's agency enhance positive youth development outcomes?**

Case study was deemed most suitable as a methodological approach to explore this research question and a single club within the GAA was selected as the case. Semi structured interviews were conducted with former participants and mentors of the programme, who all belong to the same club. The narrative events from the semi-structured interviews were analysed using the four key leadership components of the youth leadership conceptual model; collaboration skills (teamwork, decision making), emotional intelligences (self -awareness, relate to others), articulate skills (communication, presentation skills) and insight and knowledge (critical thinking, ethics), using Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2019) six step thematic analysis framework. This methodological and analysis approach will be expanded on in chapter four and five.

1.6 Key terms and constructs for the study

The following are operational definitions of the key terms and constructs that will be used throughout the study.

Youth: a time of life when young people are prototypically engaged in finding a self-definition – an identity – that enables them to matter to self, family, and society, both in teenager years and in their future adult life (Lerner and Steinberg 2009).

Positive youth development: a strength-based approach that aims prepare young people to meet the challenges of life through mitigating risk factors, promoting protective factors, and developing key assets within the dynamic, ecological domains of young people's lives (Catalano et al., 2004; Lerner, 2012).

Sport based positive youth development: a multidimensional approach that uses the strength based perspective of positive youth development and pairs it with the developmental benefits of youth sport domains (Anderson-Butcher, Riley et al., 2011; Whitley, Forneris, and Barker, 2015).

Life skill development: a repertoire of intrapersonal skills and interpersonal skills, which can be used in a variety of contexts and situations, that enable individuals to manage the stressors, challenges, and demands of everyday life (Camiré, Trudel, and Forneris, 2012; Danish et al., 2005).

Leadership capabilities: a process whereby an individual influence a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2010).

Skill transfer: "Process by which an individual further develops or learns and internalises a personal asset in [the learning context] and then experiences personal change through the application of the asset in one or more life domains beyond the context where it was originally learned" (Pierce et al., 2017 p. 194).

1.7 Structure of the thesis

The remainder of the thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter two outlines the theoretical framework that guides this study, drawing on positive youth development, Bronfenbrenner and Morris's bioecological model (1998), Lee and Martinek's bioecological value transfer model (2013) and Hager and Hodkinson's (2009) transformation and reconstruction lens to conceptualise life skill learning and transfer. Chapter three reviews the literature in relation to positive youth development approach, key concepts of positive youth development outcomes, transfer mechanisms and conceptual models, while defining what is meant by youth development and youth leadership. Chapter four represents the study's research design and justification for choosing case study research, while also detailing the researcher's positionality stance. Chapter five presents the findings of the study under three separate thematic headings and chapter six discusses these findings in light of the literature. Chapter seven sets forth the recommendations for policy, practice and research, while chapter eight provides a summary of the key findings as well as providing some concluding remarks to the study.

CHAPTER TWO: Theoretical Perspectives

In this chapter the theoretical perspectives that guide this research are explored. Positive youth development is used as a general theoretical guide in this thesis. An overview of positive youth development theory is provided to situate this study within the broader youth development literature. Bronfenbrenner and Morris's (1998) ecological theory (PPCT), which underlies Lee and Martinek's (2013) bioecological value transfer model, was used to underpin the study. Hager and Hodkinson's (2009) transformation and reconstruction conceptual lens were applied as a concept for understanding the learning and transfer process. This enabled the researcher to create new insights and understanding into the different elements, developmental processes, and the transferability of skills across life domains.

2.1 Theoretical sensitivity

Researchers influence how they interpret the data they collect, by bringing their own philosophical positions, professional knowledge, and life experiences to the research process (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018). Corbin and Strauss (2015) indicate that researchers should use their prior professional knowledge and experiences to enhance their sensitivity to subtle nuances in data. Sensitivity refers to the researcher "having insights as well as being tuned in to and being able to pick up on relevant issues, events, and happenings during collection and analysis of the data" (p. 78). Researchers who are sensitive and aware of the subjective role they play in the interpretation process are more likely to know when elements in their data are significant. As such, existing frameworks and models were used to situate this research with the aim of creating new insights about positive youth development and the life skills transfer process through a socioecological lens. The next section will outline the theoretical perspectives that guide this study.

2.2 Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth Development is a strength-based approach to youth development and puts forth the notion that all young people have the potential for successful development (Lerner, 2004). Positive youth development is a general term used to describe the ways in which young people may accrue positive experiences through their participation in structured activities (Catalano, et al., 2004; Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2003). While there are several definitions of positive youth development, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) defines it as follows; positive youth development engages young people along with their families, communities, and/or governments so that young people are empowered to reach their full potential. Positive youth development approaches build skills, assets, and competencies; foster healthy relationships; strengthen the environment; and transform systems. In line with relational developmental systems theory (Geldhof et al., 2013), the theorists (Lerner et al., 2003) of positive youth development suggest that development is a function of the dynamic relations that exist between individuals and the contexts in which they live. Positive youth development principles do not limit youth development to genetic influences and instead stress the relative plasticity of human development and the potential for systematic change throughout the lifespan (Lerner and Castellino, 2002; Lerner et al., 2005).

One of the central aims of the positive youth development approach is to promote young people's psychosocial development by focusing on building and transferring competencies, including life skills (Damon, 2004). Key features of positive youth development programmes are clear and consistent structures, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, support for agency, and opportunities for skill building (Anderson-Butcher, et al., 2011; Eccles, et al., 2003). Furthermore, positive youth development is recognised as a social process that occurs within the socio ecological context of the prevailing culture and acknowledges the social agency of young people as they engage their community (Coakley, 2016). Thus, programmes that utilise a positive youth development based approach are strategically designed and intentionally facilitated (Newman, 2019).

The researcher's justification for using this approach is twofold; capitalising on the strength inherent in all young people and utilising the potential plasticity of their structural and functional attributes can identify how best to align the strengths of young people with the resources for positive youth development present in their contexts, as both individual and context change. Understanding such alignment between individuals and the actual contexts of their lives and specifying and exploring ways to enhance these alignments across time, embeds the work of developmental science in the actual, key settings of human development, such as the family, school, and community (Overton, 2013). This provided a guiding theoretical framework, to focus on the developmental processes, key features and transferability of skills across life domains. The conduct of such research illuminates the character of the basic relational process of human development and, as well, provides information about how to promote positive human development in real-world settings, in the ecology of everyday life (Bronfenbrenner, 2005), where ecology is defined as a fit between the individual and his/her environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This approach to developmental science highlights the diverse ways in which young people, in dynamic exchanges with their natural and designed ecologies, move along pathways married by opportunities for healthy and positive development. As Bronfenbrenner (2005) eloquently puts it, it is these relations that make human beings human.

2.3 Theoretical roots - ecological perspective

There are several converging substantive themes within positive youth development approach, including the promotion of youth positive development, building life skills, enhancing plasticity and increasing the opportunities for growth (Olenik, 2019). Tolan et al. (2016) have claimed that both personal and ecological assets are associated with positive youth development. Moreover, in accordance with the risk and resilience perspective, positive youth development programmes aim to enhance positive development by mitigating risk factors, promoting protective factors, and developing key internal and external assets within the dynamic, ecological domains of youths' lives (Catalano et al., 2004; Lerner, 2014; Lerner et al., 2005). Theoretical roots of positive youth development include the utilisation of the ecological perspective on human development (Steinberg and Lerner, 2004). Based on

this ecological perspective, Lerner and his colleagues proposed that relative plasticity in youth development is shaped by developmental regulations, which are formed by mutually influential interaction between individual and context. Young people who have mutually beneficial or positive interaction with their environment engage in the process of positive youth development.

This study was approached from an ecological systems perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 2001, 2005; Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998). Bronfenbrenner and Morris' (1998) Process–Person–Context–Time (PPCT) model, was developed to guide how bioecological research best could be conducted (Rosa and Tudge, 2013), and is utilised in this study. The theory is based on four main concepts and dynamic relationships between the concepts of individual characteristics, proximal processes, contextual variables and the temporally evolving nature of relations between people and different levels of their environment over time. This study pursues an in-depth examination of the microsystem to understand the experiences of young people in a youth leadership development programme, within a specific community based sports setting. Microsystems are considered to be the patterned activities, roles and interpersonal relations a person experiences in a setting (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998).

The researcher's justification for using Bronfenbrenner and Morris's (1998) ecological theory (PPCT), which underpins Lee and Martinek's (2013) bioecological value transfer model, is as follows. Firstly, positive youth development approaches with an ecological emphasis emphasise the importance of community in promoting positive youth development. It can guide a context in the way it organises programmes, supports and provides authentic opportunities so that all young people can reach their full potential. Secondly, the model includes the proximal processes which are referred to as the engine of human development. Proximal processes involve reciprocal interaction between the developing individual and other significant persons, objects and symbols in his/her immediate environment. This provided an exploration framework to explore the importance of the club and how these proximal processes are influenced by characteristics of the developing individual and by the context in which they occur. For those reasons, Bronfenbrenner and Morris's ecological Person-Process-Context-Time model (1998), which underpins Lee and Martinek's (2013) bioecological value transfer model, was viewed as the most potent predictor of human

development within a bounded setting. This PPCT model (figure, 2.1) will be described in the next section as an inclusive framework within Lee and Martinek's (2013) bioecological value transfer model.
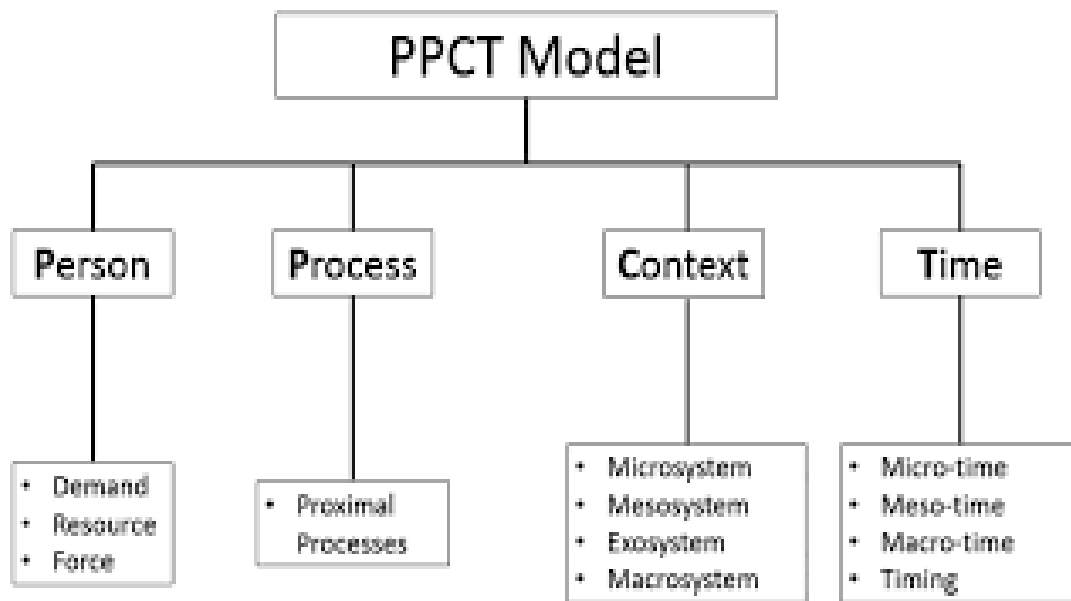
Figure 2.1 Bronfenbrenner's and Morris Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) Model (1998).

When considering programmes through a theoretical framework of positive youth development and life skill transfer, it is important to first consider the learning that takes place within the development programme, i.e. before considering how the skills are transferred beyond the programme (Jacobs and Wright 2018). Therefore, before considering Lee and Martinek's (2013) bioecological model, it is essential to elaborate on Redmond and Dolan's (2010) four foundational components (social and emotional intelligence, collaborate, articulate and insight and knowledge) that underpin this study. The next section will outline these components in detail and highlight how they relate to the study's theoretical constructs.

2.4 The four foundational leadership components

Component one: social and emotional Intelligence

Roberts (2009) highlights that social and emotional competence is a critical component to positive youth development. Social emotional learning (SEL) is regarded as a general model of positive youth development by Tolan and colleagues (2016) that is applicable across contexts and developmental stages. Social emotional learning refers to the process that enables young people to understand, manage, and express the social and emotional aspects of life (Elias et al., 1997). It has been used as an approach to enhance young people's positive characteristics, establish supportive contexts and promote constructive interactions between person and context. Social emotional learning programmes focus on nurturing social and emotional skills among young people by directly cultivating their skills or improving their learning environments that foster development. The nurtured competencies that are usually displayed by social and emotional skills (e.g., identifying emotions, self-control and coping strategies), self-perception (e.g., self-worth and self-concept), attitudes toward others (e.g., prosocial beliefs) and attitudes related to context (e.g., perception of mentors and sense of belonging) promote social relationships and behaviour outcomes (Taylor et al., 2017).

Teaching and learning in any form of education has strong social and emotional components (Zins, Weissberg, Wang and Walberg, 2004). According to Elias et al. (1997), emotions can facilitate or impede a young person's engagement, work ethic, commitment and ultimately the reaching of their full potential. As relationships and emotional processes affect how and what we learn, these aspects must be addressed effectively, for the benefit for all involved. To lead others one must know themselves well, they must know their own strengths as well as their weaknesses. In doing so, they can build on their strengths and increase their potential while also enabling other people to excel (Kouzes and Posner, 1995). Furthermore, self-control and self-awareness help reduce the chance of developing cognitive distortions such as taking things personally, mindreading or magnify situations (Taylor et al., 2017). Having self-control and self-management means when things are not working out, young people have the capacity to deal with them appropriately (Covey, 1991). The importance of social judgement skills such as understanding situations and responding effectively is significant

(Munford et al., 2000). To lead, young people must have a strong ability to develop their self-awareness and be able to relate to others as this will help them in ensuring their cause or vision is relevant to the people they lead (Kouzes and Posner, 1995). Kouzes and Posner further highlight that leaders need to understand their followers, including their hopes and dreams, enabling them better to solicit their supports towards a common goal. Ultimately, this means that they must spend time on personal development and building awareness of how they are in their interactions with others as well as how they relate their vision to others.

Component two: collaboration

As a way to promote positive youth development outcomes and continued success through the lifespan, the positive youth development literature often supports the development of collaboration skills (Cater and Jone, 2014; Gould and Carson, 2008, Hellison, 2011). The specific definition of this term has been contested over the years, as it has been splintered into many different unique categories, themes, and constructs (Salas, Sims and Burke, 2005). However, according to Glasbergen (2007) collaboration is oriented towards encouraging debate, sharing of experiences and development of new ideas. A number of theorists recognise that processes of collaboration may develop over time (e.g. Franklin 2009; Glasbergen 2007; O'Sullivan 2010) and suggest that collaboration may progress through a sequential series of stages or phases. Tuckman and Jensen (1977) state that in any establishing team, the group dynamics of forming, norming, storming and performing and adjourning apply.

Derived from an ecological perspective with a focus on the alignment between individual needs and external requirements, opportunities and supports for young people to achieve adequate development and effective functioning, include the development of social and collaboration skills (Benson et al., 1997). This includes skills that young people need for establishing effective interpersonal relationships and adapting to challenging situations, including planning, team building and decision making. In fact, life skills such as teamwork and social skills are protective factors predictive of healthy youth outcomes and are highly relied upon within professional fields such as medicine, technology services, education, business, and engineering (Newman et al., 2014). Teamwork is often one of the first life

lessons taught to young people, as it transcends a singular situation or context and is viewed as both an individual and a collaborative effort (Cater and Jones, 2014).

The concept of collaboration and the capability to effectively perform with a group is pertinent and imperative for success with a multitude of contexts in one's life (Cater and Jones, 2014). Young people are responsible for completing tasks with others such as peers at home, during school, sport and throughout the community. For example, in team sports, teamwork is a necessary component for the team to function effectively. As such, each team member has a defined role in the team and works with other members to complete tasks which help the team achieve a common goal. The roles and tasks are interdependent, as collaboration and cooperation are necessary for a team to function properly and effectively. Being able to work with other people in a way that ensures each individual experiences fairness, and recognition of their time and commitment as well as their ideas is something that is vital to sustaining an effective team (Kouzes and Posner, 1995). As part of any group process there can be a time of conflict and disagreement, and the role of a leader is to enable the team work well together particularly under conditions where there are differences of opinion. A leader within a team requires skills in conflict resolution, team building, problem solving and decision making (Kouzes and Posner, 1995; Ricketts and Rudd, 2002; Boyd, 2001). Having a leader who is responsive to the challenges of enabling different personalities to work together, as well as recognising the contribution of each team member, means the team can then work well despite challenges that it may face (Kouzes and Posner, 1995).

Component three: articulation

Articulation skills are defined as an expressing of oneself readily, clearly and effectively (Ramsing and Sibthorp, 2005). Although generally understood, articulation skills can be difficult to define and operationalise. Throughout adolescence, young people's articulation skills (oral and written) grow as they develop cognitively (Metz, Goldsmith and Arbreton, 2008) and experience new and increasingly complex interpersonal relationships within their families, peers and a variety of setting (e.g. school, home, community, sport etc.). As young people enter adolescence, peer relationships become increasingly important and language is

used as a tool to communicate information about identity and as a way to establish and maintain relationships with peers (Eisenburg, Spinard and Knafo-Noam, 2015). Interpersonal communication skills are believed to be greatly influenced by social interactions within young people's environments, which emphasise bidirectional influential relations between developing young person and their context (Rhodes et al., 2006). For example, relationships (e.g. mentor-young person) and systems of relations (programme and club) come into being through complex patterns of communication such as young people's articulation skills are initiated and maintained through young people's communication processes.

Covey (1991) highlights the pivotal role articulation skills play in young people when trying to get their point across clearly and effectively. For instance, relational communication development indicates how young people in the interaction regard each other, their relationship or themselves within the context of the relationship (Rhodes et al., 2006). Articulating a vision is vital to enlisting the commitment of others. It is also what enables a road map to be created. This highlights further the importance of clarity in communication of the end goal. However, in order to achieve two way communication techniques, leaders' skills must be underpinned by a range of knowledge, values, emotional and personal capabilities in order to overcome contextual inhibitors to two way communication (Lefevre, Tanner and Luckock, 2008). A person with a great vision who is unable to communicate it is not going to be effective in gaining support for their cause. Similarly, a person who has great communication skills but lacks vision is not going to have the road map to where they want to go. Exposure to a multitude of experiences where young people get to practice their communication skills helps to shape the brain for good communication skills into adulthood (Begley, 2000; Giedd, 1999). Harnessing articulation and communication skills early in adolescent development enable young people to overcome the challenges of speaking in public, gain confidence in their opinion and contribute to society (Redmond and Dolan, 2010).

Component four: insight and knowledge

Within the context of insight and knowledge, it is important for a leader to work within an ethical framework (Gardner, 1987). Ethics in leadership are an important aspect of

knowledge, as to have a good knowledge of what is right and what is wrong in leadership requires a level of moral judgement which can only come from the insight into the consequences of decisions (Northouse, 2004). Ethical leaders strive for fairness, take on responsibility, fulfil commitments, serve others and show courage by standing up for with is right (Zauderer, 1992). Ethics in leadership means that leaders model their actions on solid ethical principles incorporating honesty and integrity. Honesty and integrity are considered the foundation of trust between leaders and followers (Daft, 2011).

According to Libby et al., (2006), youth leadership is clearly relevant to positive youth development, but it remains remarkably undefined. Over the last decade, the research base on youth leadership has seen some focus on personal characteristics, while others focused on demonstrated actions or processes (Seevers and Dormody, 1995). Learning leadership happens experientially, through involvement in opportunities to practice the skills, experiment with approaches, and try on the role of leader (MacNeil, 2006). This may happen in formal or informal experiences but needs to occur with intentionality. To be most effective at supporting youth leadership development, it is important to identify or create more authentic opportunities and supportive environments for young people to practice leadership skills. Through opportunities to increase group process and skills, as well as facilitation, presentation, decision-making skills, young people gain confidence and capabilities as leaders.

From a positive youth development perspective, leadership development experiences are good for all young people, providing them with supportive relationships and opportunities to see themselves (and be seen by others) as having valuable contributions to make to the world (Lerner et al., 2005). Further, young people's active engagement can help them develop self-esteem, confidence, and essential social and intellectual skills and can provide an important foundation for future civic involvement (MacNeil, 2006). Developing knowledge of a particular subject matter is important in leadership. In fact leadership, as well as professional skills, need permanent and continuous self-development in order to achieve constancy in firmness of the position and dynamics in the practical application (Kalu, 2006). To be able to lead people effectively, its necessary to be able to demonstrate some level of adeptness in

the particular area (Shriberg et al., 2005). Being able to think critically about a topic requires good understanding of the topic. Trust and confidence in a leader are essential for the team to perform and this is highly connected to the leader's knowledge (Politis, 2003). Mumford et al. (2000) highlights that technical skills are core skills to leadership, as they are strongly linked to being able to problem solve which forms part of what can be considered knowledge. Research has extended its focus to include programme features that provide opportunities and supports for young people to gradually engage in increasing leadership responsibilities and roles (Larson, 2000; Pittman, 1991). Research claims that key components of effective, high-quality youth development programmes are contexts supportive of youth participation leadership roles (Camino and Zeldin, 1999; McLaughlin, 2000; Perkins and Borden, 2003).

This section outlined the four foundational leadership components that underpins the youth leadership programme within this study. It was important to consider the learning that took place within the youth leadership development programme before considering if and how the four foundational leadership components transferred to other life domains. It was essential for the researcher to highlight each component, in order to make those structural and theoretical connections for the reader. It was also important to remind the reader that Redmond and Dolan's youth leadership conceptual model (2010) was used as a framework for exploring certain skill development. This will be presented in more detail in the findings section of the study. The researcher will now describe Lee and Martinek's (2013) bioecological value transfer model as the next part of the theoretical framework to guide the elaboration of this thesis.

2.5 Lee and Martinek's (2013) bioecological value transfer model

Skill transfer is a complex process that occurs over time (Pierce et al., 2017). According to Kendellen (2019), the life skill process involves three interrelated yet distinct processes: (1) skill acquisition, (2) skill transfer and (3) skill application in at least one life domain beyond in which it was learned in. The question of life skill learning and transfer often begins at the end, examining how transfer has occurred without first establishing the teaching and learning of life skills within the contexts of a youth development programme (Kendellen, 2019). Therefore, research that documents the implementation of life skills, the processes and procedures that occur in practice, along with the young people's perspectives, can help advance research related to transfer of learning (Jacobs and Wright 2018). Furthermore, it is crucial to explore what happens once a young person decides to use these skills in their daily lives that they believe to have learned in a youth development programme.

To date, theoretical frameworks of life skills transfer have advanced our understanding of life skills learning and beyond, thus mainly focusing on stages one and two (Pierce et al, 2017). However, few theoretical frameworks exist to explain how and when young people apply these skills. Recently, Pierce et al. (2017) developed the Life Skills Transfer Model as a framework to study both life skill development and transfer further. The model posits that several key mechanisms and factors contribute to life skill development, and in turn, life skill transfer. Specifically, Pierce and colleagues (2017) state that 'the model offers a summary of what is currently known about life skills transfer, and it can, through empirical testing, be used as a guiding framework to expand the notion of what transfer is and how it occurs' (p. 196).

Building on previous research, the model proposes a variety of mechanisms and factors at different system levels and throughout diverse contexts that may contribute to life skill development and transfer. As this current study is confined to a single case study site, Pierce et al. (2017) Life Skills Transfer Model was not a suitable framework for this study. Instead, building on the PPCT model as mentioned earlier, Lee and Martinek's (2013) bioecological value transfer model (figure 2.2) became part of the theoretical framework to guide the elaboration of this thesis for several reasons. Lee and Martinek's (2013) bioecological value transfer model provided a comprehensive framework for examining youth development while also helping to explain the transfer process and identifying distinct outcomes. The interactive process of positive youth development programme participation and the transfer

of programme goals within and out of programme contexts are theoretically underpinned. Bioecological and socioecological are complementary terms used to in human ecology to examine the interaction between humans and their environment. This allowed the study to take both a bioecological and socioecological approach, while focusing on context specificity and identify clear outcomes. Furthermore, considering that the PPCT model provides a comprehensive and dynamic socioecological lens for understanding human development, it has also been adopted as a framework for understanding sports talent development (Kerbs, 2009), sport participation (Garcia and Bengoechea, 2002), physical activity promotion (Spence and Lee, 2003), and for examining the effect of sports participation on youth development outcomes (Côté and Fraser-Thomas, 2007; Strachan, 2008). Despite the prevalence of positive youth development through sport approach and emergent scholarship on critical contribution as a life skill contribution in youth development research, sport specific frameworks (e.g. Gould and Carson, 2008; Petitpas et al., 2005; Weiss, 2016) have yet to integrate critical dimensions of this developmental asset in theory or practice (Coakley, 2011). However, even though the use of the PPCT model has been limited to the conceptual level or a selection of several components from the model, the human development literature has supported the premise that PPCT can be a good fit for understanding sports participation and positive youth development in sport contexts.

Within Lee and Martinek's (2013) bioecological value transfer model (figure 2.2), the person and resource characteristics include individual's motivation, values and beliefs as well as highlighting that young people are the producers and products of the transfer process. The context characteristics include the environmental structures that provide safety, skill development, teaching processes, empowerment opportunities and strong relationships between mentors and peers. Time characteristics is categorised into microtime (e.g., one session programme), mesotime (e.g., six weeks of programme participation), and macrotime (e.g., from childhood to adulthood). According to Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998), for a programme to be effective, 'the activity must take place on a fairly regular basis, over an extended period time' (p. 996), so that activities can gradually become more complex. The proximal processes at the centre of this model are seen as the engines of development and

defined as interactions among individuals and other symbols in the immediate environment. Within their framework these include participant–mentor interaction and individuals' interactions with the programme's goals. In addition, personal reflection, opportunities to make choices and lead, and personal commitment to the goals of the programme are all affect programme outcomes. They are also influenced by person, context, and time components. Finally, in-programme outcomes include proximal outcomes, such as participants' changes in behaviours or perceptions during the programme, while out-of-programme outcomes are distal outcomes, such as participants' changes in behaviours or perceptions outside the programme.
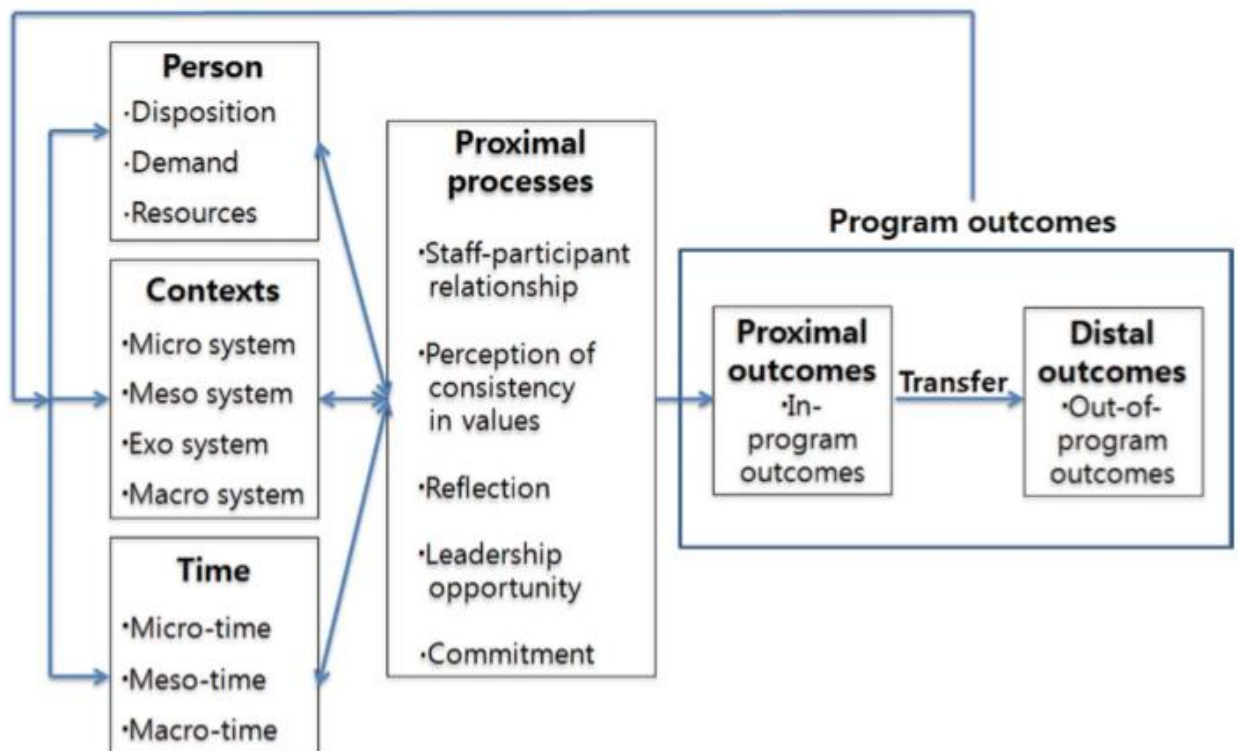
Figure 2.2 Lee and Martinek (2013) Bioecological Value-Transfer Model

The justification for using Lee and Martinek's (2013) bioecological value transfer model is as follows. Firstly it is grounded in Bronfenbrenner and Morris's bioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998), which is theoretically rooted in positive youth development, allowing the researcher to look at the relations between context and person. Secondly, it provided a framework that considers context specificity which complements a case study research tradition and thirdly, it provided a framework to guide and explain the youth development transfer process both proximal and distally. Using Lee and Martinek (2013) bioecological transfer model allowed for more reciprocity and entanglement of the different elements associated with complexity of exploring transference through a multiple of underlying factors that are interrelated in the transfer process to achieve impact. Therefore, this model provided a comprehensive framework to explore this phenomenon. However it must be noted that, Lee and Martinek (2013) bioecological value transfer model is specifically designed to account for the transfer of TPSR (Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility) programme goals and does not necessarily mean it is pliable to the transfer processes that occur in non-TPSR sports based programmes. The TPSR model is recognised as a best practice for promoting social and emotional learning in physical education (Hellison, 2011). This current study provides an opportunity to apply this theoretical framework within a non-TPSR based programme. The final section now outlines the conceptual lens used for understanding the learning and transfer process.

2.6 Conceptual lens for understanding learning and transfer

A person's social and embodied self includes skills, knowledge and understanding. These are understood to be integral parts of a person. When a young person constructs or reconstructs a skill, they are also reconstructing themselves (Hager and Hodkinson, 2009). In this study learning is viewed as a relational web, a process of ongoing change. Learning is transactional in that it changes both the learner and their environment. Transfer of learning is the use of past learning and the application of that learning both new and similar situations (Hager and Hodkinson, 2009). In other words, people become through learning and learn through becoming whether they wish to do so or not, and whether they are aware of the process or not. Currently, there is no available single general account of learning. Rather there are various ways of understanding learning. Hager and Hodkinson (2009) call these various ways of understanding learning 'conceptual lenses' and argue that the metaphor of transfer 'brings associated baggage that leads to a continuing misunderstanding of the processes it stands for' (p. 612), while Lave (1991) states that learning transfer is an extraordinarily narrow and barren account of how knowledgeable people make their way among multiply interrelated settings. To address this misunderstanding, the researcher outlines a continuum of Hager and Hodkinson's transformation and reconstruction conceptual lens (2009) below, to understand the learning and transfer processes. When this lens is adopted, it becomes much easier to understand the learning that is entailed when a person moves from one context to another - the fundamental condition of transfer.

Within the transformation/reconstruction lens, it is believed that learning involves a change in both the individual learner and the context (Hager and Hodkinson, 2009). This lens invokes the metaphors of transformation and reconstruction for understanding learning. Learning is a continuously evolving process in which the young person is the integral part and involves the emergence of new propositional knowledge and skills as the evolving young person moves from one context to another and reconstructs their own understanding of what is already known. As noted by Hager and Hodkinson (2009), this lens centres on the notion that the 'context in which individual learners learn changes and they change with it' (p. 629). Thus, the focus of this lens is on the impact of changing contexts. The individual learner brings to new contexts unique combinations of dispositions (e.g., skills, knowledge, and experiences) and

capital (e.g., social, economic, symbolic, and cultural) which together, influence how the young person constantly transforms or reconstructs their existing knowledge or skills. Of the different types of capital described in the literature (Bourdieu, 1985; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), cultural capital is of particular importance in this lens. The individual learner's cultural capital can be summarised as the resources (e.g., skills, knowledge, experience, people) they have at their disposal to succeed in a particular situation. As the young person moves from the original learning context to a new context, their ability to transform and reconstruct knowledge or skills within the self depends on the cultural capital available in the new context (Hager and Hodkinson, 2009). Cultural capital is therefore fundamental to the process of transfer but has yet to be fully explored and delineated within the transfer literature. As stated above, this thesis is informed by Hager and Hodkinson's (2009) transformation and reconstruction lens to allow the conceptualisation and understanding of life skills learning and transfer.

2.7 Summary

This chapter outlined the theoretical backdrop for this study. Drawing guidance from the landscape of positive youth development, Lee and Martinek's (2013) bioecological value transfer model and Hager and Hodkinson's (2009) transformation and reconstruction lens assisted the conceptualisation of life skill learning and transfer that orients this study. In particular, it emphasises the importance of developmental dimensions of positive youth development and context specificity, which complements a case study research tradition. This theoretical backdrop helped to connect various aims of the research, highlighting the interconnectedness of elements to consider when exploring skill development and transfer. It presented Redmond and Dolan (2010) youth leadership conceptual model in detail and discussed the four youth leadership components, not only for analysis but how each component connects to certain life skills that are transferable and critical in developing youth leadership. In concrete terms, life skill transfer was positioned as a process of personal change that occurred within the young person as they moved from one context to another, transforming and constructing their understanding of the life skills learned in the youth leadership development programme to other life domains. The next chapter presents a review of literature that is relevant to the research.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the research literature relevant to this study. The search for research articles included the following terms: positive youth development, youth leadership, youth development, life skills, leadership capabilities, skill transfer, informal learning environments, developmental outcomes, ecological approaches and educational models in leadership and transference. The reason for this area of focus was the study is about understanding and explaining positive youth leadership developmental outcomes within an informal bounded setting and the transference of skills to other life domains. Articles, books and theses were searched for through a number of databases (e.g. Quest, JAS, ResearchGate, BERJ, applied social science, applied developmental science) through Maynooth University Library. Published articles in peer reviewed journals were used from the mid 1990's upwards. The literature review is organised and presented under the following sections.

Section one discusses positive youth development, its approaches, theoretical position and limitations. It highlights the connections to specific programmes aimed at developing young people and includes a review of positive youth development in sport. Section two explores healthy youth identity development and distinguishes between youth development and youth leadership, including key concepts of life skills, leadership capabilities, and life skill transfer. Section three critically reviews leadership educational models, including the normative concept of positive leadership with the notion of leadership as a value laden exercise. Section four critically reviews key conceptual models of life skills transfer, including a brief overview of the debate whether life skills are 'caught' or 'taught' and optimal conditions for positive youth development settings.. The final section concludes the review, summarising key points within the literature.

3.2 Positive Youth Development: an introduction

Positive education is currently a very popular topic as young people's risky behaviour is a growing concern in the global context (Spruit et al. 2018). Education for our young people is even more critical today, in the face of economic, environmental and social challenges. Youth is characterised as a formative time of finding and forging oneself; hence, there are multiple institutions and organisations that can protect, support and guide young people (Besley, 2002). Today's young people can meet those challenges if their formal and informal learning environments support and prepare them, particularly for the transition into adulthood. For young people to achieve their full potential, they need to develop a range of skills and competencies that facilitates proficiency such as communication, leadership, collaboration, articulation and self-management skills – often referred to as "21st century skills" (Pellegrino and Hilton, 2013). This approach to positive youth development supports young people to be active, considerate agentic young people (Hilliard, Blom and Sullivan, 2019).

Positive youth development is an umbrella term used to cover many streams of work (Lerner, 2004). It is a complex term that has many definitions and a consensual definition amongst scholars has not yet been achieved (Lerner, 2004). This proliferation of many definitions, as well as concurrent lack of consensus on a particular definition, reflects its profoundly interdisciplinary nature. The framework is simultaneously a field of research and practice. It is the optimalisation of physical, social, emotional, and cognitive well-being with the potential for 'thriving' over time (Lerner and Benson, 2011). It is, as the term implies, developmental, with emphasis on growth and an increasing recognition that young people can be deliberate actors in the production of positive development, drawing its orbit concepts, approaches, and practices from many lines of inquiry e.g., resiliency, prevention, public health, community organising, developmental psychology (Benson et al., 2007).

The "golden age" of positive youth development research began in mid-1990s, with burgeoning literature on topics such as civic engagement, service learning, connectedness, generosity, purpose, empowerment, and leadership. It was only in the first decade of the 21st century that work positing the theoretical foundations of positive youth development commenced (Benson et al, 2004). This historical progression of practice, to research, to theory

may not be the idealised scientific progression but it is important to identify how this evolutionary pattern influences the massive number of practitioners and organisations trying to innovate youth development programmes. In the early stages, positive youth development tended to be positioned as a strategy – complementary to reducing risks – for preventing high-risk behaviours, particularly young people susceptible to potential risk factors such as poverty and dysfunctional families and/or communities (Benson et al., 2007). This created a debate about "at risk youth" versus "all youth". As work moved forward to expanding the notion of health, wellbeing, and developmental success, and as these ideas merge with historical and sociological insights about societal changes, the positive youth development field increasingly called for strategic national and community investments to strengthen the developmental landscape, critically reviewing national priority as whether to promote "good enough" development or to promote "optimal development". Lorion and Sokoloff (2003) poetically offered that this choice was between "fixing" troubled youth and the view that 'all soil can be enriched, and all moisture and sunlight maximally used to nourish all flowers' (Damon and Lerner 2006, p.137). It would appear that positive youth development represented a theoretical, research and practice "paradigm shift" at this time, from the prevention of high-risk behaviour to the positive youth development field; however, a considerable debate in the literature about the conceptual overlap of both is evident (Benson et al., 2004; Bumbarger and Greenberg 2002; Catalano and Hawkins, 2002; Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Small and Memmo, 2004).

As mentioned above, this strength-based and empowerment-focused framework of positive youth development is the result of a paradigmatic shift in youth research and programming (Amodeo and Collings, 2007; Coakley, 2011; Ginwright and Cammarota, 2002). More recently, Forneris, Whitely, and Barker (2013) concede that researchers have begun to develop frameworks, theories and models that can be used to design, plan, and deliver effective programmes that facilitate positive youth development. However, Taylor (2017) critiques the science of positive youth development as relying on a mythical adolescent psychological subject who has been socially constructed through an array of experiments and tests. As he suggests, it holds out a seductive fantasy for both policy makers and practitioners alike: the normative, model adolescent and in parallel the scientifically predetermined programme of

social integration, a youth development (i.e. PYD) approach. A youth involvement approach (i.e. youth work) offers the strongest potential to develop effective and meaningful participation practice with all young people. However, with the emergence of behavioural science and sociological thoughts, there is an alternative view maintaining that the external environment of a young person is very important in shaping their development (Bronfenbrenner and Evans, 2008). Using a positive youth development approach as a choice of focus captures a more holistic approach to youth development rather than focusing in on a specific prevention strategy. Preventing youth problem behaviours is not the same as actively promoting positive youth development (Lerner, 2000). While the focus may differ for the positive youth development and prevention perspectives, the two approaches overlap in several ways. Most importantly they share a common goal of developing the health and wellbeing of young people.

There are two major types of programmes identified in the field of positive youth development and education. The first type are curative programmes which attempt to "treat" young people via targeted interventions. The second type are developmental programmes that attempt to "develop" young people so that they can thrive in such a way that risk behaviour can be prevented. In addition, as systemic approaches develop, they align through their emphasis on the assumption of plasticity, on the contributions of the individual to the context and the important role of context on youth development. Positive based programmes often target the same prevention processes highlighted in positive youth development approaches, such the development of positive relationships within a community. In fact, instantiations of prevention and promotion programmes often very much look alike in practice (Eccles et al. 2003). For example, in the positive youth development perspective, positive qualities of these contextual variables are termed as ecological developmental assets. They are characteristics or processes that increase the likelihood of positive developmental outcomes such as competence, confidence, or contribution to one's community, also known as Lerner's influential 5C model (Benson et al., 2006; Lerner et al., 2004). In the prevention science, these contextual variables are termed protective factors and are characteristics or processes that decrease the likelihood of negative developmental outcomes.

Many research studies show that psychosocial skills are closely related to positive youth developmental outcomes. Although there are different conceptions of psychosocial skills, it is commonly conceived as comprising of several elements, including self-awareness (e.g., understanding ones' strengths and weaknesses), social awareness (e.g., understanding of others' emotions and thoughts, perspective taking), self-management (e.g., living a disciplined life, emotional management), responsible decision making (e.g., problem solving, analysing situations), and relationship skills (e.g., communication, negotiation) (Kendellen, 2019). The leadership programme in this study is positioned within the developmental programme type, as it attempts to develop young people and provide authentic opportunities to thrive in their local club and community. Furthermore, this field implies a comprehensive, integrative approach to optimising youth development. It looks at the contextual variables and ecological developmental assets that increase the likelihood of positive developmental outcomes. Therefore, this review focused on developmental positive youth leadership literature because promotion of psychosocial skills is at the heart of positive youth development and psychosocial skill is closely related to leadership skills in young people. As the leadership programme aims to develop life skills and the leadership capabilities within a social ecological context this brings us to the next section, which discuss the different models and approaches of positive youth development.

3.3 Positive Youth Development: its approaches and limitations

Focusing on developing strengths and building skills can strengthen the developmental landscape to promote optimal development and relationship building between individuals and their ecologies (Bronfenbrenner and Evans, 2008). A good example of this is the work of Benson et al., (2007) who discovered that there are twenty external assets and twenty internal assets that shape youth development. External assets include support (family support, positive family communication, other adult relationships), empowerment (community values young people, youth as resources, safety), boundaries and expectations (community boundaries, adult role models, positive peer influence, high expectations), and constructive use of time (creative activities, youth programmes). Internal assets include commitment to learning (achievement, motivation, engagement, attitude), positive values

(caring, equality and honesty), social competencies (planning, interpersonal competence and cultural competence), and positive identity (self-esteem, sense of purpose, positive view of personal future). Benson's developmental assets model (1997) suggests that it is important to change the environment as well as strengthening the inner development of young people. Furthermore, he states that if a non-elitist approach to leadership is adopted to positive youth development programmes then every young person is and can be a leader, although they may differ in their abilities in different areas. Hence, packaging psychosocial skills within the framework of leadership is helpful to the cultivation of psychosocial skills in young people, that is the young person's ability to deal challenges of everyday life and demonstrate an adaptive positive behaviour, while interacting with others and their environment.

Yet, despite the literature's documented benefits, absent from the traditional approach to positive youth development is an articulation of the impact of power, privilege, and oppression on young people's lived experiences. According to Gonzalaz et al., (2020) such understanding should be foundational to all current positive youth development models given the complex challenges faced by young people of today. Positive youth development does not provide young people with the knowledge and skills to competently challenge systemic oppression, so that they may contribute to the well-being of all people in their communities. Furthermore, scholars in the area of youth development have called for social justice principles and critical theory to play a more prominent role in youth development generally (Ginwright and Cammarota, 2002; Sherrod et al., 2006; Travis and Leech, 2014) and within positive youth development-informed programmes specifically (Case, 2017; Imani-Fields et al., 2018; McDaniel, 2017; Tyler et al., 2019). Developing young people's critical consciousness will ensure positive youth development programmes serves all youths in a manner that is equitable, socially, and culturally responsive (McDaniel, 2017).

Addressing the impact of one's environment on critical consciousness development can also assist in shifting the focus from individuals to systems (Godfrey and Grayman, 2014), including examining critical consciousness as a characteristic of consciousness-raising systems (Heberle et al., 2020). Taking a critical perspective on positive youth development means practitioners view young people as participants in systems of oppression who can, with the right

environmental support, challenge and transform those systems. This shift in perspective acknowledges that thriving does not occur only through nurturing individual strengths and relationships; young people must also recognise the systems through which they move and have the motivation to contribute by engaging in critical action. Specifically, practitioners must understand the ways in which social identities shape development, allow access to opportunities and recognise that context consists of oppressive structures, as well as potentially consciousness-raising ones. This recognition of context brings us to the exploration of positive youth development using an ecological approach.

3.4 A socioecological lens

As stated earlier, positive youth development promotes the idea that development can be enhanced for all young people, that young people can be agents for improving their own development and society as a whole in partnership with environmental assets (Bronfenbrenner and Evans, 2000). Positive youth development initiatives have attracted growing interest as they offer communities the opportunity to harness their resources to solve challenges in new and innovative ways. Utilising these resources enables young people to grow their potential in meaningful ways and enhance their contribution to society. In recent years research in a variety of fields (e.g. sport psychology, evolutionary biology) has demonstrated the possibility of optimising the relationship between individuals and their ecologies by focusing on developing strengths and building skills (Lerner et al. 2005). While the external environment (e.g. boundaries and support) is important, it is doubtful whether its influence is absolute. The literature (e.g. Taylor et al., 2017) indicates that young people can thrive even under very poor environment. Hence, there must be something within the person which can help them thrive. However, using a socioecological approach, equal emphasis is placed on both the person and the environment. While personal factors determine young people's behaviour, the environment is also an important shaping force of positive youth development. In the contemporary world, the ecological approach is commonly used to explain youth development. The emphasis on ecological influence of youth development is in line with the propositions of the positive youth development approaches where both the person and environment are equally emphasised (Benson et al., 2004).

It is evident from the literature that positive youth development theoretical frameworks are heavily grounded in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems model, which centres the developing young person within a series of nested systems (Hirsto, 2001). As mentioned in chapter two, it posits that human development is a transactional process in which an individual's development is influenced by various systems or spheres of their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These systems expand outward to represent proximal and distal social, contextual and interaction factors, which reciprocally impact the individual over time. Theorists have developed varying positive youth development models and theories drawing on this system framework perspective (Kochanek and Erickson, 2019). One such theory, drawn from this metatheory, is the developmental systems theory (Ford and Lerner, 1992). This metatheory splits development into polarities such as nature-nurture, biology-culture, and individual-society (Lerner, 1998; Overton, 1998). These influences include genetic factors that interact with one another, environmental factors that interact such as social experiences and overall culture, as well as how both hereditary and environmental influences intermingle. Developmental systems theory allows science to consider within common research programmes the emerging findings pertinent to neural, socioemotional, cultural, and historical influences on adaptive (healthy, positive) youth development (Lerner et al., 2008). According to Lerner (2004), central to this theory of positive youth development are conceptions of the developing person, the contexts in which the person is embedded and the dynamic interaction between the two. Following Lerner's lead, all of the multiple levels engaged in human development – from biology and personality to relationships, social environments, culture, and history - are fused into an integrated developmental system.

According to Benson et al., (2004), who goes beyond Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model, what is essential to positive youth development theory and design of such programmes is the generous view of human capacity and potential. This view is an important starting point, for it brings to the fore the notion that the individual and not just the environment is a prime actor in shaping of positive developmental trajectories. However, Damon and Lerner (2006) argue that this positive vision of youth potential also requires an appreciation of the dynamic interplay of person and context. When it comes to the necessary

components of youth development programmes to support human capacity and support, Lerner (2004) highlights that positive and sustained adult–youth relations, life skill building activities for youth, and authentic opportunities for youth leadership participation in valued community activities are the 'Big 3'. These personal and social outcomes also reflect ways in which positive youth development outcomes have been assessed in existing measurement frameworks.

Similarly, Larson's domains model of growth experiences can be separated in terms of personal and social outcomes (Larson et al., 2006). Youngblade and Theokas (2006) believe that positive youth development is the active promotion of young people based on Lerner's (2005) theoretical constructs known as the 'five Cs'. Lerner et al., (2011) explicitly draws on the individual and context relational conception to develop a model of the positive youth development process (figure 3.1). In Lerner's influential five Cs model, the 'Cs' of *caring/compassion* and *connection* reflect social outcomes, while *character, confidence*, and *competence* reflect personal outcomes (Lerner et al., 2005). In his frame, the 'sixth C' - *contribution* is fuelled by adaptive developmental regulations, for instance, changing the self to support the context and/or altering the context to support the self (Brandtsadter, 1998). The sixth C is essential not only for individual wellbeing and positive development but for the creation of a healthy and civil society. According to Brandtsadter (1998) adaptive developmental regulation results in the emergence among young people to transcend exclusive self-interest and place value on, and commitments to, actions supportive of a social system promoting equity, social justice, and personal freedom. The integration of individual and socioecological assets (Benson et al., 2004), e.g. support for positive youth development from family and community organisations, that occurs through adaptive developmental regulation provides the developmental "nutrients" (resources) requisite for thriving (figure 3.1).
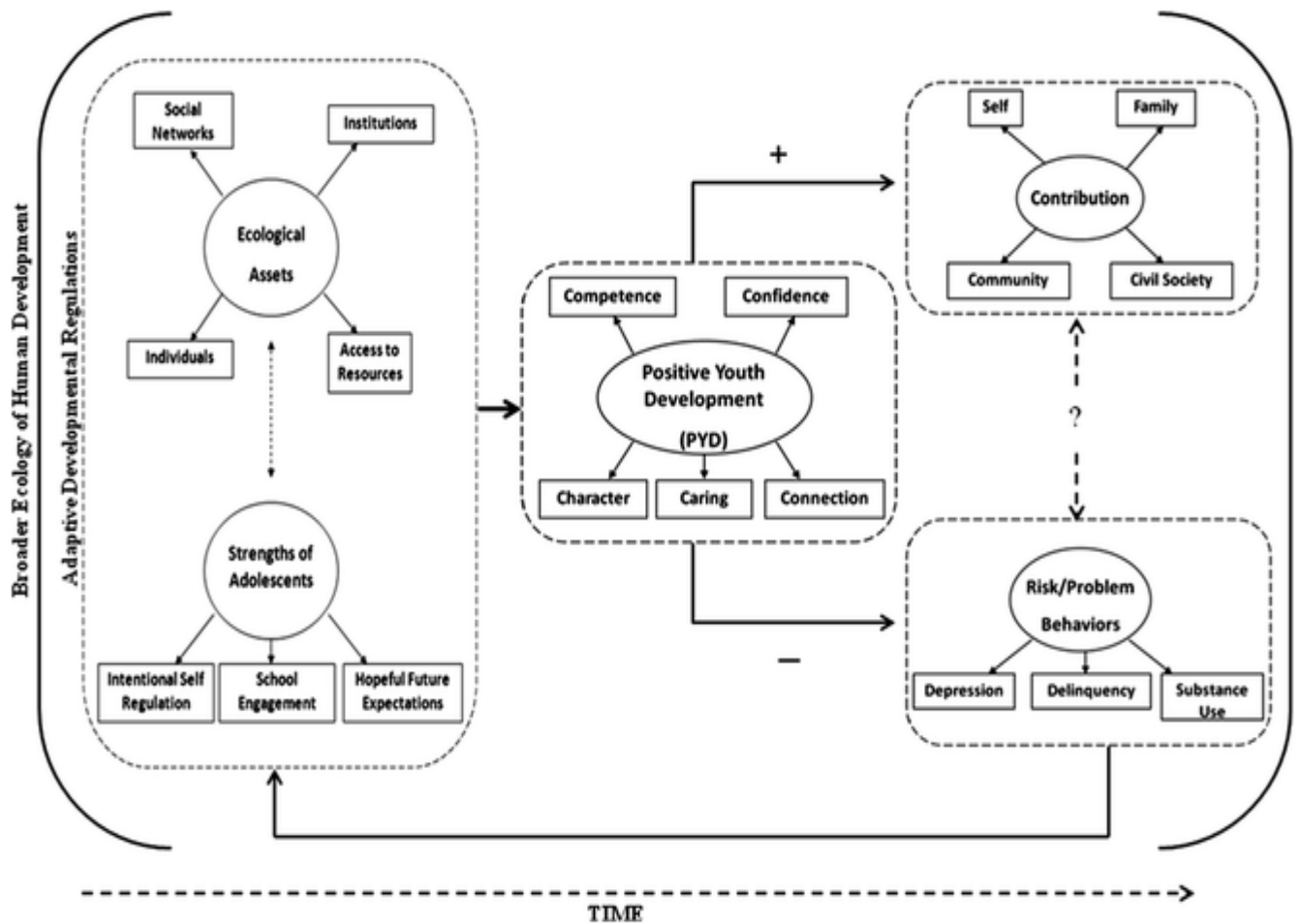
Figure 3.1. Lerner et al. (2005) relational developmental systems model conception of the positive youth developmental process.

The Five Cs model is particularly important as it emphasises the role of context on positive youth development, which is particularly useful when examining the impact of strengths-based environments and systems of oppression, an area which warrants further investigation (Godfrey and Burson, 2018; Heberle et al., 2020). When reviewing systems of oppression, Gonzalaz (2020), states that the three components of critical consciousness are: critical reflection, political efficacy, and critical action. This component should be applied to Lerner's influential five Cs model of positive youth development. He acknowledges that this critical consciousness component should be added as a 'seventh C' (after sixth C of contribution), to effectively challenge oppressive social conditions (Gonzalaz, 2020). Such critical understanding includes examining the role of systems—whether marginalising or consciousness-raising—on youth development. Gonzalaz (2020) argues that this seventh C

recognises the value of young people's voices and the capacity to challenge inequity and transform the societal structures that sustain oppression. Taking a critical perspective on positive youth development means practitioners view young people as participants in systems of oppression who can, with the right environmental support, challenge and transform those systems. This brings us to the exploration of research on positive youth development in sport.

3.5 Positive Youth Development in Sport

Ecological assets are important for positive youth development (Bowers et al., 2011). They include connections to others and to organisations or programmes (Lerner et al., 2004). One specific positive youth development context utilised to facilitate the development and transfer of life skills, is youth sport (Newman, 2019). Positive youth development through sport is intended to facilitate youth development via experiences and processes that enable participants in adult supervised programmes to gain transferable personal and social life skills, along with physical skills. These skills enable participants in youth sport programmes to thrive and contribute to their communities (Holt, Smyth and Deal, 2016).

The research on positive youth development in sport is relatively new but it remains muddy, due to the lack of consistent definition of the concept. When structured appropriately, sport settings can provide the opportunity for young people to learn and exercise psychosocial skills and can be salient context for positive youth development and the learning of life skills (Camiré and Trudel, 2011). Socioecological contexts, such as sport and community based organisations, that offer all features of positive developmental settings include (1) opportunities for youth participation in and leadership activities; (2) emphasis on the development of life skills; and (3) creation of an environment with sustained and caring adult-youth relationships (Lerner et al., 2007).

Sport has been identified as a suitable activity for promoting positive youth development when an appropriate context is created and when skill development is promoted in an intentional and systematic manner (Fraser-Thomas, Côté, and Deakin 2005). When sport is

intentionally programmed and facilitated to promote positive youth development, the approach is referred to as sport based positive youth development (Fraser-Thomas, Côté, and Deakin, 2005; Gould and Carson, 2008; Petitpas et al., 2005). More specifically, sport based positive youth development is a multidimensional approach that uses the strength based perspective of positive youth development and pairs it the developmental benefits of youth sport (Newman, 2019). In fact, youth sport stakeholders generally expect sport to be an activity in which young sports people learn leadership competencies that promote positive youth development (Forneris, Camiré, and Trudel 2012). However, in order to effectively promote the development of young people in a sporting context, the presence of competent and knowledgeable others is of utmost importance (Cushion, 2010). Knowledgeable others such as coaches or mentors are an essential component to the success of positive youth development programmes in sport, as they hold a position of considerable influence on young people (Cushion, 2010).

The previous positive youth development approaches, as mentioned in section 3.2, were not developed in a sport context. However, sport specific approaches to positive youth development do exist. For example, specific instructional programmes with educational curricula designed to teach life skills in sport settings have been created, such as Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (Hellison and Walsh, 2002) and the Sport United to Promote Education and Recreation (Danish, 2002). SPARCing positive youth development through sport in Alberta is another good example which is designed for coaches, leaders and volunteers who support children and youth in community and sports programmes. Donald Hellison's (2011) Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model is known as an exemplary youth development model within the literature, that focuses on fostering resiliency by developing skills that can be applied to other areas of life. Although many youth development sports programmes have focused on developing skills and knowledge that could be used in young people's everyday lives, the aspect of transfer was not a major focus of such programmes until Hellison (2011) included an explicit goal indicating transfer in the TPSR model.

These approaches used through sport advances the literature beyond these youth development measurement frameworks by more specifically accounting for the social features of sport and linking them with personal, social, and physical outcomes. For instance, the notion of positive youth development climate reflects, to some extent, the 'context' and 'external assets' components of the framework put forward by Petitpas et al. (2005), as well as the internal and external assets and social environmental influences that feature in Gould and Carson's (2008) model. Similarly, Côté et al.'s (2014) model includes personal, relational, and organisational factors that contribute to the processes through which development occurs in and through sport. Therefore, organised activities are contexts which, if appropriately structured, can foster positive youth development (Larson, Hansen, and Monteta 2006). Based on predominant positive youth development models, Petitpas et al. (2005, p.72) applied the below concepts to create a sport specific framework and proposed that positive youth development growth is most likely to occur when young sports people:

- engage in a desired activity within an appropriate environment (context)
- are surrounded by caring knowledgeable adult mentors and a positive group or community (external assets)
- Learn or acquire skills (internal assets) that are important for managing life situations
- Benefit from the findings of a comprehensive system of evaluation and research

However, the Petitpas et al. (2005) model does not provide explanations about how learning occurs within sport setting programmes. This approach suggests that sport has the potential to promote positive youth development contingent upon several factors such as the context, external and internal assets. This framework also aligns with other contemporaneous perspectives (Fraser-Thomas, Cóté, and Deakin 2005; Gould and Carson, 2008), postulating that growth and life skills acquisition or transfer are more likely to occur when young people participating in a chosen activity with support from adult mentors in a developmentally appropriate context (Weiss, 2016).

Petitpas et al. (2005) complements Cushion's (2010) claims that young people need to be surrounded by caring knowledgeable adult mentors to effectively promote the development of young people in a sporting context. Furthermore, Newton and colleagues (2007) described emotionally supportive practices as the creation of caring climates that promoted feelings of respect and being valued. Riley and colleagues (2017) found that both autonomy and emotionally supportive practices by mentors or coaches predicted improvements in perceived self-control among young people. McDonough et al. (2013) also found that both autonomy supportive and emotionally supportive practices predicted changes in social responsibility, over and above feelings of belonging. In other words, the influence of mentors or coaches may be greater than the influence of programmatic features that promote programme connectedness or feelings of belonging to a programme. However, community sport based positive youth development programmes are uniquely positioned to maximise positive youth development as they are regarded as key resources in the ecology of youth and their development (Lerner et al. 2012). For instance, Anderson-Butcher and colleagues (2011) proposed that effective community sport based positive youth development programmes include key design features such as activities that are organised and structured, curriculum that teaches both sport and life skills, fosters initiative, and engages multiple social agents throughout the community. Thus, community programmes are often designed and structured to engage with other resources and key social agents throughout the community to serve youth participants.

Despite the prevalence of positive youth development through sport approach and emergent scholarship on critical contribution as a life skill contribution in youth development research, sport specific frameworks (e.g. Gould and Carson, 2008; Petitpas et al., 2005; Weiss, 2016) have yet to integrate critical dimensions of this developmental asset in theory or practice (Coakley, 2011). Regardless, all effective youth programmes have youth development at their core. Furthermore, effective youth development leadership programmes build on solid youth development principles, with an emphasis on those areas of development and programme components that support youth leadership (Edelman et al. 2004). This brings to the exploration of optimal conditions of positive youth development settings.

3.6 Optimal conditions of positive youth development settings

According to Larson, Eccles and Goodman (2004), three critical characteristics that positive youth development programmes poise is (1) specific programme activities, (2) supportive and safe atmosphere, (3) goals that go beyond prevention of risky behaviour but that include the promotion of positive youth development. These characteristics mark effective youth development programmes. Building on this, features of positive developmental settings to enhance developmental outcomes include the following facets: safety, appropriate structures, positive social norms, opportunities to develop and refine real life skills, supportive relationships, sense of belonging and feeling empowered by experiencing a sense of efficacy and purpose (Larson, Eccles and Gootman, 2004). For example Gambone et al's (2004) study found that youth involvement in project decisions is most effective in programmes where mentors have considered the youth and adult roles, the skills and knowledge adults need to support youth voice, and the programme structures and supports that young people require. Thus, this study identified three categories of programme contexts that are supportive of youth leadership development: 1) adult support for increasing youth leadership roles in project planning, 2) participatory decision-making processes that provide opportunities for youth input, and 3) youth representation on decision-making or governance bodies that inform project design, planning and implementation.

According to The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002), key criteria for youth leadership development programmes include: (a) a structure that provides opportunities for decision-making and leadership, (b) opportunities for skill building and mastery, and (c) support for efficacy and responsibility in positions of leadership. These criteria for positive youth development contexts—structures that support decision-making and leadership, opportunities to build and master skills, and support for meaningful leadership roles and responsibilities—are relevant in understanding programme features that best support youth leadership development (Wright, 2008). Perkins and Borden (2003) found that youth engagement as decision-makers is one of the key indicators of effective positive youth development programmes. Other indicators of high quality youth development contexts identified include: (a) meaningful youth leadership roles; (b) opportunities to build sustainable, supportive relationships with adults; and (c) a visible programme governance

structure. Other studies of youth leadership development programmes identify key features as both adult-supported youth leadership roles and youth leadership impacting project design, development and execution (Connell et al., 2001; Zeldin, 2004).

Despite recommendations for these crucial components of positive youth development contexts, studies have not focused on examining youth development practices and the limitations or benefits of these strategies. Perkins and Borden (2003) suggest that 31 possible strategies may include: (a) opportunities for reflective, active and participatory learning; (b) a focus on assets, skills, transfer and competencies; (c) activities with clear goals linked to skill development outcomes. However, this study neither examines such programme strategies, nor investigates the benefits or limitations of these particular strategies. Indeed, the positive youth development literature is largely unclear about the extent to which youth leadership development strategies are effective. The literature shows that most of the youth development programmes studied do not successfully involve young people in high levels of project leadership and decision-making (Gambone et al., 2004; McLaughlin, 2000). Thus, the positive youth development research largely draws findings about what might be needed to better support youth involvement and presents speculative recommendations for future programme strategy criteria. Where research contain positive youth development practices, it is usually descriptive or merely suggests a set of criteria for effective practices without close examination of these strategies. For example, some studies suggest that strategies to build youth leadership capacities might include reflective practices, skill-building workshops, skill-mapping exercises, and ongoing assessment (Calbert et al., 2002; McLaughlin, 2000). However, few connections in the literature have been made between positive youth development strategies and outcomes for young people's increased capacities as leaders. To produce positive outcomes in line with positive youth development, research has shown that giving attention to the developmental process factors that seem accountable for generating these outcomes is a must (Lerner et al., 2009).

Given the rise in youth leadership development programmes, it is important to consider holistic approaches. In doing so, it is important to consider whether programmes have the capacity to critically shape young people in the present. If the skills they develop are

transferable to other life domains, both proximal and distal and if so, does this aid them to transform and contribute meaningfully to civic society now as well as in the future. Indeed, whether such approaches and programmes have benefits beyond the programme itself merits investigation. To understand this process and arising from this discussion on life skills, leadership capabilities, importance of transferability, fostering youth leadership through transformative potentialities and understanding the optimal conditions for positive youth development settings. This bring us to the next section on healthy youth identity development, which starts our discussion on the definition of youth development and youth leadership.

3.7 Healthy youth identity development

Modern conceptualisations of positive youth development are historically grounded in an ecological systems perspective. Thus, researchers can examine how people engage in various contexts to gain a better understanding of how to promote positive development. Interestingly, in terms of Lerner's sixth C of contribution (of making life better for the self, family, community, and ultimately society), researchers (Flanagan et al. 1998; Lerner, Alberts and Bobek 2007; Sherrod, Flanagan, and Youniss 2002), are increasingly interested in addressing the impact of community contribution on healthy youth identity development. Furthermore, Larson and colleagues (Hansen et al., 2003) 'domains of learning experiences' that may be associated with positive youth development include, identity work, development of initiative, emotional self-regulation, developing peer relationships, teamwork, social skills and acquiring adult networks and social capital. In designing this current study, the researcher was open to the possibility that some of Lerner's 5Cs or domains of learning may represent the types of developmental experiences reported by the young people.

Erikson (2018) proposes that, when young people identify with ideologies and histories of organisations, identities can be placed within a social, historical and cultural framework that connect young people to traditions and communities that transcend from organisations, thereby providing young people with a sense of continuity, belonging and coherence with the past, present and future. Consistent with Erikson's prescription, youth development

programmes that are supported by organisations, such as a community based sporting organisation like the GAA, are embedded in interpretive values and social, historical and cultural meaning. For example, a sports club that supports a youth development community based project will likely rely on a moral and value-laden framework to explain its involvement. In turn, young people who take part in community contribution activities organised by that sporting organisation are likely to "reflect on these justifications as potential meanings for their own actions. These meanings, with their historical richness and picturing of ideal future may readily be seen as a nourishing platform for youth identity development" (Youniss, McLellan, and Yates 1999, p244).

Therefore, the relationship between purpose and contribution supports character development among young people, and also by the development of other attributes that constitute a thriving young person, that is, competence, confidence, caring, and healthy social connections to others. Identity, sense of place and the deep rooted emotional attachment that a sporting organisation such as the GAA provides can have a significant impact on positive youth development (Hall, 1990). When young people know what developmental outcomes they want to achieve, learn how to do so and understand why, this can be key to optimising a young person's full potential. For those reasons, sport, particularly the GAA is seen as a valued social activity (Hall, 1990). This is becoming a growing trend not only advocated by the sport community but also through youth development campaigns and schools (Gould and Carson, 2008). However, despite such strong claims that sport organisations can be used as a setting to facilitate this theoretical construct, Jones, Lavallee and Tod (2011) highlight that practitioners are still unclear about just how sport can help to develop young people and improve these attributes. They state that omission of such information makes it difficult to design and implement effective programmes. The next section will define and differentiate the youth development and youth leadership literature.

3.8 Youth development and youth leadership

'Youth development' and 'youth leadership' are terms that are often and mistakenly used interchangeably. For example, many youth activities have been called youth leadership in the past which can have the effect of weakening the impact of youth leadership programmes. An initial review of the literature indicates that the use of youth development and youth leadership terms outside of sport may be somewhat problematic as terms used by educationalist and researchers in social studies may not be congruent with terms used by sport researchers and young people in sport settings (Pittman, 1991). To make the issue even more complex, there is also a distinct lack of universal definition of youth development and youth leadership in sport (Hopson and Scally, 1981; Danish 2002). Danish et al. (2002) argues that youth development skills are often discussed with sport literature but are rarely defined, within the sport psychology literature. What is most notable is the recommendation for consistency in the use of the term youth development and youth leadership and the need to embed theory into each concept (MacNeill 2006; Connor and Strobel 2007).

When reviewing the literature, definitions of youth development typically characterised it as a process or approach in which young people become competent or develop skills necessary to be successful and meet challenges (Centre for Youth Development and Policy Research, 1996; National Collaboration for Youth, 2003; Pittman, 1991). According to National Collaboration for Youth (NYC), youth development is a process which prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent. As previously mentioned, positive youth development addresses the broader developmental needs of young people, in contrast to deficit-based models that focus solely on youth problems. When it comes to the youth leadership literature it is apparent that youth leadership can be defined as both an internal and external capability (Edelman et al., 2004). The NYC adopts a two-part working definition for youth leadership; (1), The ability to guide or direct others on a course of action, influence the opinion and behaviour of other people, and show the way by going in advance and (2), the ability to analyse one's own strengths and weaknesses, set personal and vocational goals, and have the self-esteem to carry them out. It includes the ability to identify community resources and use

them, not only to live independently, but also to establish support networks to participate in community life and to effect positive social change (Wehmeyer, Agran, and Hughes, 1998). One can begin to distinguish youth leadership from youth development when using these definitions.

Youth development, while including youth leadership capabilities, encompasses a broader, more holistic process of developmental growth that occurs during adolescence, one that will determine both adolescent and adult behaviour. Although leadership ability is part of the full range of skills or outcomes achieved through the youth development process, youth leadership is a distinct area of youth development with a primary focus on mastery of certain competencies necessary for effective leadership, including responsibility, teamwork, and vision (Edelman et al., 2004). In particular, youth leadership has been identified as one of the most important skills for young people to acquire and develop to help them thrive in life (Gould, et al. 2006). The Forum for Youth Investment model (2001) organises youth development and youth leadership common skills and outcomes into five developmental areas. The Forum is a national non-profit organisation based in America and is dedicated to increasing the quality and quantity of youth investment and youth involvement by promoting a big picture approach to planning, research, advocacy, and policy development among the broad range of organisations that help constituents and communities invest in children, youth, and families (Forum for Youth Investment, 2001). The five developmental areas identified by the Forum are working, learning, thriving, connecting, and leading (Ferber, Pittman, and Marshall, 2002). These developmental areas have been used in the youth development literature as an effective framework for understanding youth development and youth leadership. Although programme activities may vary with each programme and organisational focus, the areas of development and outcomes should remain constant. Within each area of development, there are many specific outcomes that must be achieved. For example, youth leadership programmes typically produce outcomes that fit within the leading and connecting areas of development (Edelman et al. 2004). This brings us to the exploration of more specific concepts (life skills and leadership capabilities) that relate to this thesis.

3.9 Key concepts

Life skills as a key positive youth development outcome

As mentioned in section two, the ideals of positive youth development as a theoretical framework reach into a number of fields, including child and adolescent developmental psychology, public health, education, sociology and medicine. Recently, positive youth development structures have been highlighted by developmental educationalists as simultaneously a field of research and an area of practice and refers to conceptual approaches focused on acquisition of psychosocial and behavioural skills throughout life (e.g., Lerner, 1998; Mahoney, Larson and Eccles, 2005). These skills or developmental assets are often referred to as life skills (Danish et al. 2002; Gould and Carson, 2008; Petitpas et al, 2005) or as 21st century skills (Pellegrino and Hilton, 2013).

At the heart of many positive youth development programmes is the ability to facilitate life skill development and promote life skill transfer among young people. The development of life skills and the ability to transfer the learning of life skills are critical for all young people (Newman, 2019). This is described further by Weiss et al. (2013) who state that a signature characteristic of positive youth development programmes is the opportunity to develop life skills, such as social, behavioural and moral competencies, that can be generalised to domains (e.g., family, workplace, school, sport, community) beyond the immediate activity. Over the last two decades, the term life skills has become popular in education (Gibbs et al. 1994). Papacharisis and Goudas (2005) state life skills can be physical, behavioural and/or cognitive in nature and can be transferred into other life domains. Gaining life skills is having the ability for adaptive and positive behaviour that enables individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life, but also ensures they become successful members of society (WHO, 1999).

Specifically, life skills can encompass a range of personal assets including psychosocial skills, knowledge, dispositions, and identity constructions or transformations. Psychosocial skills are classified as intrapersonal (e.g., articulation, emotional regulation, goal setting) or interpersonal skills (e.g., teamwork, ethics, leadership). Intrapersonal skills refer to skills that are more cognitive in nature (self-confidence, self-discipline) whereas interpersonal skills

refer to skills that are more useful during social interactions (Danish et al., 2002; Danish et al., 1993). Knowledge can be conceptual (i.e., knowing that), procedural (i.e., knowing how), strategic (i.e., knowing why), and tacit (i.e., personal experiential knowledge; Leberman, McDonald, and Doyle, 2006). Dispositions refer to acquired schemas of perception, thought, and actions that can be moulded in a sport context in response to environmental conditions (e.g., competiveness, conscientiousness, perfectionism; Bourdieu, 1990). Furthermore, changes in identity refer to the degree to which young people transform or reconstruct their sense of self as they acquire new knowledge or skills (Hager and Hodkinson, 2009). In transforming or reconstructing what is already known within the self, the individual is also transforming or reconstructing themselves. Building on these definitions, Hopson and Scally (1981) divide life skills into four categories: 1) skills I need to survive and grow generally, 2) skills I need to relate effectively to you, 3) skills I need to relate effectively to others, and 4) skills I need in specific situations. They then categorised them to five areas of living where such skills would be needed, namely education, work, home, leisure, and the community. It is significant to highlight these definitions of youth development terminology (e.g. skills, capabilities, competences, psychosocial, knowledge etc.) as they differ across field and disciplines.

According to Chinkov and Holt (2016) to be considered a life skill, the skills learnt must be transferable. For example, if an individual learns about teamwork in one area of living (e.g. sport), then it must transfer and be used in other domains (e.g. home or college). Transferability is therefore central to understanding life skills, and there is a need to learn more about how skills learned in one domain are transferred to other domains in order to create knowledge that can be used to enhance positive youth development (Forneris, Camiré and Trudel, 2012). Understanding more about the learning and transfer of life skills is also important for sport psychology, education and coaching, as these fields move beyond the traditional focus on performance and towards a holistic approach to helping young people develop as individuals (Danish and Nellen, 1997; Vella, Oades Crowe, 2011). Furthermore, several studies illustrate that promoting a sense of belonging and a sense of community are antecedents for life skill development. When young people feel connected to a programme, they are more likely to engage in activities designed to facilitate life skill development

(Anderson-Butcher et al., 2014). To this end, community sport based positive youth development programmes that are designed to be fun, safe, and accessible possess the ability to facilitate life skill development (Bean and Forneris, 2017).

Recently, research has started to examine mechanisms that promote life skill development within the unique context of community sport based positive youth development programming (Newman, 2019). For instance, these unique contexts were recognised as settings that provided ample opportunities for the development of meaningful social relationships. More specifically, relationships with these key social agents were identified as processes of life skill development (Holt & Neely, 2011; Jones et al., 2017; Weiss et al., 2013). There is a growing body of work in which sport educationalists have created and delivered life skills training programmes for young people and developed coach education programmes with a life skill component within it. However, according to Peirce et al. (2017), the development of life skills is thought to be an ongoing process by which an individual further develops and internalises a personal asset (i.e. psychosocial skill, knowledge, identity construction, disposition or transformation). With this in mind, the development of life skills is distinct from, but intertwined with, life skill transfer. When life skills have been internalised, life skills transfer is a youth/learner-centred process with characteristics of the learning context and the transfer context influencing the nature and occurrence of life skills transfer (Pierce, Erickson and Dinu, 2018). Therefore the internalisation of life skills is important for transfer. Critically, this perspective is grounded in person-in-context developmental perspectives where processes and contexts are situated and constrained within broader socio-cultural environments (Bronfenbrenner and Evan, 2008). As this field is in its infancy, there remains a need to establish information about how to create a sociocultural environment that enables young people to learn life skills that transfer to other life domains and learn about the ways in which young people experience life skill development in different life contexts.

Youth leadership capabilities as a key positive youth development outcome

As stated in section 3.7, youth leadership is part of the youth development process and supports young people in developing: (a) the ability to analyse their own strengths and weaknesses, set personal goals, and have the self-esteem, confidence, motivation, and abilities to carry them out (including the ability to establish support networks in order to fully participate in community life and effect positive social change); and (b) the ability to guide or direct others on a course of action, influence the opinions and behaviours of others, and serve as a role model (Wehmeyer, Agran and Hughes, 1998). While thousands of studies have been conducted on leadership development in adults (Gould and Voelker, 2012), far fewer have specifically examined leadership in young people, especially in sport settings (Papacharisis and Goudas, 2005).

When defining youth leadership, it is important to look initially at what leadership is. As mentioned earlier, the exact concept and term 'leadership' has been used widely, in many fields, for many different approaches to facilitate change and is often combined with management and authority (Redmond and Dolan, 2010). A multitude of different definitions of leadership exist. Northhouse (2004) outlines how some definitions view leadership as the focus of a group process, for example the leader is the centre of group change and activity. Central to leadership, from Northhouse's perspective, are the following components: (1) leadership is a process, (2) leadership involves influences, (3) leadership involves goal attainment. Based on these components, he proposes leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2010, p3). To do this however a set of skills are required to ensure the process is directed effectively. Whitehead (2009) argues for a definition of an authentic leader as one who: (1) is self-aware, humble, always seeking improvement, aware of those being led and looks out for the welfare of others; (2) fosters high degrees of trust by building an ethical and moral framework; and (3) is committed to organisational success with the construct of social values.

Building on from this, Govan et al. (2015), advocates four critical youth leadership development practices: (1) prioritising youth voice, (2) positive relationships, (3) critical social interaction, and (4) active engagement, while Van Linden and Fertman (1998) identify three

major stages of youth leadership development: (1) awareness, (2) interaction and (3) mastery. Interestingly Wheeler and Edelbeck (2006, p.6) describes youth leadership as 'learning, listening, dreaming and working together to unleash the potential of young peoples, time, talent and treasure for the common good'. Others have described it as a set of skills that enable people to lead (Edelman et al., 2004; Zeldin and Camino, 1999). If leadership is defined as a process through which a set of learned skills and competencies facilitate this process, the position outlined by Van Linden and Fertman (1998) that every person is capable of becoming a leader, highlights the potential of programmes to teach these skills.

Working with the beliefs that a leader should find a balance between "doing" and "being" (Holt and Seki, 2012) and that everyone can be a leader, as least for oneself, a study conducted by (Shek et al., 2012) entitled Tomorrow's Leaders, was designed to help university students develop leadership capabilities in a holistic manner, with the aim of promoting positive youth development and intra- and inter-personal competences. To enhance students' interest in learning, the mentors included varied teaching approaches. For example, instead of adopting a traditional didactic lecture style, experiential learning activities were employed to encourage active student involvement. In the workshops, students were not only encouraged to actively reflect on their learning experiences but were also encouraged to discuss and collaborate with classmates through their group projects. This study found self-reflection and collaborative learning, two key features of youth leadership development programmes, can promote the learning and enhance young people's intra- and inter-personal competencies. The 4-H teen leadership programme is another example, conducted by Boyd (2001). He looked at the impact of weekly sessions on different concepts related to leadership followed by experiential learning activities. Through the course of the programme, young people applied their newly acquired skills and concepts, while completing community based projects. He found that the combination of experiential learning and service learning significantly increased young people's leadership capabilities, such as decision-making, setting goals, working with others, and community service. Research shows that young people most often develop leadership skills during structured extracurricular (recreational and social development) activities, such as clubs, service organisations and sports programmes (Gould and Voelker, 2012).

However, the lack of youth leadership development models available for educators can pose a challenge in creating opportunities intentionally designed to enhance leadership learning and development (Seemiller, 2018). One could argue that large knowledge base on adult leadership may be used to apprise our understanding of that in young people. However, researchers have warned against blindly applying adult leadership theories to youth populations due to the distinct differences in age, experience and development level (MacNeill, 2006; Van Linden and Fertman, 1998). Numerous youth leadership programmes associated with sport and young people have been reported in the literature. The most consistent finding is that social skills can be learned through sport, including teamwork, leadership, communication and learning to work with different types of people within different situations (Holt et al. 2009; Holt et al. 2008). Interestingly there is less consistency in the literature concerning cognitive, emotional, and intellectual skills, but a range of skills have been reported including improved competence, self-awareness, time management, goal setting, emotional intelligence, problem solving and improved academic performance (e.g. Camiré, Trudel and Forneris. 2012; Goudas and Giannoudis, 2010).

3.1.1 Fostering youth leadership development

Over the years and in different contexts, there is divergence between whether young people play leadership roles within their communities. Sometimes they are exploited and other times they remain untapped depending on the communities' skill set, resources and need (Gould and Voelker, 2012). Seeing young people as having a contribution to make in their society encourages them to use their skills, time, and energy to harness the will of their peers to find unique solutions to issues they see as relevant (Dolan and Redmond, 2010). This in turn can have a positive impact on themselves, their peers, and their communities. Fostering youth leadership involves providing opportunities to take the lead and engage in life skill building activities (Northhouse, 2010). Young people need to learn not only how leaders should behave but also how to understand the needs of their peers, read a situation, and adapt their leadership style in order to be effective (Martinek and Hellison, 2016). For example, a young captain on a sports club team who is quiet and uneasy facilitating team communication might

be very effective on a more established and senior-laden sports club team that already communicate well. However, the same captain might be far less effective with a sports club team that has trouble working as a unit, relational problems, and a coach who does not accentuate communication and effective listening. In this case it would be highly valuable if the captain and coach worked collectively to develop their communication skills to meet the unique requirements of the team and conditions.

Opportunities and possibilities to develop young leaders are now greater than ever, hence the need for more research in this area. Empirical interest in youth leadership development through sport has increased in recent years. This is due to youth leadership programmes being able to represent a tangible way to contribute meaningfully to young people's communities as well the community benefiting directly from their endeavours. According to Redmond and Dolan (2010), it is now more important than ever to build a theoretical understanding and an evidenced base educational model for the work that volunteers do with young people in the area of positive youth leadership education, particularly as communities, youth and sport organisations consider their legacy to young people and both youth organisations and researchers grapple to articulate the work carried out with young people. Focusing on building a theoretical framework assists practitioners in developing programmes that are evidence informed, and therefore, more likely to yield the desired outcomes. Other theoretically driven work provides insight into the types of leadership that may be developed in young people. For example, of the many leadership theories developed, transformative leadership is one of the most popular theories examined today. Transformative leadership by definition involves individual consideration (e.g., cares for others), inspirational motivation (e.g., talks optimistically), intellectual stimulation (e.g., promotes decision making), fostering acceptance of group goals and teamwork, high performance expectations, appropriate role modelling, and giving contingent rewards (e.g., providing encouragement and support; Bass, 1998; Callow, et al. 2009). Scholars such as Zacharatos, Barling and Kelloway (2000) contend that this type of youth leadership can and should be fostered in young people to promote positive youth development.

However as mentioned earlier, absent from positive youth development traditional approaches is an articulation of the impact of power, privilege, and oppression on young

people's lived experiences. According to Gonzalaz et al., (2020) such understanding should be foundational to all current youth leadership development models given the complex challenges faced by today's young people. This is particularly important with transformative leadership literature (Shields, 2016), which views an intersectional approach to identity as integral to comprehending how young people across all social groups—and the adults with whom they interact—critically reflect upon their own positionality and learn to address oppressive social conditions by engaging in contribution through critical action. Transformative leadership requires the development and appreciation of one's privilege and power, as well as the deconstruction and reconstruction of dominant knowledge frameworks (Shields, 2010). For practitioners, a focus on positionality includes being intentional about working in solidarity with rather than for young people, listening to and valuing their ideas, and ensuring they are active participants in their own transformation (Freire, 2000; Hooks, 1994).

Moral and ethical aspects of the normative notion of positive leadership are becoming an important topic in leadership research due to recent shocks stemming from moral indignities (Bao and Li, 2019). Leader morality is considered a critical factor within many leadership concepts, including transformational leadership (Bedi et al. 2015). Although transformational leadership is value-based, it also contains other dimensions such as the use of charisma and individualised considerations (Van Linden and Fertman, 1998). When leaders' behaviours are consistent with the social norm and are considered ethical, moral, and righteous, there can be profound positive influence leading to beneficial outcomes. However, when leaders unintendedly motivate followers to consider unethical behaviour that either serves the leader or self, this highlights that leadership does not exist in a moral vacuum but is value laden. While ethics attempt to secure morally right actions, values are meant to secure doing what feels best. While both are concerned with the "right" behaviour, morals are specifically focused on how an individual's behaviour makes them feel. Ethics usually tend to incorporate good or positive morals which leaves a better impact on society. However, a person can be moral but not ethical because what they might find to be morally correct might not be morally correct in the eyes of the ethical system (Bedi et al. 2015). A theoretical definition and systematic inquiry specifically forfeited to moral leadership it is only in its early stage of

development (Brown and Mitchell, 2010). Therefore, it's important that researchers and practitioners are attuned to the fact that leadership is not by default something positive but is indeed value laden.

Including critical reflection and political efficacy into the normative notion of positive leadership and positive youth development traditional approaches can lead to more transformative, critically grounded and informed youth leadership and systemic change in the form of critical action. Thus, when critical reflection and political efficacy are present, the outcome of contribution is through critical action. When they are not, as is the case in the traditional positive youth development the result is solely contribution, which Gonzalaz et al. (2020) view as more limited and individualistic in its conceptualisation of positive youth leadership and community civic engagement. That is, young people may contribute in ways that are beneficial to their community—such as volunteering but they will not possess the skills necessary to engage in critically informed and collective social change. This brings us to the critical review of leadership educational models within the literature.

3.1.2 Leadership education models

The assumption that leaders can be made, as argued earlier by Van Linden and Fertman (1998), implies that there are certain ingredients essential in the making of great leaders. An educational model by Roberts (2009) outlined the SEED's model which represents important characteristics required for a youth leadership programme. These include S: social and emotional competencies that include social awareness, self-awareness and social skills. E: emotional resilience; the ability to cope with challenges that may be short or long term, E: enterprise: the ability to shape circumstances, remain open to new concepts, problem solve and work as part of a team, D: discipline: both inner disciplines to defer indulgence and pursue goals, as well as the ability to cope with external chastisement. This model focuses strongly on skills, characteristics and discipline however it gives little attention to the practice of leadership or transferability of such skills, characteristics and disciplines. Another education model (Ricketts and Rudd, 2002) for teaching and developing leadership and life skills in young

people, included five dimensions: (1) leadership knowledge and insight (2) leadership attitude, will and desire, (3) decision making, reasoning and critical thinking, (4) oral and written communication, (5) intra and interpersonal relations. Their focus frames some of the skills required by a leader. However, similar to Roberts' (2009) educational model, this model focuses solely on skills without giving consideration to opportunities to practice these skills in real life situations or the ability to transfer these skills to other life domains. It also fails to include the ability to collaborate or work as part of a team.

Work by Brendtro (2009) highlights an extension of Maslow's Hierarchy (1962) that for growth and development to occur a person needs four elements: (1) attachment or sense of belonging to provide safety and significance; (2) achievement or mastery that brings knowledge, competence and esteem; (3) autonomy or independence builds efficacy, power and self-actualisation; (4) altruism or generosity fosters morality, virtue and self-crisis. This model has many of the components of what is needed for a young person to develop leadership qualities, for example the ideal conditions for them to be in such as belonging as well as the commitment to action through altruism and achievement. However, it is missing the skill set that young people require to be able to engage in some of these proximal processes. Research carried out by Heifetz (1994) and Klau (2006) outline three components required for leadership development: (1) The need for both technical and adaptive challenges, (2) Case in point learning which provides on the spot opportunities to explore group dynamics and group learning. (3) Below the neck learning provides practical experiences that challenge participants out of their comfort zone including reflective practice, which offers the space to reflect on what has been learnt and put it into practice in their lives. This model demonstrates the importance of reflection for learning to occur, as well as the flexibility of thinking in action. This model fails to look at the skills and real life opportunities necessary for the young people to put their reflection and learning into practice or transfer such skills to other communities.

Research by Boyd (2001) found that the blend of experiential learning and provision learning significantly increases young people's knowledge of leadership skills, such as decision-making, setting goals, working with others and within the community. This model more closely fits the

combination of experiential learning and individual leadership projects, which relate to providing authentic opportunities for leadership. However, it does not look in depth at the leadership skills required of a young person and neglects to focus on communication skills and commitment to action. The work of Kahn et al. (2009) outlined a number of key elements important for leadership including authentic opportunities, meeting needs, challenges, supports and reflection. This educational model illuminated the necessity of a programme to have real opportunities for leadership, something considered to be a crucial component. However, the model fails to illustrate the particular challenges that a young person might face with authentic leadership opportunities, and what they would need to deal with them.

Research by Zeldin and Camino (1999) developed a framework called CO-SAMM – Cause and Outcome, (collective action or having a mission), Skill and Action (skills and mastery), Membership and Modelling (connected and healthy leadership role models). This model explored more of the action and commitment to action aspects, as well as having the opportunities or causes to lead. It also looks at skill but is not explicit on the types of skills necessary. Van Linden and Fertman (1998) summarised a youth leadership model into five dimensions: leadership knowledge, attitude, communication skills, decision making, and stress management. They noted three stages of youth leadership development as mentioned earlier, awareness, interaction and integration. This approach looks at the skills and attitudes necessary for youth leadership but does not explore the application or transferability of those skills. Finally, research by Wang and Wang (2009) propose a model which combines individual and team leadership. Within the individual leadership are components such as self-confidence, learning skills and critical thinking, while team leadership are a sense of accountability, inspiring and encouragement, interpersonal skills and decision-making. This approach focuses on skills and attitude but fails to consider real life opportunity and action. Many of these educational paradigms bring attention to the importance of skills development, with few focusing on opportunities to execute those skills, transfer them to other life domains and intrinsic motivation to achieve action. It is important that positive youth development programmes are framed in the context of theory, so that they are best placed to enable young people to meet the challenges of real meaningful opportunities. The literature will now turn its attention to the nature and mechanisms of transfer.

3.1.3 The nature and mechanisms of transfer

The ability to use life skills in other contexts is known as life skill transfer (Newman, 2019). It is the process by which young people internalise skill development and subsequently apply them in life (Kendellen and Camiré, 2015) e.g. when young people learn how to work with their peers during sport, they can use those same life skills when working with their classmates in school. Humans could not survive if they were not able to adapt what they know to circumstances that differ, at least in some degree, from the circumstances in which they learned it. Yet transfer is seen as ubiquitous and is mysteriously absent from the psychological laboratory literature; it seems to vanish when experimenters try to pin it down (Lobato, 2012). This apparent paradox disappears when researchers realise that in the laboratory, they are typically looking for pre-determined transfer; the connections they hope their subjects will make have been determined in advance. This may not happen very often. However, people are making connections all the time. The question is to figure out which connections they make, on what basis and how and why those connections are sometimes productive (Lobato, 2012).

According to Perkin and Salomon (2012), formal educational organisations are supposed to be stopovers in life, not ends in themselves. The information, skills, and understandings they offer are knowledge-to-go, not just to use on site. Unfortunately, considerable research suggests that much of the knowledge-to-go served up by formal educational organisations does not "go" that far (Perkin and Salomon, 2012). In the sports education context, there has been constructive dialogue as to whether sport programmes should rely on life skills being gained implicitly, as an automatic outcome of sport participation, or explicitly, as a result of international and deliberate integration of life skill lessons taught in conjunction with sport skills content (Hodge, 1989; Turnidge, Cóté, and Handcock, 2014). According to Holt et al., (2017) implicit and explicit approaches to life skills have been put forward to explain life skill development and transfer. Currently, these terms are conceptualised from a pedagogical (i.e., instructional/teaching) rather than athlete learning perspective. In line with this, these pedagogically oriented distinctions between explicit and implicit approaches do not adequately consider the role of the young person as an active learner within a context of a particular programme and whether it has an explicit intentional life skill focus or not. These

concepts of implicit and explicit (caught or taught) approaches to life skills transfer will be explored in more detail in the next section.

Hellison (2011) defines transfer as applying lessons learned in gym setting to school, home and community life. 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 a sports programme are valued in other settings", along with athletes having "the confidence in their ability to apply skills in different settings" (p.66). This line of research often relies on student self-reporting or teacher/coach observation of behaviours as a method for assessing whether transfer has occurred, placing a strong focus on the outcomes of learning rather than the process students engage in to get there (Hellison and Walsh, 2002). Hodge et al. (2016) suggested that young people must internalise life skills to develop them, which may occur implicitly or explicitly. Gould and Carson (2008) suggest that educators and coaches' characteristics and teaching strategies influence life skills development and the possible explanation for how and why life skills development occurs include the social environment and the utility of life skills. Although social interactions with coaches and educators are known to promote life skill development (e.g., Camiré et al., 2012; Holt et al. 2009), far less is known about the cognitive strategies' learners may use to develop life skills.

Scholars argue that in order for life skills transfer to happen, two key cognitive components need to be present. Firstly, Martinek and Lee (2012) state that in order to start the transfer process programme, participants need to have an awareness of the programme values. Oftentimes, athletes and students are not aware they have learned life skills that can be used outside of the sport setting (Danish et al., 2002). According to Danish and Nellen (1997) young people must be able to recognise, understand, and believe they can use life skills outside of the intervention. Drawing on educational psychology literature, Jacobs and Wright (2018) suggest that reflective awareness, metacognition, observational learning, real life application, automatic and interaction are strategies that can facilitate the life skill transfer process. Hence, it would appear reasonable to suggest that teaching strategies that will facilitate later learning and transfer of life skills would be a fruitful endeavour i.e. rather than directly

teaching life skills per se, it may be useful to teach the cognitive strategies that enable individuals to be active producers of their own life skills learning experiences.

Taken altogether there is a clear rationale within the literature for examining the role of young people's cognitive processes in understanding transfer, while also exploring the enablers and barriers that facilitate or prevent life skill transfer. Such questions are important because the answers affect the way life skill programmes should be developed and delivered. For example, implicit approaches suggest that life skills learning can take place in a sports programme that focuses on teaching sport-specific skills. It is based on the assumption that although young people are acquiring sport-specific skills, they can also implicitly learn skills that are beneficial in other areas of life (Jorgensen, Lemyre and Holt, 2019). The explicit approach implies that life skills must be systematically designed to provide instruction about transferability of life skills, in which life skills sessions are often taught in non-competitive setting before, during or after training (Chinkov and Holt, 2016).

Pierce et al. (2017) proposes that within their model of life skills development and transfer, learning life skills is a result of the internal and external assets of the individual learners and their autobiographical experiences, whereby athletes are active producers of their own developmental experiences. Similar to Hodge et al. (2016), they suggest that to develop life skills, individuals must internalise them, which is influenced by the inherent demand's, features of life skill programme designs, coach/educators' characteristics and pedagogy strategies. Inherent demands include social interaction, which may enable individuals to be producers of their own developmental experiences. Programme design refers to specific features of programmes (e.g., experiential learning, real life application, explicit life skills focus). Coaches and educators can influence the development of life skills based on their philosophy and relational skills and via implicit and/or explicit behaviours and instruction. While the Pierce et al. (2017) model goes some way towards illustrating factors that influence the development of life skills within sport contexts, there is little evidence in understanding and demonstrating ways in which individuals as learners may internalise or produce their own life skill learning experiences and how they transfer these learning experiences to other life domains (Jorgensen, Lemyre and Holt, 2019).

Jone and Lavallee's (2009) case study examined perceived life skill development of a single female and, while results indicated that dispositional factors and experiential learning were key elements of learning life skills, the specific cognitive processes used were not clearly articulated. A similar study conducted by Holt et al. (2017) of forty young adults showed social interactions with peers, parents and coaches were central to the development of life skills. In another ethnographic study conducted by Holt et al. (2008) found that young adults involved in a high school soccer team learned about three life skills; initiative, respect, and teamwork/leadership but there was little direct teaching of these skills. Rather Holt et al. (2008) suggested that the young adults were "producers of their own experiences" (p.281). The notion of young people being producers (or creators) of their own experiences stems from Larson's (2000) seminal article on positive youth development. He suggested that through activities such as sport, adolescents can experience a unique combination of intrinsic motivation and concentration in a temporal arc of action toward a goal, enabling them to acquire agency and initiative. Together, these conditions create a fertile context for the development of positive outcomes. Thus, within appropriately structured environments, young people can become active producers/creators of their own positive development. If young people are producers of their own learning experiences, and if this is part of the process of internalising life skills, it is essential to create more thorough understandings of how they create these experiences.

The building of bridges between the known and the new is assumed to be predominately supported through adults and young people's interactions (Perkin and Salamon, 2012). For example, adults helping young people to make connections may specify how new situations resembles the old. Parallels between two situations are drawn to foster the transfer of the related skills and relevant information (Rogoff et al., 1991). Formal instruction and informal social interaction provides the young people with a model of moving from a beginner to an expert level, by applying appropriate background information and thereby, giving the young person experience in the skilful generalisation of knowledge to a new setting. However, the literature regarding the enhancement of cognitive skills through guided participation are rather inconsistent (Gardner and Rogoff, 1990, Gauvain and Rogoff, 1989). According to Rogoff, (1991) the enabling effects of guidance are age-dependent, the readiness of

knowledgeable others to take up a leading role and the motivations of the young people involved in the participation. Furthermore, in a landmark review of work on out of school learning environments, Scribner and Cole (1981) defined and distinguished characteristics of learning across contexts of school and non-school. Their review revealed how school-based learning is most heavily language based and information is taught out of context. In contrast, out of school learning more often relies on rich social engagement and affords learning through imitation and observation in the context of knowledge use and real life application. Where to draw the line between a straightforward extension of initial learning and true transfer remains something of a judgment call. According to Perkins and Saloman (2012), much may depend on one's judgment of the 'distance' between what is learned and the domain of application. On the other hand, Lobato (2012) states that transfer comes easy when prior learning, surface cues, direct cueing, situational priming, and preselection of targets for accessible consumption, as in metaphor and humour. To illuminate the nature and mechanisms of transfer, Perkins and Saloman (2012) outline three mental bridges of transfer called detect, elect and connect. In their detect-elect-connect transfer framework, developing the connection aspect of the framework is the principal problem, as connecting addresses the challenge of finding relevant relationship between initial learning and the transfer situation. They view detect, elect and connect as functions to be fulfilled one way or another on any occasion of transfer, but not always fulfilled in the same way, much as, to make an analogy, one might come to a decision by means of reviewing how similar decisions worked out previously or a quick intuitive judgment. According to Perkins and Saloman (2012), the three bridges get built in various ways such as, memory retrieval by similarity, pattern recognition, the acquisition of routines, surface and deep coding, the consequent formation of schemas, analogising, and so on. This framework suggests which connections people make, on what basis, how and why those connections are sometimes valuable and is helpful in conceptualising the process of cognitive transfer employed by participants in youth leadership programmes.

3.1.4 'Caught' or 'Taught'

There are two arguments that are debated within the life skill transfer literature. The first argument is that such skills are caught (not deliberately taught). The idea that life skills are caught during sport engagement was an early and common assumption, as was the belief that such skills could be used in different settings and situations. As stated earlier by Lerner (2005), for development to occur, young people need to be conscious and deliberate producers of their own learning and development. Lerner believes that young people should not have to rely on adults, suggesting that life skills are caught through sport, with no need for deliberate teaching. The second argument is that such skills have to be taught. According to Danish and Nelson (1997) the traditional idea of catching life skills was challenged under the assumption that life skills have to be taught in the same way as physical skills, through modelling and repetition. The taught approach is essentially adult led to facilitate youth development by imparting their knowledge to young people. In a later paper, Danish et al. (1993) noted that children may not have the sufficient self-awareness to report the life skills they have learned in detail and engage in relatively few other life domains compared to adults.

The fundamental assumption of current research is that the taught approach is most appropriate for young adolescents, particularly during a period of life transition from adolescent to adulthood, arguing that young people need guidance, to be taught what life skills are and how to use them in different life domains. Whether skills are taught or caught is a fundamental question as it determines the way in which life skill programmes should be developed and delivered. It is worth noting that some children can go through formal education where skills are taught, but not learn the skills they require to do well in society. For instance, Holt and colleagues (2008) explored whether and how young people developed life skills in their involvement in an interscholastic youth sport team. While young people reported learning life skills, results indicated that there was a lack of intentionally designed programmatic features and practices. As such, life skill development and transfer process may be contingent on a multitude of factors and mechanisms. This appears to support the argument that the process of developing key life skills is underpinned by multiple interrelated factors. In a study of youth participation in an intensive wrestling camp, Pierce et al. (2016)

found that young people transferred learning in various different ways. Specifically, based on interviews with young people and their parents, life skill transfer occurred as immediate sport specific transfer and immediate life general transfer as well as latent sport specific transfer and latent life general transfer. Additionally, evidence supported that young people were able to experience long term impacts of life skill transfer, well after the completion of the programme. Furthermore, through interviews with young adults who had participated in sport as youths, Holt et al. (2009) found that many of the life skills that they had previously developed retained meaning during adulthood. In other words, life skill transfer occurred both immediately and in a delayed fashion, as well as within and out of sport.

However, within the research community it seems that the idea of life skills being transferred from one context to another context is a contentious issue (Newman, 2019). Whilst transfer is a desired outcome of any life skill intervention, the question that comes up repeatedly is whether young people can actually transfer life skills and if so, what are the enablers and barriers involved? Overall, the assumption of transfer still needs to be tested, yet it must be done with the realistic understanding that life skills transfer does not and will not always occur, and that each research approach has its limitations (Schoenfeld, 1999). While conducting this review, a number of limitations of the previous research have been identified. These include: (1) a failure to precisely define life skill transfer, (2) an overreliance on qualitative retrospective studies and the need to design more prospective intervention studies, (3) a lack of validated tools for life skills transfer quantitative assessments, and (4) a failure to examine individual autobiographical factors, the learning context, and the transfer contexts in the same studies. According to Holt and Sehn, (2008) more specific research is required to explore the types of processes, experiences and interpersonal interactions that may influence the development of life skills transfer in different domains. Such information will inform the practice, delivery, and effectiveness of life skills programmes in the future. In order to understand the process of life skill development, future research must also explore the process of life skill transfer. Therefore, to conceptualise life skill development fully, understanding the outcomes and mechanism associated with life skill transfer is critical. Several researchers who will be discussed next, have created models to conceptualise the processes involved in the transfer of life skills.

3.1.5 Conceptual Models of Life Skill Transfer

Associated with life skill development is the process of life skill transfer (Newman, 2019). How young people transfer what they learn in a youth leadership development programme and apply this learning to the outside world is a challenging task that is complex and lacks a universal theoretical framework for investigating this process. Though positive youth development scholars and practitioners have made invaluable contribution to our understanding of sport as a developmental context (Weiss, 2016), critical perspectives are vital to question dominant ideologies that underpin this work to continuously improve and progress this field (Coakley, 2016). To move forward, there is a need for a framework that explains in a comprehensive manner the interactive process of youth programme participation and the transfer of programme goals within and out of programme contexts.

A review of the literature unearthed some conceptual models of life skill transfer. Some focus on how transfer occurs within sport based youth development programmes (Hodge, Danish, and Martin, 2013; Jacobs and Wright, 2018; Lee and Martinek, 2013), while others attempt to explain life skills transfer in the general sport context (Bradley and Conway, 2016; Gould and Carson, 2008; Pierce et al., 2017).

For instance, Jacobs and Wright (2018) proposed a framework for the transfer of life skills in sport based youth development programmes, which focuses on the cognitive processes underpinning transfer i.e., experiential value, motivated use, expansion of perception. Within the framework, it is posited that young people must see the value of using the life skills learned in sport in everyday life and be motivated to apply skills outside of the programme. Although this framework provides insights into the cognitive processes involved in life skills transfer and highlights the importance of transformative learning, it does not offer explanations for what young people are thinking when they leave the programme and attempt to apply in life the skills they learned in sport.

Hodge et al. (2016) created a life skills framework integrating the Life Development Intervention (LDI) and Basic Needs Theory (BNT). Within the LDI/BNT model, it is posited that sport based programmes that present needs, supportive and motivational climates can foster the internalisation (i.e., learning) and generalisation (i.e., application) of life skills. Kendellen

and Camiré (2017) demonstrated the usefulness of the LDI/BNT model in explaining the process of life skills transfer from high school sport to life, but also critiqued the model for not taking into consideration how negative experiences may prevent basic needs satisfaction and thus impede the transfer process. Since the LDI/BNT model has yet to be extensively tested, Kendellen and Camiré (2017) suggested that future work focus on defining the life skills included in the model and justifying why each skill is linked to a particular basic need. Although this model touches on the underlying mechanisms (i.e., basic needs satisfaction) influencing learning and transfer, it does not address what happens once a life skill has been generalised and applied outside a sport setting.

Other models have conceptualised life skills transfer in the general sport context. Gould and Carson (2008) created a heuristic model for understanding the process of coaching life skills through sport. Within the six components of the model, the fifth component outlines the factors theorised to influence transfer. Examples of such factors include (a) confidence in one's ability to transfer, (b) awareness of transfer, and (c) ability to seek out social support. Camiré et al. (2012) provided support for the model by showing how coaches play a critical role for many of these factors. Although Gould and Carson's (2008) model addresses transfer, the primary focus lies in understanding the role of the youth sport coach in coaching life skills through sport. Bradley and Conway (2016) created a dual step transfer model to explain the relationship between participation in school based extracurricular activities (including sport) and academic achievement. The authors proposed that such activities can foster the learning of non-cognitive skills (e.g., self-efficacy, conscientiousness, motivation), which in turn benefits the subsequent academic achievement (the second or dual step transfer effect). The model conceptualises how participation in school based extracurricular activities can eventually nurture desired academic outcomes but is limited in its generalisability by investigating transfer to a single life domain.

Finally, Pierce et al. (2017) proposed a model for life skills transfer from sport to other life domains. The model specifies the features of the sporting context (e.g., inherent demands, coach characteristics, coaching strategies) and athlete psychological processes (e.g., satisfaction of basic needs, meaningfulness of learning, confidence, perception of support)

that can influence the transfer process. Although this model acknowledges that life skills transfer can lead to positive and negative outcomes in life, it does not offer explanations for the mechanisms through which young people apply life skills beyond a sport setting. Although the reviewed scholarship offers some insights into the process of life skills transfer, they do not explore the contextual features in transfer settings that support or impede the transfer process or explain what happens once young people decide to use the life skills they believe to have learned.

3.1.6 Lee and Martinek's (2013) Bioecological Value Transfer Model

Building on previous research on life skill development and life skill transfer, Lee and Martinek's (2013) developed the bioecological value transfer model. As stated in chapter two, this model is used as a guiding framework for this study. From the ecological and development systems perspectives, the model was designed to describe potential mechanisms and factors that may contribute to both life skill development and life skill transfer. Specifically, the model outlines the possible explanations for how an individual learner develops and then transfers life skills. The model identifies the individual learner as the integral, active, and constant factor throughout the learning process. Similar to the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) and relational developmental systems perspective (Lerner, 2006), Lee and Martinek's (2013) bioecological value transfer model proposes that the individual learner develops within multiple level systems and through continuous proximal processes and bi-directional interactions.

However, Lee and Martinek's (2013) bioecological value transfer model has been used within only one programme (TPSR) and the research on transfer from the TPSR programme has led to mixed findings. For two decades, Walsh et al. (2010) examined transfer in the TPSR based programme called the Coaching Club programme, which used team sports as a vehicle for teaching life skills and promoting transference. The findings revealed how coaches employed intentional strategies to enhance transference. These strategies included asking young people for examples of how they used TPSR values outside the programme, having discussions centred on transfer, and providing young people with opportunities to journal on their

transfer experiences. Findings from this study also indicated that young people successfully transferred the four primary TPSR goals out of the programme context. However, other studies have demonstrated that life skills learned in TPSR programme do not always transfer (Lee and Martinek, 2012). Lee and Martinek (2012) also investigated the factors influencing transfer from an after school programme for underserved elementary students. Findings revealed how peer culture differences, distortion of programme values, and lack of empowerment in school made it difficult for the young people to transfer many of the programme goals to other life domains. Further research is needed to examine the contextual features in sport specific settings that support or impede the transfer process. Studies that explore the perspectives of diverse social agents using multiple methods may offer new and unique insights as to where and how transfer manifests itself (Holt et al., 2009). To move forward, there is a need for a universal framework that explains transfer in a multidimensional comprehensive manner.

3.1.7 Conclusions

This study explores whether participation in a leadership programme proved effective in the development of life skills and leadership capabilities, within a specific sports setting and whether participants utilised these skills in other life domains. Reviewing the research literature it indicates that positive youth development programmes based in community based sport settings are uniquely positioned to maximise the development of young people through their unique socioecological features and approaches. The literature highlights that positive youth development programmes have the ability to facilitate life skill development and leadership capabilities, and at times, promote life skill transfer. The ability to enhance these skills and transfer them to other life domains is critical, as they can support young people to reach their full potential. Furthermore, not only is youth leadership apart of the youth development process, but it has been identified as one of the most important skills for young people to acquire and develop to help them thrive in life (Gould et al., 2006).

Considered together, gaps regarding both the development and transfer of life skills and leadership capabilities remain. For instance, research is needed that differentiates between the two interconnected, yet distinct processes of life skill development and life skill transfer. Future research is needed to specifically explore the mechanisms and factors that contribute to both processes, rather than solely examining life skill outcomes. Moreover, because of the dynamic complexity of learning and development, a more ecologically based understanding of the mechanisms and factors is still needed. To address these gaps, young people must be engaged in the research process in order to more clearly understand complexities related to life skill development and life skill transfer.

To alleviate these known areas of need, this thesis will contribute to and advance the literature in numerous unique ways. For instance, previous research most often focused solely on programmatic design features and/or strategies used by programme mentor or coaches (Bean et al., 2015; Gould et al., 2012; Riley et al., 2017), and at times, additional external mechanisms and supports were overlooked. Thus, this study not only holds that life skill development and life skill transfer are two distinct processes, but each is understood through the ecological and relational developmental systems perspectives. Furthermore, previous research demonstrates even when young people learn life skills, there is little evidence illustrating how young people learned life skills (Camiré et al., 2012; Holt et al.,

2008). Similarly, there is a lack of understand of how young people transfer life skills to other settings and life domains (Bean and Forneris, 2017; Pozo et al., 2018). Further, this thesis allowed the research participants, who are often disregarded within the research process, to have autonomy throughout the research process, a critical perspective that is often missing from formal research (Bean and Forneris, 2014; Harley, 2015). By identifying and understanding key mechanisms and factors, positive youth development programmes can be designed and facilitated to maximise their positive influences, specifically, through intentional programming and practices in community based sport settings. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore whether participation in a leadership programme proved effective in the development of life skills and leadership capabilities, within a specific community based sports setting and whether participants utilised these skills in other life domains. Using Lee and Martinek's bioecological value transfer model (2013) as a guiding framework, as well as Redmond and Dolan's youth leadership conceptual model (2010) as a framework for exploring skill development, this study explores the lived experiences of young people who participated in a youth leadership development programme within a bounded setting. The next chapter outlines the research methods of this study.

4.1 Introduction

This study sought to explore whether participation in a leadership programme proved effective in the development of life skills and leadership capabilities, within a specific community based sports setting and whether participants utilised these skills in other life domains. Using purposive sampling, the study explored the lived experiences of young people and mentors who participated in a youth leadership development programme within a specific setting. Specifically the study was guided by three main questions :

1. **Does participation in a youth leadership programme prove effective in developing and sustaining the four foundational leadership components overtime?**

2. **Do the participants utilise these life skills and leadership capabilities in other life domains?**

3. **Does the interplay of environmental conditions and the young person's agency enhance positive youth development outcomes?**

This study is interpretive, conducted using a case study methodology and is grounded in the perspective of social constructivism (Merriam, 1998). This methodological approach aims to co-construct knowledge with research participants, thus supporting their autonomy and empowering them to share their lived experiences and perspectives (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). To understand the phenomena of life skill development and transfer, the bounded case included the young people and mentors who participated in the 2016/2017 youth leadership development programme (DEYLI). As described by Merriam (1998), a bounded case is "a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries" (p. 27). Data was gathered using semi-structured interviews which took place two years after the participants completed the leadership programme, to allow enough time to digest the learning and transfer of skills

beyond the programme to be explored. Understanding the participants within the bounds of a case study was important to capture those facets of experiences and perceptions that lead to the present moment. Data was analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six step thematic analysis framework. This chapter will explain the rationale for these choices and will also set out my own positionality in relation to the research.

4.2 The researcher's personal stance: acknowledging subjectivity

Given the qualitative methodology and interpretivist epistemological stance of this study, the ability to recognise the researcher's own perspective and unique positionality within this thesis is critical. Specifically, when conducting qualitative research, the researcher is viewed as an integral part of the research process (Brodsky, 2008). For instance, Denzin and Lincoln (2003) hold the view that the researcher is an instrument during both the data collection and analysis of the data. Therefore, recognising one's own positionality within the research context is critical. Thus, the influence of the researcher's prior experiences and perspectives of her engagement within the research context cannot be overlooked. In the case of this study, its beginnings emerge through my own involvement in sport and youth development work. As this is a professional doctorate I think it is important to point to my personal and professional experiences as particular influences in shaping my stance and research choices (Creswell, 2007). Anything in italics in this chapter is my own personal writing/reflection.

…Through my education and academic career I earned a degree and master's in exercise and sports science. In preparation and as part of this independent doctoral thesis, I completed several advanced courses in qualitative research methodologies and writing retreats. Through this I developed an interest and a critical, transdisciplinary view for exploring positive youth development, leadership and transference features of programme and practice.

From a very young age I participated in multiple sporting activities (GAA, rounders, basketball, track and field, cross country, horse riding). For 15 years I played GAA at the highest level and won an All-Ireland medal. I also served as a GAA coach for over a decade at various levels. Therefore, I have both played and coached in mastery-orientated contexts and performance-driven contexts. As I progressed through my sporting career I felt, to a certain

extent, sport developed me not just as a player or coach but as a person. Particularly, through the transition from an adolescent to an adult. However, I felt I 'picked' up important life skills along the way, that I use in other parts of my life today. This brought my attention to two schools of thought regarding transfer of life skills: the explicit approach and implicit approach. Both approaches are found to be effective in the research on positive youth development, however it is important that with either approach, life skills are purposely taught and integrated into sport domains (Lerner, 2005).

In 2013, I took up the role as the GAA's National Coordinator for the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Programme and as part of this role, I developed and coordinated the GAA's first accredited youth leadership development programme. Being in this position professionally, and with my personal experience playing sport, I wanted to give young sportspeople the opportunity strategically and formally, to explicitly develop life skills and leadership capabilities both individually and athletically. While sport may not inherently promote positive youth development, it does offer a unique avenue for positive youth development if structured and designed purposely (Gould and Carson, 2008). This in part, explains my attraction to youth skill development and transfer, and the different approaches to positive youth development, as it resonated strongly with me.

In my work as the national coordinator I could see the merit of this approach through the roll-out of the youth leadership development programme. Reflecting back on a younger version of myself, I felt that if I had the opportunity to do such a programme it would have developed me more as a player and person. In doing so, this work has enhanced a sense of professional autonomy to my sense of self. These experiences have brought me into contact with both youth development policy and practice and has often prompted reflection on the interrelationship between both. These experiences have generated some questions for me as a researcher such as: what does the research tell us about how to structure the youth sport experience to promote positive youth development and transfer or the impact of supportive conditions beyond the individual? Seeking to a new space, I joined the Doctorate in Education in Maynooth University in 2017, where I gained the opportunity to explore this. This research has emerged from that reflection and it represents the culmination of this journey…

The researcher is aware of her positionality within the youth leadership programme and this thesis. The value of her insider/outsider position, as well as the advantages and disadvantages this carries will be discussed in more detail in section 4.8. However, at this point she acknowledges the role that values and subjectivity played in this research process from the choice of research topic and the methodology to the interpretive act of analysis, to the write up of findings and conclusions. As such, the researcher does not claim that the research presented here is final, fixed or true interpretation: it is one possible interpretation and must be read as such. However, to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings from this study, several methods and steps were applied which will be outlined further in the following sections.

4.3 Research tradition

When it comes to educational research, there are three associated assumptions to consider when choosing a methodological approach (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Firstly, there are assumptions of an ontological kind (is reality of an objective nature, or the result of individual cognition), an epistemological kind (how one aligns oneself in this particular debate profoundly affects how one will go about uncovering knowledge of social behaviour) and thirdly the relationship between human beings and their environment (since the human being is both its subject and object of the study, the consequences for social science of assumptions of this kind are indeed far-reaching) (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). The three set of assumptions identified above have direct implications for the methodological concerns, since the contrasting ontologies, epistemologies and model of human beings will in turn demand different research methods. The importance of acknowledging these assumptions within this area of research interest is important to ensure the researcher is operating fairly and is not drawing false conclusions. In order to investigate this phenomenon, there were multiple methodological approaches available.

Consistent with interpretivism, this study was guided by ontological relativism (i.e., there are multiple ways to represent the subjective reality of youth development and life skills transfer) and epistemological constructionism (i.e., knowledge of youth development and the life skills transfer process is socially constructed). An interpretive paradigm rests, in part, on a

subjectivist, interactionist, socially constructed ontology and on an epistemology that recognised multiple realities, agentic behaviours and the importance of understanding a situation through the eyes of the participant (Cohen, 2018). In comparison to other paradigms, constructivism is fortified in several basic beliefs related to reality. For instance, while post positivism holds that reality is assumed to exist and is probabilistically apprehendable, constructivism is grounded in the belief that realities are relative and apprehendable in the form of multiple socially and experientially based constructions. Moreover, while post positivism aims for epistemological objectiveness, constructivism holds that knowledge is subjective and socially, culturally, and politically constructed. Further, as a research methodology, the objective of post positivism is the falsification of hypotheses; however, constructivism is hermeneutical and dialectical. In other words, from a constructivist paradigm, knowledge is co-constructed and "can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigator and respondents" (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p.111). Taking this viewpoint into consideration justifies this study's paradigmatic approach, as it vindicates the philosophy of the research question which explores participants' experiences. The research question seeks to discover how different people interpret the world in which they live in and particularly the relations between person and context. The research began with the individuals' experiences and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them.

However, having a subjective perspective of human behaviour and experiences can have implications. Critics of the naturalistic and interpretive approaches have wasted little time in pointing out the weaknesses in these qualitative approaches and argue that anti-positivists have gone too far in abandoning scientific procedures of verification (Mead, 1934). Experiments and surveys usually have a narrow focus, whereas qualitative cases studies tend to spread the net for evidence widely (Merriam, 2009), yet that does not mean that this type of research lacks rigor. The researcher is conscious of the limitations associated with interpretivism related to the subjective nature of this approach. Firstly, case studies are not replicable, representative or generalisable (Merriam, 2009). For any case study, bias may be a problem as the case study relies on an individual's (selective) memory and primary data generated in interpretivist studies cannot be generalised since data is heavily impacted by personal viewpoint and values. To overcome and control this, a good case study researcher

must be an effective questioner, listener and prober, as well as adaptable to changing and emerging situations (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). Furthermore, it is important to remember to have a balance between having research questions reflect key concepts but broad enough that they do not steer the research in any particular direction.

Some of the key strengths using this type of methodological approach is it can establish cause and effect. Moreover, it is rooted in real context which is strong on reality and can lead to action. According to Flyvbjerg (2006), the closeness of the case study to real-life situations and its multitude of details are important in two regards. Firstly, it is important for the development of a nuanced view of reality, including the view that human behaviour cannot be meaningfully understood as simply the rule governed acts found at the lowest levels of the learning process and in much theory. Secondly, cases are important for researchers' own learning processes in developing the skills needed to do quality research. If researchers wish to develop their own skills to a high level, then concrete, context-dependent experience is just as central for them as to professionals learning any other specific skills.

4.4 Why this approach?

Cresswell (2007) presents five qualitative approaches to inquiry: narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study. According to Yin (2009), there are several types of case studies and they can be determined by their purpose. So why case study and why this approach?

A case study is an in-depth description and analysis in a bounded system (Merriam, 2009). Yin (2008) defines case study in terms of the research process where 'A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident' (p.18). Stake (1995), however, focuses on trying to pinpoint the unit of study – the case, while Wolcott (1992) sees it as "an end-product of field-oriented research" (p.36) rather than a strategy or method. Of course each of these approaches reveals something and contribute to a general understanding of the nature of this kind of research. By concentrating on a single phenomenon (the case), the researcher aimed to uncover the interaction of significant factors

characteristic of the phenomenon, in a situation in which it was impossible to separate the phenomenon's variable from its context. Therefore, a case study approach was most suitable as it provided a specific, holistic and unique instance that was designed to illustrate a more general principle (Cohen, 2007).

This methodological approach provided a unique example of real people from real situations and a detailed examination of a small sample size. It provided an instance in action, an evolving situation and portrays 'what it is like' to be in a particular situation, as the researcher aimed to uncover the interaction of significant factors and characteristic of the phenomenon. A single site case study was decided for three reasons. Firstly, as this is a complex phenomenon, understanding it in a bounded setting points towards future research. Secondly, in order to explore this phenomenon in detail it was of great importance to gather the detailed experiences of the research participants, therefore an interview research method was more suitable than survey. Thirdly, at a practical level the Professional Doctorate process leaves less time and less write up space than a traditional PhD process. This meant that an alternative methodology like comparison or multi case study approaches would be beyond the scope of this study's timeframe. The researcher saw this research process as a first step, and she regards the inclusion of young people's and participants' voices, experiences and enactments as vitally important and she suggests this as a follow-on research project in the final chapter. The product of single site qualitative inquiry is richly descriptive in words rather than numbers and this approach is used to convey the learnings of this phenomenon. Figure 4.1 outlines the full research design framework to guide the reader through the methodology section of this study.

```
┌─────────────────────────┐
│        Case Study        │
│        Subjective        │
│        Qualitative       │
│        Single-site       │
└─────────────────────────┘
```

Quality Assurance	**Data Collection**	**Data Analysis**
Triangulation	Participant interviews	Thematic analysis
Clear audit trail	Mentor interviews	(Braun & Clarke, 2006)
Research reflexivity	Participant journals	
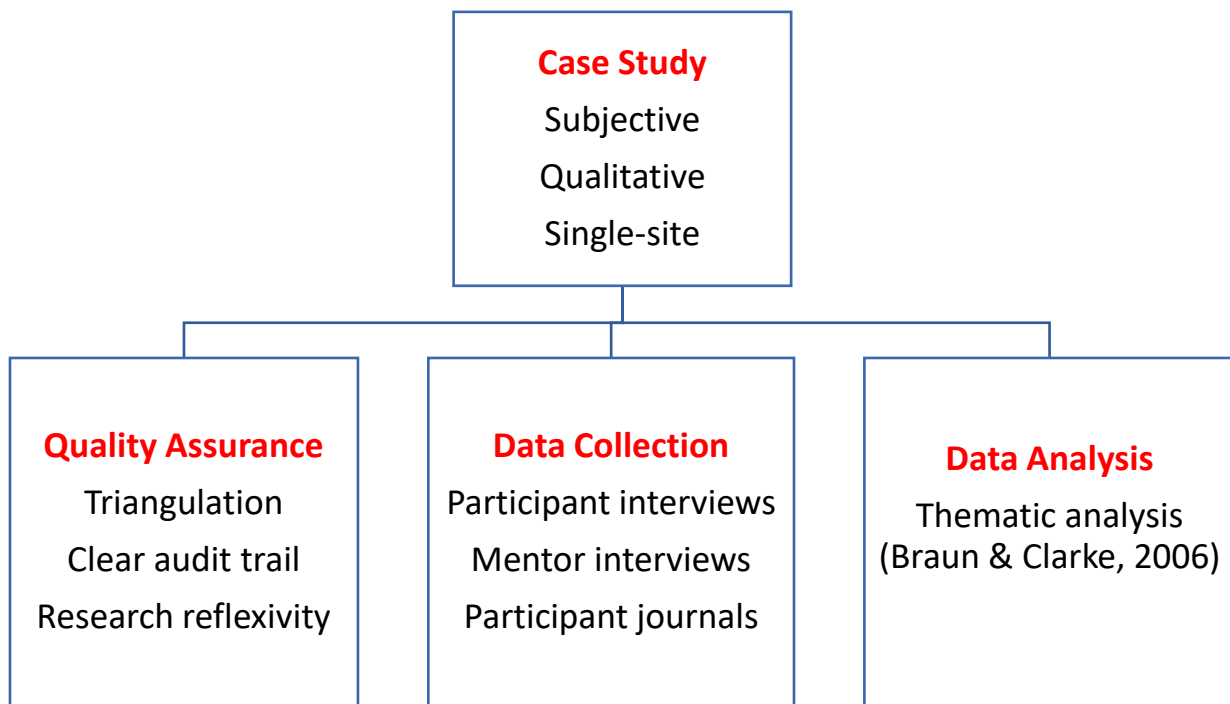
Figure 4.1 Research design strategy

4.5 Research design

To review, case studies can uncover new meaning, providing further knowledge on a phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). The particularistic, descriptive and heuristic qualities of a case study can provide a holistic and detailed explanation and analysis of a unit of study (Merriam, 1998). The unit of study in which this research took place in was a GAA club in a large urban setting. The case itself is important for what it might reveal about the phenomenon and for what it might represent. The aim was to achieve a wide range of opinions and experiences of the youth leadership programme within the club setting, as well as explore if the skills learned in the leadership programme were utilised in other settings. There were a cohort of clubs to choose from but a purposive approach was used to achieve variation on dimensions of interest. This enabled the researcher to uncover a lot of information out of the data and provide in depth and detailed information about the phenomenon. The club was chosen for three reasons:

1. Of the 600 young people who completed the leadership programme nationally since 2014, this club had the most participants at club level.

2. A review of the club's strategic plan and procedures shows that the members have used the club as a vehicle for teaching personal and leadership skills since the inception of the leadership programme.

3. The club provided a unique opportunity to study the phenomenon in a bounded setting, thus allowing the phenomenon to be studied in a socioecological context that is consistent with the theoretical position employed in the study, making case study the most appropriate methodology for the research

As the purpose of this design was to provide qualitative narrative accounts through semi structured interviews and develop conceptual categories deductively, in order to examine initial findings, this study took a 'top down approach' which utilised a descriptive, constructivist and interpretative case study approach. This will be discussed in detail in section 4.9.

4.6 Participants

The participants were drawn from one class (year 2016/2017) who completed the leadership programme in the same GAA Club. The reason for choosing one class is the programme is run over two years with a fallow year in between. This meant only one class met the criteria below. Participants who were all over 18 years of age were purposively selected from a former participant application list, with formal permission granted by the programme's national steering committee to access this information (Appendix A). The purposive sampling criteria used for participant selection was:

- Active member of the case study club

- Actively engaged in playing sport

- Over 18 years of age

- 50/50 gender balance

- Score of 60% or more on their original application form

- Participants had to complete the programme by year 2018, to allow enough time to digest the learning and transfer of skill beyond the programme to be explored.

- At least one year post the final examination (Leaving Certificate) of the Irish secondary school system to allow life transition to happen from formal education to employment or educational settings.

Out of a class of twelve participants, six participants met the purposive sampling criteria. All six participants agreed to take part in semi structured interviews, three male and three females with a mean age of twenty years of age. Participants were selected based on the criteria outlined above and then an email invitation along with information letter and consent form was provided to them (Appendix B). Age and participation criteria were purposefully chosen to ensure participants had the cognitive skills to differentiate information learned from multiple contexts, identify sources of ability information across domains, and distinguish sources of social influence for learning skills. It also provided sufficient time and experience in the programme to provide informed responses and examples of successful transfer to other life domains. As such, all were involved in at least one other life skills learning context in addition to sport. They also shared similar goals, wanting to pursue sport at the highest level and reach their full potential in all walks of life, as evident from the original application form for the leadership programme.

4.7 Data collection

According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), the past is brought into the present through human instruments. Data was gathered using semi structured interviews (Appendix D) as it provided the most opportunity to understand experience and individualised outcomes associated with the programme. Using interviews as a method provides the opportunity to give meaning and consistency to our experiences (Merriam, 2009). This provides the

opportunity to select the elements of the telling to confer meaning on prior events – events that may not have had such meaning at the time. This is a transposition of Kierkegaard's (1843) famous statement that "we live life forward but understand it backwards" (Bachmetjevas, 2020 p.11). As the semi structured interviews took place after the participants completed the leadership programme (to allow enough time to digest the learning and transfer of skill beyond the programme to be explored), understanding the participants within the bounds of a case study was important to capture those facets of experiences and perceptions that lead to the present moment.

Argyle (1978) argues that if carefully controlled interviews used in social surveys are inaccurate, then the less controlled interviews such of those using a narrative approach to understand experience carry even a greater risk of inaccuracy. To reduce this risk, the researcher was conscious not to impose her own definitions of situations on participants. She also reduced risk by the use of participants' journals and workbooks from their time on the programme, as well as considering the circumstances where participants were placed during interviews. For this reason the researcher made the conscious decision to conduct the semi-structured interviews in the case study club. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as a method within this case study as it allowed the researcher to guide participants on a particular theme with flexibility. Exploring a multifaceted phenomenon like this, it is difficult to know the exact questions needed but having a theme or the ability to ask 'follow up' questions after initial questions is critical.

To provide a data triangulation perspective to the research, two trained mentors and the club programme director of the leadership programme were also invited to partake in semi structured interviews. The mentors and club programme director were instrumental in coordinating and delivering the leadership programme during the period of time when the six research participants were engaged in the leadership programme. This supported the validity of the research along with capturing different dimensions of the same phenomenon. The participants and mentors were invited to use their workbooks and reflective journals during the interview to help recall memories and experiences. Follow up meetings were conducted for transcript authenticity and accuracy. A semi structured interview guide (Appendix D) was developed based upon the research questions and the literature. The introductory questions

were designed to help the participants speak about their experiences on a more general level. This helped them to be comfortable and free to discuss their experiences in the first phase of the interview. The flow questions created a smooth transition to the key questions the researcher wanted to explore. The final phase of the interview used questions to summarise and finish the interview and make sure that the participants didn't have further comments (Krueger and Casey, 2009). Following the initial design, the interview guide was piloted with two participants (one male and one female) who completed the leadership programme previously from a different club. Based on their feedback, this resulted in some changes in the questions, to make them clearer and more concise.

All interviews were conducted in the same room in which the leadership programme was delivered in within the club. This provided a quiet space and allowed the participant to feel at ease. The formulation of questions to be answered, the characterisation of participants and methodological concerns were all considered very carefully. The interviews were voice recorded. After each interview, the researcher wrote separate reflectional and methodological notes regarding the interviews as recommended in qualitative research (Watt, 2007). Analytical memos were used for additional insight during the data collection and analysis. A sample of these memos are in Appendix D. These memos were used in the analytic phase to clarify initial reflections, preunderstandings and enhance rigour, to explain the analytic path. Figure 4.2 outlines the timeline for the data gathering and analysis phase of the research study.

Figure 4.2 study timeline in table format

Research Tasks	Months (Sept 2019 – May 2020)								
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Ethics board approval granted	▨								

	▓								
Data collection - 6 Interviews		▓	▓						
Qualitative data transcription				▓					
Data collection - 3 Interviews					▓	▓			
Qualitative data transcription							▓		
Data analysis								▓	▓

4.8 Data Analysis

Rigorous data analysis is central to credible qualitative research (Maguire, 2005). Analysis of narrative data is rooted in a social constructivist paradigm in which behaviours or experiences and their meanings are socially situated and socially interpreted (Cohen, 2018). Social constructivism emphasis is on the collaborative nature of learning (learning is perceived as an active, not passive, process, where knowledge is constructed) and the importance of cultural and social context (Vygotsky, 1978). This approach allows a focus on individuals, culture, and context, challenging concepts to examine using traditional, positivist methods (Hallberg, 2006).Thematic analysis is compatible with social constructivist paradigms and is independent of theory and epistemology. In other words, thematic analysis is a flexible analytical method that provides a thick and rich description of a phenomenon, which is constructed and defined from the data, but through the unique perspective of the researcher (Cohen, 2018).

In recent years, there has been concerns on how thematic analysis is being implemented in the field of sport and exercise research, indicating that a methodolatry or proceduralism

method like baking a recipe should be used precisely in order to ensure a successful outcome (King and Brooks, 2017). When Bruan and Clarke (2006) initially articulated their thematic analysis approach, they took some things for granted, particularly their unarticulated assumptions. Critiques (Chamberlain 2000) stated that they prioritised procedure over reflexivity, theoretical engagement and creative scholarship. However, reflexively they claim they did not and that interpretations of their thematic analysis approach seem to be unknowing, unreflexive and indicative of some degree of conceptual confusions (Bruan and Clarke, 2019).

Bruan and Clarke state that knowingness, meaning evidence in the writing of research, being treated as a deliberative process, one that involves decisions related not just to design and method, but ontology, epistemology and methodology, and rationales for these, individually and collectively. Knowingness demonstrates engagement with research as a thought-out adventure, rather than simple 'recipe following' activity. In doing so they took the decision to relabel their approach as 'reflexive TA' (Bruan and Clarke, 2019). In this approach, they consider the importance of methodological and reflexivity in the articulation of thematic analysis and highlighting the importance of methodological scholars locating their stance and acknowledging their position as I have done in section 4.2.

Taking a reflexive thematic approach and following the guidelines of Bruan and Clarke six step approach (2006), separate thematic analyses were conducted to analyse data from the semi-structured interviews. A six step thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), was conducted to explore the mechanisms and factors that contribute to life skill development as well as life skill transfer. Braun and Clarke (2013) distinguish between a top-down or theoretical thematic analysis that is driven by the specific research questions and/or analysis focus, and a bottom up or inductive one that is more driven by the data itself. In this study, a deductive approach was applied towards the data where the participants' statements were openly coded initially through a thematic step by step analysis method (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

When recording the interviews, the researcher disciplined herself to write notes as quickly as possible after the interview. The researcher made sure the notes were full enough to summon up for once again, months later, a reasonably vivid picture. Writing up a case study abides by

the twin criteria of 'fitness for purpose' and 'fitness for audience' (Yin, 2009). In this study the researcher transcribed the interviews herself to be in control of the quality of the actual process and to get familiar with the data. The research questions defined as the key questions in the interview guide, guided the analysis. A sub theme was defined as something that has a certain level of pattern or meaning in relation to the research questions in the data. The interview was screened for topics or key words that could be used as a centralising organising concept to sequence information (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

Coding data was organised through the following priori sub codes (social and emotional intelligence, articulation, collaboration, insight and knowledge) relating to the foundation components of the leadership conceptual model used in the leadership programme. In addition Lee and Martinek's (2013) bioecological value based transfer model of youth sport programmes was used as a measurement framework to distinguish proximal and distal transfer outcomes. This allowed the researcher to use positive youth development constructs and divide the programme outcomes under proximal transfer (in programme outcomes – changes in behaviour and/or perceptions during the programme) and distal transfer (out of programme outcomes - changes in behaviour and/or perceptions in other settings).

The steps taken in moving from description to understanding to explanation, interpretation and conclusions must be transparent and demonstrate validity (Glaser and Laudel, 2013). The researcher quickly realised that there was no simple formula or correct way to analyse and present qualitative data. In a continuous process of the analysis, the researcher found herself writing down notes, memos, thoughts and a reflexive dialogue in an audit trail manual. This captured the choices the researcher made throughout the analytic process. The process of transcribing the data was seen as a key phase of data analysis, particularly using an interpretative qualitative methodology. Single statements captured for the final report were reviewed regarding their relevance, to critically review if it was only one participant's opinion or an opinion in general among the participants. Below is a step by step description of the data analysis process the researcher took, using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six step thematic analysis framework.

Step 1: Familiarise yourself with the data

The first step for the researcher in analysing the data was to read and re-read the transcripts to make sure she was very familiar with the entire body of data. The researcher made sure she did this by transcribing each interview herself, which was very time consuming. As she was doing this, she took moments of reflection on the data, writing about the data regarding the language, different meanings, explanations and interpretations immuring from the data. She also took some time to reflect on her own biography, values, knowledge, assumptions and experiences as this may shape or inform her initial data analysis. The researcher used this reflexivity approach throughout the process and documented this in her audit trail memos (Appendix D).

Step 2: Generate codes

In this phase the researcher started to organise her data in a more meaningful and systematic way. The researcher did this by hand initially, working through hard copies of the transcripts with pens and highlighters. The researcher had initial ideas about codes when she finished step one and wrote them down on big sheets of paper, hanging each one of them on her study room wall. For example, the development and improvement of understanding self and communication skills were two key areas that kept coming up in all interviews and relevant to the overall research question.

As this was a theoretical deductive thematic analysis rather than an inductive one, the researcher coded each segment of data that was relevant to or captured something of interest about the research question. The researcher used open coding which meant she did not have pre-set codes but developed and modified the codes as she worked through the coding process. Coding started to move towards greater selectivity and synthesis (Charmaz, 2006). Therefore, codes were brief, yet descriptive. As the researcher generated the codes, she set ground rules to help her define the codes properties and dimensions, outlining from the start what each code meant. The setting of these ground rules and definitions was instrumental, as at times when coding a sentence, it could have had different meanings. This developed a real focus for the researcher to organise and synthesise the data more fittingly

and coherently. Table 4.1 below provides an example on how the researcher defined her open codes under the four foundational leadership components:

Table 4.1: Initial open codes

Code	Description/Definition	Notes
Understanding self	I understand why I do what I do.	
Leadership development	An activity that makes me become a better leader and perform in leadership roles.	
Becoming aware of others	I understand that people have different views and opinions.	
Relationship development	Repetitive connection and evolution towards accomplishing a common purpose of two or more people.	
Overcome challenges	I am able to overcome my fears and teach myself how to control it.	
Confidence development	I belief in my own ability overtime.	
Competence development	I can effectively accomplish goals and emerge with greater confidence.	
Community contribution	Anything I have done to contribute positively in my community	

When organising individual codes to develop sub codes, rules that describe proprieties of each sub code were developed in order to justify the inclusion and/or exclusion of each of the codes as a way to ensure internally consistency (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). To move beyond the young people's measurement of skill acquisition, the next stage the researcher took was to examine if transfer took place and if so, what 'type' of transfer? Lee and Martinek's (2013) bioecological value transfer model used as a theoretical framework in this study enabled the researcher to use this as a measurement framework for transfer, to divide the programme outcomes under proximal transfer outcomes (in-programme outcomes such as changes in behaviour and/or perceptions during the programme) and distal transfer outcomes (out-of-programme outcomes such as changes in behaviour and/or perceptions in other settings). Table 4.2 outlines how many examples were provided for each form of transfer; this highlights the large number of examples provided within the data analysis.

Table 4.2 transfer outcomes

PROXIMAL TRANSFER: In programme outcomes – changes in behaviour and/or perceptions during the programme	DISTAL TRANSFER: Out of programme outcomes - changes in behaviour and/or perceptions in other settings
50 examples	38 examples

The next step the researcher took was to breakdown proximal and distal transfer examples into each setting. This allowed the researcher to clearly see what type of transfer took place in which setting. As the leadership programme had a community based element built into it, any community examples that were linked to the programme itself, was included as a proximal transfer outcome and any community example given outside the programme, was categorised as a distal transfer outcome. Table 4.3 outlines the breakdown for each setting:

Table 4.3 Transfer examples per setting

Transfer outcome	Programme	College	Sport	Community	Work	Home
Proximal	44	0	0	6 examples – In module 3	0	0
Distal	0	17 examples	18 examples	3 examples – outside module 3	0	0

Step 3: Generate initial themes

As Braun and Clarke (2006) explain, there are no hard and fast rules about what makes a theme. A theme is characterised by its significance. In this case as the researcher examined, divided up and took apart the codes, some of them clearly linked together into an initial theme. For example, the researcher had several codes that related to each other like teamwork, becoming aware others, relationship development etc. She collated these codes into an initial sub code called 'understanding and relating to others', which fell under the collaboration leadership component. She also used a matrix table to break down the number of codes associated with sub code that highlighted the transfer of key skills to other areas of the participant lives, such as sport, college and the community. At the end of this step all the codes were organised into broader themes that linked to the four foundational components, which seemed to say something specific about the research question. As this study used a theoretical deductive thematic analysis approach, the themes were predominately descriptive as they described patterns in the data relevant to the research question. Table 4.4 below shows all the preliminary sub codes and themes identified and, in some cases, where a sub theme did not manage to fit under the below theme headings, the researcher used a 'miscellaneous' theme to manage these codes in the interim. These miscellaneous codes then became inductive findings within the data collection, which represent both semantic and latent content in the data.

Table 4.4: Generate initial sub themes

Social Emotional Intelligence	Collaborate	Articulate	Insight Knowledge
Understanding self	Becoming aware of others	Communication skills	Leadership development
Overcoming challenges	Relationship development	Decision making	Competence development
Confidence development	Empathy	Critical thinking	Opportunity development
Character building	Teamwork	Problem solving	Community contribution
Resilience development	Concrete support guidance		
Self esteem			
Goal setting			
Improved attitude			

Table 4.5 Generating examples per sub theme

Category	Skill/code	Programme	Sport	Community	College
Social Emotional Intelligence	As per above	Evidence in data Yes (22)	Yes (4)	No	Yes (3)

Collaborate	As per above	Evidence in data Yes (7)	Yes (3)	Yes (1)	Yes (2)
Articulate	As per above	Evidence in data Yes (11)	Yes (7)	No	Yes (4)
Insight and Knowledge (leadership capabilities)	As per above	Evidence in data Yes (14)	Yes (9)	Yes (3)	Yes (9)

Step 4: Review initial themes

During this phase the researcher reviewed, filtered and classified the preliminary sub themes that she identified in steps two and three. At this point the researcher asked herself key questions like what does this all mean? Do the themes make sense? What story is the data telling me? Does it relate to other work in this research field? The researcher then moved all the hard copy coded transcripts into a qualitative data analysis software called MaxQDA. This was useful to gather the data in a systematic way. This process was labour intensive at the start, but once the researcher copied the hard copies into MaxQDA it made the process much easier and quicker, helping the researcher identify how the colour coded data (image 4.6) associated with each theme.

4.6 MaxQDA software images

The researcher read the data associated with each sub theme and considered whether the data really did support it. The next step the researcher took was to think about whether the sub themes work in the context of the entire data set. When the researcher was going through the data set in one extract, she considered how the themes work both within a single

interview and across all interviews. At this stage the researcher asked herself critical questions like; am I trying to fit too much into a theme? Are there potentially other themes within the data? If themes overlap, are they really separate themes? For example, the competency value 'empathy' did not occur frequently in the data set. The researcher struggled to put this code under one specific theme. As she reviewed her code definitions, she saw that it could fit under two themes 'understanding self 'or 'understanding and relating to others'. When the researcher reviewed the one set of text labelled empathy, she was able to reclassify it under the ground rules she set, to the code 'becoming aware of others.' Another challenge that came up for the researcher was to categories the data under each sub theme to highlight the transfer of skill to other areas of the participants lives. The researcher did this initially in step two and then reviewed this in step four, incorporating how many codes were associated with that data set through MaxQDA.

Step 5: Define and name themes

According to Braun and Clarke (2019), step five is the final refinement of the themes and the aim is to identify the essence of what each overarching theme is about. What is the theme saying? Do they interact and relate to other themes? In order to explore each research aim, separate inductive meta thematic analyses was conducted using data from semi structured interviews. Specifically contexts related to the individual learner and the learning context. For example, individual learner included internal assets such as confidence and self-efficacy; while learning context factors included factors related to the club and mentors. When the researcher reviewed each sub theme and as the life skills process involves three interrelated yet distinct stages, as mentioned in chapter three: (1) skill acquisition, (2) skill transfer and (3) skill application (Kendellen, 2019), she associated them with three overarching lens for analysis: **skill acquisition** – through the leadership programme, **skill transfer** – internalisation of skills learnt and mode of transfer and **skill application** – successful transfer to other life domains. The findings were extrapolated and described with vivid quotes that represented the essence of the overarching lens for analysis. The next section will outline the ethical considerations within this study.

4.9 Ethical considerations

The major ethical dilemma in any study is the ability to strike the balance between the demands placed on researchers to pursuit the truth and protecting the subjects' rights and values potentially threatened by the research. This is known as the 'costs/benefits ratio' (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1992). Taking a subjective approach to research can have an emotional effect on all parties involved. Qualitative researchers have to take seriously their responsibilities to their participants. Only if this is done can the researcher walk through the ethical and methodological minefield. The 'right to privacy' may easily be violated during the course of an investigation or denied after it has been completed. As this study took a subjective approach using only qualitative methods, sensitivity of information is higher. Certain kinds of information are more personal than others increasing the risk to the participant. Delving into personal attributes on a personal level is more sensitive items than name, rank and serial number (Saidin and Yaacob, 2016). Thus, the greater the sensitivity of the information, the more safeguards are needed to protect the privacy of the participant. In doing so, the researchers' intentions were made clear and explicit through an information sheet and informed consent was sought. All participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, without any adverse consequences (Cohen et al., 2011). Information provided by participants was not identifiable. This ethical consideration is very important as a participant's privacy is guaranteed, no matter how personal or sensitive the information is. In the case of a participant who agrees to a face to face interview can in no way expect full anonymity and at most the interviewer can promise confidentiality (Kimmel, 1988). The principal means of ensuring anonymity for this study was not to use the names of the participants but instead the use of codes for identifying people and the use of password protected files. Ownership of the data collected and access to the data was retained by the researcher, which was made apparent to the participants prior to the research study and in the obtaining of consent (Cohen et al., 2018). The dissemination of research findings and feedback was offered to participants and provided upon request.

4.1.1 Generalisability

As mentioned earlier, case studies can have limited generalisability due to the small-scale nature of the research (Yin, 2009). Much of what can be learned from a single case may be general, in part through merging knowledge from familiarity with other cases (Stake, 1995). Stake (1995) describes this potential learning as naturalistic generalisations which "are conclusions arrived at through personal engagement in life's affairs or by vicarious experience so well constructed that the person feels as if it has happened to themselves" (p.85). This study assists the audience in creating naturalistic generalisations through ensuring that an opportunity for a vicarious experience is constructed (Stake, 1995). The provision of a rich, thick description of the case, the research methods, and the findings, provides the reader with the opportunity to explore and compare her own context with the research case, and therefore determine if the research findings are relevant to her own situation (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995).

4.1.2 Procedures to maximise validity, reliability and generalisability

Several strategies to establish trustworthiness were integrated in this study. These included member checks, data triangulation, interview training, pilot interviewing, audit trail and cross checking through coding in data collection and analysis, to help inform decisions when corresponding patterns and themes were adequately exhausted. In order to maximise the validity and reliability of the data collection instrument, a pilot test was undertaken. The research procedures and interview protocol were piloted by two former participants from different clubs. The pilot process for the interview schedule was helpful, as it highlighted some necessary minor changes to the structure of the interview guide. The interview guide was reviewed by content and methodological experts in the field of positive youth development, transfer and qualitative methodologies. Expert viewers were tenured academics in social science. Additionally, to assuage power dynamics between the researcher and research participants, as well as to build rapport, several techniques were employed. For instance, the setting in which the interviews took place in was considered very carefully. At the beginning of the first interview, the researcher attempted to build rapport with the research participant by asking about their general experiences of the youth leadership development programme, as well as the researcher sharing her own experiences working with the programme. Similarly, the use of semi structured interviews allowed for an engaging, conversational form of inquiry between the researcher and the research participant (Padgett, 2008).

The trustworthiness of the study was enhanced further, through data triangulation securing multiple perspectives (mentors and participants of the leadership programme) on the same phenomenon (Hammersley, 2000). To ensure reliability and validity a 'chain of evidence' must be provided, such that an external researcher can track through every step of the case study (Yin, 2009). As the case study in this study was carried out in a unique context, principles of validity and reliability were followed in the undertaking of this research such as avoidance of bias and ensuring transparency of findings, supported by evidence and triangulation of data (Cohen et al., 2011). To ensure this, it was particularly important to note the time and place in which the case study data was collected, as many actions and events are context specific and part of a 'thick description'. Whilst case studies may not have the external checks and

balances found in other forms of research, they still abide by canons of validity and reliability for example, construct validity (employing accepted constructions of concepts and terms), internal validity (ensuring agreement between different parts of the data and ensuring findings and interpretations derive from the data transparently), reliability (replicability and internal consistency) and the avoidance of bias (reducing selective data being gathered or data being used selectively)(Yin, 2009). This was addressed by reflexivity, respondent checks and checks by external reviewers of the data, influences and conclusions.

An audit trail (Appendix C) was created which detailed the description of the data collection procedures used, the selection of codes and themes and decision making throughout the study. This is essential for clarifying how the researcher arrived at the results and increases the reliability of the study (Hammersley, 2007). The sampling strategy was appropriate in that it provided a sample of participants who could provide a range of information-rich accounts. The use of a range of strategies in this manner incrementally contributes to the methodological rigor of a study. The researcher maintained a reflexive journal to keep track of her thoughts, feelings, and unfolding challenges as the study progressed. After each interview, reflections about the conversation with the study participant were recorded. Finally, throughout the analytic process, findings, relationships, and tentative speculations were continually discussed with her supervisor and other graduate students during regular meetings to foster critical and theoretical thinking.

4.1.3 Insider/outsider position

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), all human knowledge and experience expressed through verbal accounts is in essence biased. Everyone sees the world through frames of reference which are developed as a result of their possessing particular attributes, or being situated in particular social, historical, geographical, political, religious etc. which, consequently, lead to various and different experiences. Hammersley (2000) states that researchers have to be reflexive in accounting for their own biases, and reflective and enquiring in identifying possible biases in participants stories. Saidin and Yaacob (2016) also illustrate that rather than seeking to pretend that any aspect of research can ever be bias free, it is important to acknowledge bias and indicate where it may occur. According to Sikes

(2006) research projects that are undertaken by people who, before they begin to research, already have an attachment to, or involvement with the social groups in, or on, which their investigations are based, are considered to be 'insiders'. All researchers who investigate social situations are ambivalently positioned, simply because they themselves are social beings. According to Saidin and Yaacob (2016), we are always 'insiders' in some contexts and 'outsiders' in other situations. For this specific study and as noted earlier in the section on positionality, the researcher in this study is an 'insider' and recognises this situational position. As Gadamer (2004, p.274) says "we are our prejudices or our prejudgements, we can't float above them, and indeed they give us both rich insights and once as we bring them to greater awareness, it is not to eliminate them, but to show how and where we support insight and understanding, and where we may be a barrier".

…As the GAA's national coordinator for the leadership programme, I was part of the organisation that ran the programme at a national level but was not directly apart of the club or group locally. The understandable pride in the leadership programme, the validation of the programme and the need to bring a critical eye to the process was important to manage. One such challenge with this situation is 'marginality' that is common in fieldwork where researcher is in the organisation but is not part of it and must balance his or her role between 'familiarity' and 'strangeness' (Hammersley and Atkinsion 1983, pp.97-9). In addition to the management of 'marginality' I was aware that my formal role was quite different to the role I had as a researcher. During this study the review of literature on positive youth development and conceptual models of transfer heightened my awareness of the impact of various models on youth development, particularly in a sport setting. My role as the national coordinator restricted me to work with transmissive approaches of youth development, while my role as a researcher allowed me to explore all kinds of conceptual models and tradition of youth development. Furthermore, as both a researcher and practitioner I wanted to explore if the youth leadership conceptual model deployed in the leadership programme had the potential of transferability of skills into other life domains. With this in mind, I adopted reflexivity by ensuring my own personal views were not communicated to the participants. This involved close monitoring of research reaction that might impact the research and was key to maintaining trustworthiness (Cohen et al., 2011).

As a researcher and national coordinator, the participants may have viewed me as an 'insider' (Mercer, 2007). Although as noted by Mercer (2007), the participants' view of the researcher as an insider can appear along a continuum and that for some topics or interviews, I may have been considered an insider, but not for others. This could have potentially resulted in informant bias where the participants consciously or unconsciously make statements that they perceive to be what I wanted to hear. I was also aware of my position as a doctoral student and therefore the outside 'expert' may have had an impact on power relationships (Mercer, 2007). In order to maintain reflexivity, I was committed to creating a comprehensive and thorough account of the area of study through analysis of participants' views, behaviours, and engagement. Furthermore, I was aware of reciprocity during the interviews in terms of avoiding sharing my own experiences that could influence the participants to make contributions aimed to please me (Creswell, 1994).

4.1.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the methodological approach used, along with the philosophical assumptions underpinning this study. A predominately qualitative case study design was deemed appropriate for this research study. This research design was discussed in relation to its strengths and weaknesses, in addition to how these were addressed. Regarding the aspects of methodological rigour selection, clarification was provided to ensure validity, reliability and generalisability of the research. Ethical considerations were outlined and the data analysis was described using Bruan and Clarke, (2016) six step thematic analysis approach. The final section explored the value of the researchers' insider/outsider positionality stance. The following chapter will detail the research findings using vivid quotes.

5.1 Introduction

The overarching research question guiding this study is as follows:

Does participation in a leadership programme prove effective in the development of four foundational leadership components (i.e., social, and emotional intelligence, collaborate, articulate, insight and knowledge) within a specific community based sports setting and whether participants utilised these skills in other life domains?

This chapter introduces the participants and presents the findings from the case study site. It outlines how Lee and Martinek's (2013) bioecological framework, which is grounded in Bronfenbrenner and Morris's bioecological theory (1998), provided theoretical insights (e.g. learning context, individual learner, time, proximal processes, transfer context factors) into youth development using a socioecological lens, while also helping to guide and explain the transfer process, both in a proximal and distal manner. The report findings are systematically presented within Redmond and Dolan's youth leadership conceptual model (2010) as a framework for skill development analysis. As life skills process involves three interrelated yet distinct stages: (1) skill acquisition, (2) skill transfer and (3) skill application (Kendellen, 2019), the research question is designed around the three interrelated yet distinct stages of the life skill process. For this reason the chapter addresses the research question under the following overarching interrelated stages:

Skill acquisition - through the youth leadership development programme.

Skill transfer - the primary engines of skill development and transfer.

Skill application - to other life domains.

The use of italicised quotes from the narrative interviews throughout this chapter allows the voices of the research participants to be heard.

5.2 Participant descriptors

To confer anonymity, participants were allocated pseudonyms. This is key in qualitative research. The use of pseudonyms allowed participants to be anonymised and yet feel like real people to the reader. It helped the researcher to portray the participants stories effectively and maintain that human element. Each participant's profile is outlined below.

Participant A - Mary was a second level student aged between 15 and 18 when she participated in the leadership programme. At the time of interview Mary was aged between 20 and 22. Mary has been involved with the case study club all her life and played Gaelic football at every grade. She regularly volunteers her time with underage teams.

Participant B - Catherine was a second level student aged between 15 and 18 when she participated in the leadership programme. At the time of interview Catherine was aged between 20 and 22. Catherine has been involved with the case study club all her life and played Camogie at every grade. Catherine regularly volunteers her time to coach younger girls in her old secondary school.

Participant C – Gerry was a second level student aged between 15 and 18 when he participated in the leadership programme. At the time of interview Gerry was aged between 20 and 22. Gerry has been involved with the case study club all his life and played hurling at every grade. Gerry wants to pursue the area of entrepreneurship in the future.

Participant D - Jason was a second level student aged between 15 and 18 when he participated in the leadership programme. At the time of interview Jason was aged between 20 and 22. Jason has been involved with the case study club all his life and played Gaelic Football at every grade. Jason volunteers his time to other community organisations.

Participant E - Nicole was a second level student aged between 15 and 18 when she participated in the leadership programme. At the time of interview Nicole was aged between 20 and 22. Nicole has been involved with the case study club all her life and played Gaelic Football at every grade. Nicole has spent time in an African country helping to build shelters for young people.

Participant F - Dean was a second level student aged between 15 and 18 when he participated in the leadership programme. At the time of interview Dean was aged between 20 and 22.

Dean has been involved with the case study club all his life and played hurling at every grade. He regularly helps out with underage training and school teams.

Mentor A - Joseph is the second (assistant) mentor for the club's leadership programme and was a young volunteer aged between 22 and 24 when the participants were taking part in the leadership programme. At the time of the interview Joseph was aged between 26 and 28. Since a young age Joseph has volunteered his time as a coach and still mentors some of the underage teams.

Mentor B - Diarmuid is the club's mentor for the leadership programme and was a middle aged volunteer aged between 34 and 36 when the participants were taking part in the leadership programme. At the time of the interview Diarmuid was aged between 38 and 40. Diarmuid has committed much of his life to coaching and played Gaelic Football at every grade prior to becoming a coach.

Club Director - Dinny is a middle aged volunteer aged between 44 and 46 when the participants were taking part in the leadership programme. At the time of the interview Dinny was aged between 48 and 50. Dinny is the club's dedicated youth and coaching development officer and during his time with the club, he has coached all grades of hurling from underage right up to senior level.

5.3 Club descriptor

The case study club is based in a large urban area and serves a wide affluent community with a medium to high socioeconomic status. There are two primary and three secondary schools within the area. The club currently has 1,600 club members and accommodates all playing codes (hurling/football/camogie) and age groups from children to adults. According to the clubs' current strategic plan 2018 -2022, the club has a huge history of pride and passion and a hugely dedicated network of volunteers. Collaboration, partnership and teamwork are key values of the club. The club aspires to support all its members to reach their full potential, both as a player and person. It is dedicated to growing and developing its members and inspires them to keep a lifelong engagement with the club. In fact, the club has a dedicated club academy which its motto is 'More than a club… a way of Life'. The aim of the club academy is to develop young people as both people and players from a very young age. As

part of the club's continuing commitment to developing and promoting healthy youth lifestyles, it has a dedicated youth and coaching development officer. Dinny, the club director for the leadership programme, fulfils this role. The role is responsible for ensuring that youth development programmes set out by the executive committee are delivered. This includes the youth leadership development programme (DEYLI).

5.4 Why is the club significant?

Over the past decade, the case study site (the club) has had exceptional leaders on and off the field. This is captured on the club's strategic plans and press cuttings over the last ten years. The intergenerational work undertaken by the club throughout the years is well documented in their policies and procedures, particularly nurtured through the club's academy programme and appointed youth and coaching development officer. The club can trace its roots back to the commitment of volunteers who built and invested their time and energy into producing a fertile ground for positive youth development.

Diarmuid, the mentor for the leadership programme, acknowledged the club's legacy in striving to support youth leadership development

> *…for me it goes back to my teenage years and in the club when I had key mentors who I looked up to… I will always remember them, 5 or 6 key influential people… I now have a sense of duty to give back, as I got so much from the club myself. If you look at a person who is doing the most in the club more than likely they got the most from the club.*

While the club has always had an informal history of leadership development, the provision of the leadership programme allowed this to be offered in a more formal way to young people within the club. Joseph, the second mentor for the leadership programme, recalled meeting a number of the senior players who had just won the All Ireland cup

> *…when I was 13 or 14 years of age, I remember here in the club…they brought the winning cup with them and spoke about leadership on and off the pitch. To this day I remember this so clearly in my head, 40 years on…I want the next generation to*

experience this in a more formal manner, rather than by chance and the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative is an excellent platform to facilitate this.

Jason outlined how the leadership programme provided this formal and unique access to listen and learn from GAA role models he admired

…I remember at the launch night of the leadership programme the All Ireland Winning Captain spoke to us about the highs of All Ireland success and also the challenges of injury setbacks he faced along the way…He is someone I look up to in the club and I learnt a lot about resilience that night.

This supported the view of how the club provides an ideal fertile ground for leadership development and character formation and this was reiterated by Gerry

…because the leadership programme was ran by our local GAA club you already felt a sense of belonging…the intergenerational and leadership qualities are already part of the club… the GAA, leadership and community come hand in hand…it just works.

This was also echoed by Dean

…the club has this environment where it brings along like-minded people. The team environment and leadership qualities are naturally part of the club. Getting to interact with the community through the club, with guidance from our mentors, particularly during the community based action project fostered real growth for me.

In the club's four year strategic plan 2018 - 2022, goal two strives to 'strengthen the community of interest' and it is evident that the aims of the leadership programme are aligned to the aims of the club. The culture and ideologies of the club provide positive influencing factors that offered authentic opportunities and mentor access to practice

leadership skills, encouraging young people to flourish and thrive. Dean captures this when he notes that

> …our *club is so integrated into the local community. After I completed my foundation coaching course, I volunteered to do a bit of management and coaching with the club's underage academy each week. Then I was given the opportunity to do a bit of after school coaching too.*

This suggested that the young people who participated in the leadership programme came in already with a certain amount of leadership skills. However, placing these young people within a formal situated leadership development programme provided a unique opportunity to hone and enhance these skills. Dinny, the club director of the leadership programme, spoke about how the club was ideally set up to lay down formal foundations of positive youth leadership development

> …*it's the perfect setting…the GAA is highly regarded in society and already has a strong sense of belonging within the community. The leadership programme has become a natural part of the club and it's particularly the parents who are in high demand for their son or daughter to do the programme, as they see the difference it makes…this filters down to parents each year as they want their child to reap the benefits too.*

Joseph echoed this, stating how well the leadership programme was received and embedded into the club's ethos

> …*it's regarded as a 'Passage of Rite' in the GAA club. It's a big deal! When the club has its yearly convention, awards night or the development of the clubs four year strategic plan, the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative is strongly presented. Over the years it gained buy in from the management committee, coaches, parents and the young people themselves*.

Mary highlighted why the club was an ideal informal educational setting and the opportunities it brought for social development and formal character formation

…no one else is doing this kind of in-depth personal development and teaching these leadership life skills… in my school the curriculum just doesn't have the time or capacity to do this as its already packed with exam driven material…to be able to add something like this to my C.V is brilliant…it's not just another 'mickey mouse' course it's a level 6 Foundation Certificate in Leadership and Community Action and it's named after the legend Dermot Earley.

As mentioned in chapter 4, the club is situated in an affluent area of high socioeconomic status. The location within the wider community appeared to make a difference as to what 'type' of young person applied for the leadership programme. Dinny, the club director for the leadership programme, identified the young people as agentic high achievers with strong support systems, who are more active in pursuing challenging projects, sharing their thoughts and opinions and willing to take on leadership roles

…over the last number of years, I've noticed that there is this 'type of kid' profile who does the leadership programme...your club captain or county player or high achiever in another area of their life…who have strong support systems…who are confident to go along and do this type of programme and who want to reach their full potential and are very aware of this. They are willing to get out of their comfort zone and challenge themselves at the vulnerable age of 16.

While this was the profile of those who applied to participate from the club, he also noted that…*the programme is advertised to all young people in the GAA club and wider community each term but the young people who may need this type of personal leadership development even more so, such as your non high achiever, may not apply.*

This raises a question about the reasons why some young people do not apply for the leadership programme. It seemed that those most motivated and connected to the programme responded most positively and took their own initiative to sign up for the leadership programme. However, understanding why the leadership programme took hold for some young people more than others merits further investigation.

The GAA club was by far the most frequently cited setting where participants spent most of their time outside home/school/college. Participants were young sports people who were involved in GAA sporting activities, such as Gaelic football/hurling training and coaching. Some participants were more actively involved than others but all of them reflected on their own experiences during the first phase of the interview. All of the participants interviewed started their GAA career at nursery level (under 5's grade) and all playing as adults now (senior grade). Participants noted that their involvement in the leadership programme was the first time they got to socially interact in a non-competitive learning environment, particularly in a setting in which they would be used to competing.

Joseph remarked how the primary and secondary schools in their geographic location were single sex schools. He noted how this reduced the young people's access to social learning and interaction with the opposite sex

> *…at the start of every programme the girls would go one side of the room and the boys would stand the opposite side. Now I know boys and girls divide does happen, particularly at this age but because the schools around the club are single sex schools this has a big influence on the code divide…creating a supportive social learning environment like the one in the leadership programme broke down huge barriers for these young people.*

He went on to say how the makeup of the club grounds amplified this barrier…*they even train on different nights in different locations as we have pitches dispersed around the community, so they rarely see each other never mind socially learn among one other.*

This accidental outcome demonstrated the broader social ecological impact the leadership programme had on breaking down such practical and social barriers for the young people in the club. Catherine echoed this, stating how this logistical challenge contributed to the lack of communal learning opportunities with the opposite sex and how the leadership programme brought another dimension to overcome this

> *…It wasn't quite like going to school or training…I was in a group that wasn't handpicked or with the same sex. I've never been in a social learning environment like*

> *this… with the opposite sex before… only time since was when I started college. A lot of my baseline friends pushed on from my time on the programme and two of the lads are now doing the same teaching course as me.*

The 'type' of young person as mentioned earlier by Dinny was evident in the findings, as all participants at some stage volunteered their time with the club's academy, camps and other after school GAA initiatives, illustrating a high achiever persona. It also highlighted the young people's commitment to the club and wider community. Dean demonstrated this

> *…I did a bit of coaching in my old school, while volunteering in other GAA related activities within the local community. I strongly believe it's important to give back to your club and community.*

These findings showed that the young people drew upon different internal and external resources within the club to support development. This implied that others had confidence in the young people's capabilities and that when they volunteered, they were accepted. This suggested that while the participants were certainly affected by the things they experienced in their environment, they also had the power to exert a change on their situation and circumstances through their own attitudes, values and beliefs. This demonstrated a certain disposition within the young people, such as inherent qualities of mind and character. This showed how the participants enacted self-efficacy and drew on resources through an informal educational practice such as the club. The findings revealed that the agentic young people acted on their environments and life trajectories in thoughtful and purpose-driven ways.

5.5 Mentor access and support

As mentioned in chapter one, all mentors graduated with a Diploma in Training and Education from NUIG. The mentors within this study felt they were extremely supported throughout the training and delivery of the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative. It was apparent from the data that Dinny was impressed with the training and support provided to him.

> *…I felt extremely competent rolling the programme out in my club…it was structured very well to complement the academic year and the content within the programme was hugely thought through. It was professionally ran and the content was very practical and meaningful in all facets of life. As a county games development officer and club youth and coaching officer, the training we received for the leadership programme was the most professional and accredited training I've ever done through the GAA.*

Diarmuid recalled his training days in NUIG and how the experience of delivering the leadership programme influenced his teaching strategies

> *…I felt very competent after the 4-day training in NUIG. There was a lot of content to be covered… I learnt a lot about the way I teach and we left with two big manuals to support us …the way the leadership programme was structured it wasn't like school where it's all lecturing and speaking down to young people…I learnt it's about facilitation and interacting together as one team… that the young people worked better peer to peer and I was just there to facilitate this process.*

The data showed that the young people also felt empowered and supported by the mentors during the facilitation of the leadership programme. It was clear that the young people and mentors developed a level of trust over time. Mary highlighted this growth of reciprocal trust

> *…at the start of the programme when we did the discussion sections, I didn't feel comfortable in sharing my thoughts or challenging other people's views. But the mentors really encouraged us to open up each week and by module 2, I felt so much more at ease doing this.*

The learning environments where young people feel more connectedness to adults and peers are strongly associated with higher rates of trust leading to positive personal development (Stewart et al, 2004). The utilisation of this formal structure and qualification as mentioned above, enhanced learning through increased interactions supported by trust and a shared understanding of common objectives. This paved the way to support real growth and highlighted the importance of trust to encompass and enhance impact.

The teaching strategies used in the NUIG training and leadership programme invited both the participants and mentors to enter a two way dialogue about learning, lending itself to the active process of co-constructing knowledge not only in the classroom but in the real world too. This was articulated by Jason

> …I learnt so much from my peers… I felt module 1 and 2 supported the development of key life and leadership skills and then module 3 provided me with the opportunity to apply these skills into real life situations.

Catherine echoed how this type of relational learning and social constructivist approach gave her the confidence to be herself and provided a safe social space where the learning was a two way process

> …like the mentors would say 'I might not know all the answers, or you might know more than me and we are here to learn from everyone's experience'. I really thrived in this type of learning environment and even though I was very shy at the start, I felt my confidence grew more and more throughout the programme.

Diarmuid the programme mentor perceived himself as a learner in the process and spoke about how the tacit knowledge he gained from this experience benefited him beyond the facilitation of the leadership programme itself

…The skills I learnt along the way were transformative… I now apply them in my job. I work in a gym and I use the lesson plan and the different teaching styles I learnt in the leadership programme…In return, how I approach my clients has changed. In the past I would try to do everything for them but now I work with them and support them to help them change their perceptions around food and exercise.

Furthermore, the involvement of multiple parties and factors in the task of learning within the training and leadership programme deconstructed the hierarchy within the traditional teaching centred model and opened the space up for a more social collaborative learning experience. This social constructivist learning approach highlighted the interplay of behavioural, personal and environmental factors that can influence human behaviour. It was evident that the mentors were paramount to the young people's learning experience. Nicole saw Dinny, who was a coach, a facilitator, and the driver of the leadership programme, as a big role model in her life

…you could see how passionate he was about the programme…he has kept it alive in the club for many years now. My brother was in transition year last year and my mother wanted him to do the programme as she could see much of a positive impact it had on me. Even after doing the programme he still encourages me to use the skills I learnt into other areas of my life…when we won the All Ireland for example, he got me to take the cup to the local school and to stand up and say a few words to the younger girls who looked up to me. He's constantly pushing you to be the best you can be by supporting you to do things like this.

Jason supported Diarmuid's statement regarding how the mentors and programme structure deconstructed the hierarchy within traditional teaching, acknowledging how the mentors didn't make the leadership programme feel like school and how this made him feel more relaxed and open to learn, noting that…*there was no right or wrong answer within the content it was more around developing your personal skills in a practical way.*

Gerry echoed this

…You could see it was non formal so if you wanted to speak you spoke, and if you didn't want to speak there was no pressure to do so. I felt so much more relaxed compared to school…you could see that the facilitators weren't teachers.

This highlighted that the young people were not passive recipients of information and the knowledgeable others (i.e. mentors) had a strong connection with the young people, well beyond the programme itself. It was evident that this connection developed trust over time and continued well into the young people's life. It highlighted the unique position of the mentors and the strong interaction between the mentor and young person.

5.6 Importance of timing

Most of the research participants mentioned at some stage during their interview that the timing of the leadership programme in relation to their stage of life was paramount to the development of these skills. They felt it was the optimal time to invest heavily into their leadership skills, particular as all participants were in Transition Year at the time of programme commencement. Transition Year (TY) is a one-year programme that forms the first year of a three-year senior cycle in many schools. It is designed to act as a bridge between the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes. Due to this the young people felt they had enough experiences learnt from multiple contexts to really engage with the course content. Getting the opportunity to discuss this in an interview provided sufficient time and experience to provide informed responses and examples of successful transfer to other life domains.

Joseph highlighted how important the leadership programme was targeted to TY students and how this was significant for real youth leadership development

…I do believe the timing we did the leadership programme was significant… especially during that critical time in my life, when you are not sure what you want to do…a few years on I can see now, how I have carried those learnt skills to other areas of their life.

Jason also voiced how he felt the leadership programme came to him at the right time as he wasn't sure what he wanted to do in his TY year

> …*the leadership programme definitely came to me at the right time. I was going into TY and I didn't have a clue what I wanted to do but I didn't want it to be a waste year either. Looking back, I can see how it helped me to understand who I was becoming and what I wanted to do.*

The findings showed the significance of time in a number of ways, from the moment-to-moment exchanges that took place between participants, mentors and their environment to interactions that occur over longer periods of time, including how person-environment interactions are shaped by the historical time in which they occurred. Findings showed that time, as well as timing, was equally important because all aspects of Bronfenbrenner and Evan's PPCT model (1998) was thought of in terms of relative constancy and change. This was true when the young people were thinking of formally developing themselves over a nine month period and the type of activities and interactions in which they engaged in.

5.7 Life skill process

Stage one: skill acquisition

Skill acquisition is a learning activity that invite students to collaboratively develop new skills or competences (Cheng, 2015). It is the process of an individual gaining skills on a topic or competence in a certain area using different methods, resulting in a change in the way of perceiving things and behaviours (Cowling, 2000). In an effort to gain a deeper understanding of the research participants' skill acquisition over a prolonged length of time, the young people were asked to describe the skills they learnt in the time they spent doing the programme and provide concrete examples of such skill development. This provided a structure to gain insight into how the young people who completed the leadership programme, developed the four foundational leadership components within the programme, using Redmond and Dolan's youth leadership conceptual model (2010) as a framework for skill development analysis. In the following sections the findings will be presented under each of the four foundational leadership components.

Social and Emotional Intelligence

The key skills investigated within this competency were self-awareness, confidence development and the ability to relate to others, as outlined in chapter two. Stanley (2014) notes that an individual's leadership development and effectiveness can only go as far as the extent to which their personal self-perception is developed. It was clearly evident that self-perception was strongly developed by all participants, and this finding was triangulated with data from the mentors.

Jason recalled how the leadership programme was a starting point for him to openly express his emotions, explore his self-perception and awareness of others

> *…each week we would do small group exercises around the table, this actual table we are sitting at now…mentors would ask questions like name or say something good about yourself and how did this make you feel? Week in week out we would be asked to express our identity and emotions, through the processing phases. This was the first time I had ever done anything like this.*

Dean pointed out how vividly he remembered a particular activity that helped him to understand how to relate to others better, in order to get a group task done

> *…I remember a group activity we did called build the pyramid. I learnt quickly that it wasn't good enough for everyone to go off on their own and do their bit. We had to map out people's strengths like who was the tallest in the group and who was the lightest in the group, so they would go on top of the pyramid. I learnt how to approach them in a particular way to get buy in to complete the task.*

Mary recalled the time she spent developing attributes of self-perception. She acknowledged that the first time she heard of the word 'value' was on the leadership programme

> *…I remember a few activities around understanding values…we did a lot of work on this. This was the first time I heard of the word value never mind understanding what it was. By the end of the programme, I had a really strong set of values which definitely helped me to understand who I was and help build my confidence.*

Diarmuid the leadership mentor echoed Mary's experience by recalling his encounter with the participants and their lack of understanding of values and other self-awareness attributes

> *...in module 1 we did a lot around self-awareness and I remember the evening we introduced the section on values…most of the young people looked at me weirdly, as they never heard of the word or what it meant. We did a lot of processing and personal development work around this.*

It was evident that there was a significant element of growth and collaboration in how the young people perceived and understood themselves and others. The data showed how the fundamentals of youth leadership such as self-perception, understanding your value system and beliefs were developed. There seemed to be a higher sense of social and emotional intelligence after doing the programme, indicating knowledge acquisition took place, under this particular youth leadership competency. This evidence of growth was backed up with clear constructive examples provided by both the participants and mentor.

Collaboration

In young people, developing a sense of community and belonging is vital for personal development (Maslow, 1970). Disenfranchisement leads to early school leaving and poorer academic results and can also impact idealism versus cynicism on participation in society as a whole (Smyth, 1999). Being part of a team that works towards a common goal was a key principle within the leadership programme. It allowed the young people to make significant contributions to society and to see that contribution is valuable and valued. The key skills investigated under this competence were teamwork, problem solving, conflict resolution and decision making. It was apparent that the participants struggled to articulate all of the skills within this competency, with only teamwork and decision-making being clearly constructed in the interview data. Mary illustrated the time she invested into the team project in module 2 and the complicity of working collaboratively with others for the first time

> *…I felt the second module really focused on the development of team building exercises and the outcome was to present our topic as a team. All participants were split into subgroups… you had to work with people who you didn't know personally and that definitely made me come out of my comfort zone. As a group we had to decide what topic we would research on. Then we had to decide on how we would present this in a way people would find interesting…. like whom would do the introduction section, who would do the middle part and so on…*

Jason articulated his journey on teamwork development and how he learnt the principles required to effectively work as a team

> *…teamwork was a big one for me… through the activities on the leadership programme, I learnt if I was good in a team environment. Again, in terms of projects it was up to us to do them, not like school where you had to do it… so each group set their own standards and expectations... you wanted to be the good person in the team and not the person who didn't pull their weight.*

Dean recalled how the leadership programme gave him the opportunity to practically implement the skills he learnt in the leadership programme and how this really enhanced his skills like teamwork and decision making

> *…In module 3 we did a group project on homelessness. We actually did it here in the club. We slept rough down near the pitch for the night and we did a sleep out and raised money for charity. I remember there was a lot of decision making throughout that process and we probably approached it initially with too much of an open mind. Aww, we will be grand kind of attitude.*

He went on to explain in detail the decisions that needed to be made and how more challenging it was when the team had to apply these skills in a real-life situation

> *There was four of us on the team and we relied on each other. In terms of getting stuff together… we had to make big decisions… like what to sleep out on, how to promote what we were doing, who and how would we collect the cash from people who supported us. I got great sense of commitment and learning on how we managed this project in real life.*

From the data findings, there was strong emphasise on the process participants took to work as part of a team and the decisions they had to make individually and collectively along the way. Although the majority of collaboration skills were present in the data, two skills were notably absent. There was a lack of evidence or clear examples of conflict resolution or problem solving provided by either the participants or mentors. This raises a question about the reason for this absence, which will be addressed in chapter five.

Articulation

The key skills investigated within this competency was communication, oral/written and presentation skills and this was one of the strongest competencies developed when interview transcriptions were coded. Catherine verbalised how she learnt the different forms of communication

… I learnt the importance of your body language, tone of voice, how to use your hands and how to sit with someone and the impression of crossing your arms can be a sign of closed communication. Even how you perceive something versus how someone else might perceive something was something I learnt through the role play activities on the programme…

Gerry expressed not only how his presentation skills improved but how he got rid of the anxiety he experienced when it came to doing presentations

…me personally, when it came to presentations or speaking in front of a group, I use to feel my throat drying up and my body getting tense. Even though I'm still not there yet, I got rid of that nervousness around public speaking through the leadership programme. We got a lot of opportunities to practice our communication skills and the more I did it the more I became more at ease. The mentors really believed in me and encouraged me all the time.

This highlighted a deep sense of reciprocal trust among the young person and mentor. This supportive environment was instrumental in overcoming any anxiety challenges. It was evident that the building of confidence took place for this participant to help him overcome the challenges of self-doubt.

The biggest transformative learning moment acknowledged by all the participants was the module two presentations. All mentors and participants mentioned that the presentation section at the end of module two was a key moment and milestone.

Joseph stated how this section of the leadership programme was the moment when all the months of learning and effort came together *…this was the 'showcase' event at the end of module two. Each group had to present their action projects to their family, friends and peers. It was a big deal.*

Dinny stated that participants' communication skills improved significantly throughout the whole programme but most particularly on the delivery of the group presentations. He noted that the formal presentations would be at the top of most participants' learning experience and had a significance for others, not just for the participants

> *…this experience is a massive deal at that age. I remember vividly one of the participant's parents tipping me on the shoulder during one of the presentations and she said, 'who is that young man up there?'. She told me she couldn't believe the transformation in her son. She went on to tell me that her and her son had lost a connection and she said from that moment on, they formed a new bond and that was very satisfying to hear this.*

This accidental outcome revealed the impact of the leadership programme had not just on the young people themselves but family lives and relationships outside the leadership programme.

Dinny went on to recall one particular participant and how he demonstrated improved articulation skills, which was a transformative learning experience for the participant

> *…one young man did some work with a Charity Trust and I asked him to discuss his experience with the group. After the session, the young man came up to me and said he never got an opportunity to speak about anything like that… he got real learning from processing that experience verbally to the group… I could see it was a transformative moment for him and the leadership programme provides these important personal development opportunities.*

Mary summed up her experience, illustrating how she developed all forms of communication skills. She helped paint a picture of what the presentation showcase evening was like for her and her peers

…we were all striving to work towards our group research project, given that presentation was a big thing for every single person on the programme. The room was like a big lecturer hall with raised seats and a podium. It was quite daunting at first. I never came across a room like that before in school or anywhere really. I remember everyone dressed very formal…all the lads had suits on, so it was very professional setting for us all to experience at that age.

She went on to outline who was there that evening and how much she got from this learning experience

…Our parents, friends and clubmates were there. Like doing that presentation in front of them in that setting was a big achievement for me. I got such a good buzz after doing it. I felt I could have done anything after doing that presentation.

Gerry echoed how completing such a task and stepping out of his comfort zone helped him later on in life when it came to doing presentations

…I couldn't have imagined myself speaking to such a big group in such a big lecture hall dressed so formal. This experience has stuck with me now as an adult…I feel now when I have to public speak, I'm okay with it and feel confident in my own ability. Learning to compose myself to speak to a big group in a professional room was massive learning for me.

The statements above demonstrated how an experience like this, conducted in a safe environment, can go beyond just the development of communication skills and can enlighten an individual. All the participants mentioned the project presentation experience as an awaking moment and a very powerful endeavour.

It was clear through the course of the data analysis that this competency was not a prominent topic of discussion. Of the four competencies within the youth leadership conceptual model, this competency was the least acknowledged directly under the skills of critical thinking, ethics, and facts. However, the participants did refer to the development of specific leadership skills in this section and the outcomes of module three. Leadership awareness and life skills development felt like the overall goal of the programme as mentioned by all participants and this was articulated very well in this section of the interview script. Nicole explained how the role play section within the programme was an excellent way to learn the different types of leadership styles

> *…before I started the leadership programme, when I thought of a leader I always thought of the President of Ireland but as I went through the programme, I learnt there are all kinds of leaders in your community as well as famous people. Also, the different types of leadership styles like aggressive and passive…when to use each one depending on the situation.*

Jason illustrated the more he was in a leadership position the more he felt at ease in playing this role
> *…each week one person would have to take the lead on something and everyone got a turn. I started to get more comfortable in this position as the weeks went by. I learnt that everyone is a leader in their own way and there is no right or wrong way.*

Dinny summed up the class of 2016 leadership journey by explicitly stating that when he thinks of an individual who did the leadership programme, the word leader comes to his mind straight away. He provided clear demonstrations of this

> *…if you take one of the girls for example, I know I already spoke about her, but her knowledge of homelessness was incredible. I was really struck on how strong the group felt about this and how they wanted to make a real difference. I also remember how struck I was in terms of their knowledge of mental health and they wanted to organise*

a darkness into light walk. But they didn't just want to organise a walk, they wanted to make people aware of mental health issues and raise money for mental health charities.

He continued to say that what the young people learnt in modules one and two set them up really well to practically roll out these skills in real life situations

…I felt what they learnt in modules one and two gave them the insight, skills and confidence to do module 3. As these were big societal challenges in their lifetime it was something they came up with and wanted to research about. They all wanted to do something meaningful and something that challenged them and for the class of 2016 homelessness and mental health were the big two societal issues.

He recalled how this experience had a lasting effect on one of the participants

…After the leadership programme one of the young lads got involved with the meals on wheels community group and still does at bit at the weekend. This young guy is playing hurling for his county at the minute, so you could see how strongly he felt about this.

Diarmuid also used this opportunity to sum up the leadership journey the young people went on from start to finish

…Every week, month and by the end of the year you could see their personal growth…was phenomenal. Seeing them starting out and being socially shy and that big sex divide, to working together and delivering a real-life practical community project that positively impacts the club and community was fantastic. For them to be put in positions to influence people and to have people influenced by them at such a young age was powerful.

This highlighted the level of maturity and personal growth undertaking by the research participants at the latter end of the programme. However, it was interesting to see participants acknowledging leadership development only examples in this section. It raises questions on the articulation of or naming of insight and knowledge skills within the programme and what the young people understood this to be.

Stage two: skill transfer

The next section explored whether any of the skills learnt in the leadership programme were utilised in other life domains such as sport, home, community, work and college. The research participants were asked to answer these questions specifically relating to their experience on the leadership programme and to use their workbooks and reflective journals to support this process. The young people showed evidence of subsequently applying some of these skills into other life domains which is known as 'transfer'. Lee and Martinek's (2013) bioecological value based transfer model of youth sport programmes allowed the researcher to divide the programme outcomes under proximal transfer (In programme outcomes – changes in behaviour and/or perceptions during the programme) and distal transfer (out of programme outcomes – changes in behaviour and/or perceptions in other settings). During the narrative interviews 50 proximal transfer examples were provided along with 38 distal transfer outcomes. The following sections will present these findings.

Jason clearly showed how he had internalised the different leadership styles learnt during the leadership programme and how he now has a deeper understanding and thinking around this

> …*Doing the programme helped me to understand the different leadership styles and now 4 years on I know what they look like… I can spot them in real life. Like take my coach or lecturer in college for example, if they are overly assertive, I can see people lose a bit of respect for them and if they are democratic like my GAA coach, everyone buys in but they might take a bit longer to make a decision.*

Nicole also showed strong meta cognitive development by expressing how she could align the skills she learnt in the leadership programme to her college placement

…you learn quickly how important these skills are when you're practically trying to deliver something within your club and community. Even with my college nursing placement I remember in the lab you only do things on dummies and when I started my hospital placement, I remember it feeling like the experience I had during module 3 of the leadership programme. For me it was one of those light bulb moments.

She also stated that if you're not given real life practical opportunities to use these skills then this has an impact on the learning

…You have these skills you developed for the last year but you haven't had the chance to really use them, so when you have to go out to placement or execute these skills during your community action project, then this is where the real learning happens… these two experiences were similar for me.

To support this statement Joseph recalled a moment where he saw this heightened awareness taking place

…what the young people like is the articulation and processing phase in each activity and when we dive into this section you can physically see a 'light bulb' learning moment and then we challenge them on their thinking or how they could see themselves using these skills in other areas of their life.

The data analysis showed that all participants reported development, particularly through the experiential learning activities/immersion experiences. Gerry stated that doing this type of deep learning through these learning strategies over a full academic year was important

…I think it was actively learning and doing it every week for a full year that even if I didn't want to learn it, it was kind of instilled in me, in my brain, if you get me…

Mary echoed a similar time as she spoke about the amount of reflective learning, she had to do in the leadership programme and how this was the first time she applied this type of learning

> *…in my college teaching course, there is a lot of self-reflection pieces… the first time I came across anything like this was on the leadership programme. They were like mini reflective journals compared to the ones I now do for teaching practice. We would have our own workbook and we would have to fill out the reflective journals individually each week. I only appreciate now the importance of reflection and like asking myself questions… did my lesson plan go okay or if it didn't why not? This helped me to process what I learnt and make my experience meaningful if you get me?*

It was interesting that when the male participants spoke of the reflective aspects of the leadership programme, it seemed that they didn't enjoy this process as much as the girls did. Jason illustrated how frustrating it was for him each week

> *…Like there was a lot of writing and thinking involved after each session. We be given couple of minutes at the end to fill out questions like how did this make you feel, how would you do that differently… I found this part challenging if I'm honest.*

Diarmuid acknowledged the difference he seen in the boys and girls when it came to filling out their reflective journals each week

> *…one of the things I noticed was the amount of reflection each week and for most it was their first time doing anything like this… I particularly seen the boys struggling with this task, whereas the girls on the other hand, you could see they enjoyed this new experience. It was very interesting to see the code difference but the insight they got from doing this week in week out was phenomenal.*

This raises a question on why there seemed to be a male/female dimension to reflective learning. The data analysis clearly showed that the male participants felt challenged when completing the weekly reflective journaling. For them this seemed to bring a negative internal

response to this metacognitive experience. According to Bennett (1933), critical to metacognition is the ability to deliberately foster a positive attitude and feelings towards your learning. When it came to reflective practice, this seemed to be more of a challenge for the males than the females.

Dinny complemented the teaching philosophies built into the programme and how this positively impacted the internalisation of each skill

> *…the programme content was very interactive…from role play, arts based and reflective practices…each week we would do this type of processing phase with the young people and I felt this helped them to process the learning more effectively.*

Transfer of learning to new or different contexts has always been a leading concern of education because unlike training for a specific job, education must establish skills without knowing exactly how those skills might be called upon (Pavlik et al., 2011). For those reasons research on transfer can be difficult because it is often superficially unclear why transfer occurs or more frequently does not occur, in a particular paradigm. The data in this study showed that the leadership programme had well thought out teaching and social constructivist learning strategies built into its curriculum, to allow the time and space for the internalisation of skill development to occur. This feature which is critical for allowing transfer to happen. It also highlighted and provided clear examples of how the young people tried to reuse the experiences created in the leadership programme and how they could see themselves using these skills and experiences in other areas of their life.

Stage three: skill application

Ode and Ayavoo (2020) note that skill application is associated with knowledge gained and existing background information to help build greater meaning and increase engagement. Thus socially engaged, self-directed learners are better equipped to put skills into action at school, college, home or sport and in the world around them. By providing creative learning experiences that connect to the 'real world', young people can understand the relevance of a task and make it more meaningful. The findings below show how the content and structure within the leadership programme provided this meaningful experience.

The interview data provided evidence of enhanced skill development through the leadership programme. All participants provided examples on how the skills learnt through their experience on the leadership programme transferred and supported them in other facets of life. Even though the research participants were asked to give examples in five settings (Table 5.1), high proportion of distal transfer examples came from sport and college only. Despite being provided with prompts and opportunities, few examples were provided in the community, with none provided in the home. This raised a question as to why this was the case and this will be discussed in chapter five. The two prominent settings where distal transfer was explicitly stated during the interviews, were in sport and college. This section of the chapter documents those results and provides further evidence of transfer of learning from one context to another.

Table 5.1 Number of transfer examples per setting

Transfer outcome	Programme	College	Sport	Community	Work	Home
Proximal	44	0	0	6 examples – In module 3	0	0
Distal	0	17	18	3 examples – outside module 3	0	0

Gerry highlighted some skills learnt in the leadership programme and how he applied this to his sporting life

> *…in sport when I was picked for captain I learnt not to just go in and start shouting at people, like many people would do. For me it was a lot about keep being who I really was, and I learnt this on the leadership programme.*

He went on to outline how the skills he learnt in the leadership programme helped him to understand the different leadership roles required in different situations

> *…I didn't change how I naturally acted because I was made captain. I was trying to do the things I always did, as this is how I got to be selected and picked as captain in the first place. The activities on power and self-awareness helped me to understand this position and transfer it to my captaincy role in sport.*

He also acknowledged how this gave him the confidence and insight into his own ability to fulfil this captaincy role

> *…Keep acting the way you're acting. I learnt some examples when people were loved and respected before they got power and when they got power, they felt they had to act a certain way, and this just didn't work. They were voted in for a reason in the first place. The leadership programme helped me to question this and supported me to be confident in my own ability as captain.*

Nicole stated the realisation that with leadership comes responsibility and how she applied this in real life situations

> *…As I play for the senior county team many of the younger girls look up to me. Going through the leadership programme helped me to understand this responsibility and how to deal with it. The programme already has that legacy piece as the programme*

is named after the great Dermot Earley Senior and I learnt this through the discussions on Dermot Earley himself... Like showing important leadership qualities like leading by example.

This statement shows the longevity of role models and leaders within the GAA and how the participant connected to this. These personal connections and common attributes can foster real, meaningful learning.

When it came to showing the transferability of leadership skills into a college setting, Dean spoke about an experience he had during his college placement and how he was able to apply the same learning outcome from the leadership programme to his student placement

…In the leadership programme when we were doing our group projects, we were always taught to have a backup plan in case something happened. When I'm on observation in a classroom I can now see the importance of this. During my college placement I had to do a lot of planning before I entered the room… one lesson plan can't be used for all students as it depends on their learning need, so in this situation I had to learn how to alter it to suit all needs, for example, if a child is mildly autistic or nonverbal. That sort of leadership awareness is essential as a student teacher.

Jason demonstrated clear transferability of skills when he realised, he could apply the SMART principles he learnt on the leadership programme into his college work

…last semester I had a module on enterprise and the things I learnt on the leadership programme reinforced stuff I learnt on the module. For example, in the leadership programme we learnt about the SMART framework and how to use this when planning our module 3 community action project. I was able to apply this framework to my college module on enterprise and this helped me to make sure I had a structure I could use to develop a full business plan before I spent a single penny.

Another skillset strongly reported throughout the participants time on the leadership programme was communication skills. It was evident that transfer of this skill took place for a number of the participants, particularly in their sporting and college life. Dean highlighted this when he spoke about how his presentation skills improved during the leadership programme, how he got rid a lot of nervousness and how this has given him the confidence to present in college

> *…giving all the presentations we did in college the leadership programme definitely helped me in a big way to communicate better verbally and nonverbally. The mentors taught me that it's okay to feel vulnerable when speaking in front of a big group. One of the mentors said this still happens to him. My first time to experience a formal presentation and to present to a big group was on the leadership programme. I feel the leadership programme gave me a head start when it came to group presentations in college.*

When it came to communication in sport, Jason remarked how his communication skills improved on the pitch, especially as corner back on the senior team

> *…I learnt on the leadership programme how to voice my opinion in a constructive way. When I'm on the pitch and we are learning new kick out strategies I know how to communicate effectively with my goalie. Like for example how we both have our inputs on the kickouts and then we develop a communication strategy that works for us both to win the kick out. We learnt a lot about two way communication on the leadership programme.*

Joseph confirmed this development made by Jason, saying how he saw this improvement first-hand

> *…I see him now back playing in the half back line with the senior team and the transformation is unreal. The dressing room chats now with him is great. He's well able to communicate more and has the confidence to back it up. He's after coming out of*

his shell and he's not the 'shy' one anymore. You can just see he's done some personal development work on himself, even the way he's able to hold himself in a dressing room or during a match.

Nicole stated how she now knows how to speak to her teammate in a more constructive way

…I feel I can communicate better on the pitch and particularly at half time. In the leadership programme I learnt the different approaches on communication and I now know when to pull someone aside to talk to them or say something at half time. Or even on the pitch I find I communicate more effectively when I need to tell teammate to track a player.

Teamwork was strongly reported with strong transference examples provided in the participants sporting and college life. Catherine vividly recalled the social gains she developed in the leadership programme and how this stood to her in college

…when I went into college, I would say the social side of the leadership programme, and all the group work stood to me big time. I didn't know a single person in my course so that experience of not known many people when I enter a programme stood to me. When it came to college, I felt that previous experience on the leadership programme helped me to be more confident working in groups or with people I didn't really know.

Teamwork is a core element of sport and Mary showed how her teamwork skills transferred onto the pitch and how she applied her delegation skills learnt in the leadership programme into her sporting career

…before I did the leadership programme, I thought I always had to take charge of everything and whereas now I'm much better at delegating… I learnt I needed to be more assertive than aggressive…like when I played midfield, I used to think I needed to run all the way up to the other end of the pitch to take a free but now I understand to

strengthen the team I need to delegate more to my teammates to improve more players. So, in that sense I think it has helped me to develop into a better team player.

Jason acknowledged how he applied teamwork skills he learnt in the leadership programme into his college work and the importance of creating ownership within a team dynamic

…in year 2 we had a lot of group projects. Interestingly, I've seen loads of college students drop out of the course due to no prior experience working in team projects. In the leadership programme we learnt to work to people's strengths and a group delegation matrix on how to delegate work and create ownership of this. When I'm in a group scenario and someone isn't doing the work or pulling their weight, I feel I now have the confidence to confront that person is a more constructive way.

To support his opinion Joseph stated that most of the activities on the leadership programme were team based activities. He clearly stated how he seen the different personalities unfold during different group activities

…at 16 years of age you don't get a chance to engage in this type of learning each week for a full year. When the young people are doing a task there could be 4 or 5 of them working together on one task and you can see the different dynamics of the team unfold.

He went on to describe how one participant really benefitted from this type of social learning environment

…One of the girls in the group was a bit aggressive at the start but during the course of the year, you could see she relaxed and became more assertive than aggressive. She acknowledged she was the type of person who just liked to get things done regardless of how she got there. At the end of each activity there was always a good constructive

discussion on things like this, and it was during these discussions that the penny dropped for most.

Dinny voiced his concern about how young people he has worked with don't get access to this type of social collaborative learning before they enter college or the working world

…a while back I spoke to a university counsellor. She advised me that the biggest challenge for students, particularly first years is having to collaborate and work in a team environment and how they're simple not able to because they're not use to this type of social collaborative learning environment.

He went on to describe the negative impact this can have on young people

...As a result, they develop very severe social anxiety. This lack of social learning brings on a lot of anxiety and mental health issues. Young people don't seem to have the skills developed to support this type of learning productively or are unable to take critical feedback.

He added that the type of collaborative social learning applied in the leadership programme, really bridges this gap and sets young people up for college or work life

…the leadership programme is all about collaborating, being able to negotiate who is doing what in a productive manner and understanding people's strengths and weaknesses, while also working on your own self-awareness and developing their leadership skills…They quickly learn this is the way things work in life…it's all part of working as a team so when they are exposed to this situation again with new people, they are equipped to handle that situation. This can prevent the onset of social anxiety or mental health issues down the road.

These examples show how the participants not only learnt the meaning of certain skills but were able to articulate this and now have the vocabulary to discuss what is going on for them as well as the skills to do it. The findings also highlighted the importance for young people to experience social constructivist learning approaches before they enter adulthood and how the experiences through the leadership programme stood to them beyond the programme itself.

Self-awareness and awareness of others, in addition to how this self-perception transferred into other facets of their life was also discussed. Mary acknowledged how much she learnt about herself on the leadership programme and how this self-awareness piece transferred into her college life

> *…when I started college, I felt the leadership programme helped me to understand myself a bit more, making the transition into college a lot easier. I learnt about my character and values and this helped me to understand my identity more. I remember a few activities where we had to look in detail at ourselves and to fill out a long questionnaire and how I could apply my strengths and interests into other areas of my life.*

Catherine spoke about how the leadership programme changed her perception of herself and how she worked with other people and how this had benefitted her now in adult life

> *…as I mentioned I'm an aggressive person by nature and in the leadership programme I learnt why I was like this…I like to get things done. Like in school I would have tunnel vision when I had to complete a task or assignment. Whereas now in college I understand the importance of listening to other people's opinions and taking different views on board. Before I did the leadership programme I would have just went on my own way to do something without even thinking about consulting anyone.*

Dean recalled how leadership programme gave him more confidence, due to the personal development work he did on himself. He felt this really stood to him when he went for an interview

> *…during my college placement I worked in residential care and when I was going for the placement interview, I felt so much more confident in myself as I knew what my strengths and weaknesses were as we did these using the SMART approach on the leadership programme.*

He went on to state how understanding his own strength and weaknesses helped him to fulfil the role when he got the job

> *When I got the role, I felt I was able to understand patients more… for example, when it was appropriate to slag or joke with a patient and when not to and how this could impact them or me. I got great awareness from that experience and felt I applied that self-awareness piece into real life situations…*

Dinny complemented the amount of programme content devoted to self-awareness

> *…I found the introduction on values alone on the programme to be phenomenal. I've done some work on this in schools wearing my life coach hat on and particularly with TY students. Now, I'm not expecting them to know all their values, but I do expect them to name a few and most of them ask 'what is a value'? They don't even know what the word means never mind articulate it. So a lot of young people are living their life right up to their adult years not really known what a value is and what their own values are… They learn what their strengths and developmental areas are and how to put a plan in action to improve those developmental areas… the fact that they really delve in to and learn this sort of stuff is transformative in my eyes.*

Joseph reiterated this point made by Dinny regarding programme content on self-perception

> *…participants learn to be confident to challenge others and not follow the herd. You can see all the young people who do the programme come out with that and you can see and say to yourself, that kids' future is bright. Since 2016, I've seen them grow up from teenagers to fully functional adults. I see huge improvements, such as their articulation skills, a new sense of self-confidence, very charming to meet and speak to and that ability to showcase that extra charisma. You can see they have done huge amounts of personal development work on themselves. I always say to participants at the end of each programme…knowing who you are will help you to know who you want to be, its only after this experience you know what to do.*

These stated experiences showed the longevity and wisdom of the mentors and how they acted as significant role models and educators, creating that scaffolding learning approach for the young people. It is clear the leadership programme increased confidence and insight. It is evident that the club and the participants will reap the benefits for years to come. To date the findings confirm that the life skill process is underpinned by multiple interrelated factors (e.g. learning context, individual learner, mentor access, time, transfer context factors and other social agents). All participants demonstrated strong evidence of life skill development and leadership enhancement over time under the four foundational leadership components i.e. social and emotional intelligence, collaborate, articulate, insight and knowledge. This was back up by clear examples by the mentors. It was clear that all research participants stated that they had grown in some capacity. However, the findings showed some skills (self-perception, teamwork, decision making, communication and leadership skills) developed better than others (critical thinking or problem solving). The two prominent settings where distal transfer took place in was sport and college, with very few examples demonstrated in the community and none provided in the home. Most of the distal transfer outcomes were self-reported by the participant. The reason for this will be discussed in chapter six. The next section highlights some unexpected outcomes from the data.

5. 8 Unexpected outcomes

At this stage of the study it is appropriate to mention the inductive data findings. This included the unexpected experiences, memorable moments, personal fulfilment and lasting friendships the leadership programme brought to the research participants life, within and outside the bounds of the programme itself.

When it came to personal fulfilment Diarmuid outlined why he applied to be a mentor and how he unexpectantly got more out of the programme than he expected

> *…my reason for becoming a mentor was two-fold, I love the idea of coaching and teaching and I also wanted to get as much experience as possible, so when the opportunity came up, I jumped at it. However, the self-fulfilment you get seeing your group grow and flourish is something I wasn't expecting and because of this I loved every minute of it.*

Dean acknowledged how the course brought other unexpected opportunities to him well after completing the programme

> *…having a course on your CV named after the great Dermot Earley has always been a talking point…it seems everyone knew who he was and how well regarded he was in Ireland and abroad. As Dermot's name is associated the with programme people are naturally interested to hear more. I feel it opened many doors for me…*

The name associated with the leadership programme created a strong reputation and prestige, allowing greater connections and opportunities to be made. This unexpected finding also emphasised the mentors' personal self-fulfilment journey and captured how the leadership programme supported ongoing development, helping them to realise their deepest desires and capabilities. The findings revealed the emotional bonds and connections made, not just for the participants but for the mentors too, and how this emotional connection had lasting effects.

Dean expressed how the leadership programme brought him both memorable moments and unforeseen opportunities, particularly when it came to the graduation day in NUIG

> *…I thought the experience of wearing a hat and gown at the age of 16 in NUIG was something really special… it gave me the drive to work hard for fifth and sixth year in school. It made up my mind I wanted to go to college when I finished my leaving certificate.*

Gerry echoed this by stating how much he loved the graduation and if he put in the work, he could go to college sometime in the future

> *…it was a proper college setting like… So yeah, it was cool, and I could see if I put the work in again, I could get myself a degree in the future. Hopefully in something I wanted to do, and it really helped me to visualise this…*

Mary also acknowledged the significance of the NUIG graduation day

> *I can see how beneficial it would be to help people decide what they want to do in life… for me it helped me to aim for primary school teaching and have a proper certificate to show for. When you get an official stamped certificate from NUIG you felt the work you put in was truly worth it.*

Catherine recognised how the graduation day brought not just her course mates together but her club and family together too for a very special occasion

> *…What was even more special about the graduation day was four of us from the programme went up together from the club with our parents and we all stayed in Galway that weekend. So, to have such a special day and to graduate with a Certificate in Youth Leadership and Community Action with four others from your club and their families, to join you is a memorial day.*

These findings demonstrated how the young peoples present self, got to experience their future self in both a positive and motivational way. It inspired them to work really hard after the leadership programme and assisted them to visualise a brighter future. It gave them a sense of belonging well beyond the programme/club walls and made them feel a part of something very special. Sharing this day with family and friends made fond life memories for all involved.

However, it must be noted that not all experiences were positive. The workload and commitments to the GAA itself had been a challenge for one participant on the leadership programme. Mary stated that because she was trying to break onto the county senior ladies' team at the time, she didn't get the full value from the leadership programme

> *…because I was so busy with the county senior team at the time when I was doing the leadership programme, I didn't get to fully complete module 3 the community based action project, as it was coming into the height of the season. This is something I do regret as I got so much out of module 1 and 2. If I completed module 3, It would have benefitted myself and my club hugely, by allowing me to embed them properly. This also led me to miss out on the graduation day in NUIG.*

This showed that this scenario in particular put the young person in a difficult position as it asked the participant to make a very difficult choices between sport and study. Having to choose between two hugely important and equally personal experiences, two facets of the same organisation, caused significant dissonance. Furthermore, challenging something you love and are committed to can cause internal conflict. This can be difficult at a very young age when a young person may feel they do not have the authority to challenge such situations. This highlighted the difficult position the young person was put in and how the association (GAA) as a whole was unaware of the consequences for that young person. This raises a question about the scheduling of GAA activities and merits further investigation.

All the participants stated that the unexpected lasting friendships they made along the way was important to them. Nicole complemented the programme for this

…I made friends for life during the leadership programme. Honestly, when I was 16 I not thinking about, oh I'm developing really important skills here…it's not until now I see how much the programme has positively impacted me and if I didn't get the opportunity to do the programme in the club, I wouldn't have the strong friendships I have today.

Catherine echoed this by saying… *I've made friends through sport but the friends I've made on the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative are truly special.*

Dinny summed up how special this bond was

…the real value is the friendships made. To see a group who were socially and physically divided at the start and are now best of friends and who have become great leaders in our club, community and beyond is incredible. It is something very unique and to have it dedicated to one of Ireland's greatest leader is very special indeed.

These unexpected outcomes brought another dimension to the data findings, allowing the research findings to emerge inductively. The findings highlighted the unexpected opportunities and challenges, memorable moments, personal fulfilment and lasting friendships created along the journey. It also indicated the unintentional influences and lasting impact the leadership programme had on the lives of the research participants.

5.9 Summary

This chapter presented the findings of this qualitative study, using the voices of the participants and mentors involved. The findings revealed that a variety of mechanisms and factors contribute to the development and transfer of key life skills and leadership capabilities. Such antecedents were underpinned by multiple interrelated factors (learning context, individual learner, time, programmatic features, social agents, transfer context factors and other proximal processes). Proximal processes included mentor-peer relationships, connectedness, peer-led learning, mentor rapport, leadership opportunities, real life application, commitment levels, personal reflections and discussions. The leadership programme's high quality content and structure provided empowering opportunities and interactions for the young people that were consistent with the four leadership components. These proximal processes were found to be the primary engines of development to enhance the young people's intrapersonal and interpersonal skills in leadership, teamwork, communication, and self-awareness. While some skills developed better (self-perception, teamwork, decision making, communication and leadership skills) than others (critical thinking and problem solving), the predominant modes of skill transfer found were proximal (in-programme outcomes) and distal transfer outcomes (out of programme outcomes – prominently sport and college). The findings revealed that the young people were producers and products of the transfer process, demonstrating strong willingness to transfer programme components, had positive future aspirations and personal values that aligned to both the club and programme goals.

The findings revealed that the socioecological context in which the leadership programme was facilitated provided supportive conditions and illustrated that the microsystem consisted of the leadership programme, peers and mentors, while the club offered a natural supportive mesosystem. The importance of creating an atmosphere that had strong values, a sense of belonging and authentic opportunities enabled the participants to practice and hone their leadership skills. It was apparent that the knowledgeable others (mentors) were adequately motivated and equipped after their training, to foster a supporting learning environment. This enabled them to create a safe balanced environment for all participants to engage in. The findings showed that the mentors created a 'bringing people together' attitude and implemented a culture of social constructivist learning and knowledge within the club. The

young people seemed to trust that the knowledge facilitated by the mentors was for their personal benefit and at times this trust among mentor and young person was more important than the message itself. This created an atmosphere of trust, safety and strong values. This highlighted the significant role of the club, as well as the role mentors played in cultivating the young people's skill development, environmental factors and commitment to action. It is evident that the combinations of person, context, proximal processes, time and social interplays of the club and leadership programme allowed certain transferability of skills to transition into participants sporting, community and college life. Taken together, findings indicate that life skill, leadership development, and transfer might be most effectively promoted through a multi-systems approach. This study illustrates the complexity of exploring transference through a multiple of underlying factors that are interrelated in the life skill and transfer process. An in-depth description of the interpretation of these findings is provided in the next chapter. The findings are grouped and presented under the following headings 1) participation in the leadership programme proved effective in developing and sustaining the four foundational leadership skills over time. 2) participants transferred skills learned on the leadership programme into other life domains, both proximally and distally. 3) the interplay of environmental conditions and the young person's agency enhanced positive youth development outcomes.

6.1 Introduction

While the previous chapter presented the findings from the data analysis, this chapter, revisits the research question and objectives, interprets the findings to answer the questions and explain the findings in terms of theoretical constructs. The study has three main aims:

1. **Does participation in a youth leadership programme prove effective in developing and sustaining the four foundational leadership components overtime?**

2. **Do the participants utilise these skills in other life domains?**

3. **Does the interplay of environmental conditions and the young person's agency enhance positive youth development outcomes?**

Key findings related to each of the research aims are described in this chapter, drawing out the connections between the interpretation and relevant concept(s) in the literature. The discussion focuses on key findings that were constructed from the data, which were most prominently identified by the research participants in the study throughout the interview process. The first section discusses skill development under the four foundational leadership skills, as well as the unique mechanisms and factors that contributed to transfer. Although the distinctiveness between skill development and skill transfer (four foundational leadership skills) is considered first, due to the co-dependent nature of life skill development and life skill transfer, notable areas of intersectionality between the development and transfer of skills are presented. The next section identifies areas of advancement for Redmond and Dolan's Youth Leadership Conceptual Model (2010) and discusses the interplay of environmental conditions that enhanced youth development outcomes. The last section outlines how the study is grounded in a social constructivist paradigm and the importance of understanding lived experiences.

6.2 Participation in the leadership programme proved effective in developing and sustaining the four foundational leadership skills over time.

All participants demonstrated strong evidence of skill development and leadership enhancement over time under the four foundational leadership components i.e. social and emotional intelligence, collaborate, articulate, insight and knowledge. Growth and skills reported in this study are congruent with positive youth development constructs, such as an individual's effort to think better, build skills better, relate better, understand oneself better and make better decisions. A finding unique to this study is that some skills developed better than others and that skill development does not happen in a uniform manner. For instance, skill development took place in self-perception, teamwork, decision making, communication and leadership skills but little to no evidence emerged of critical thinking or problem solving development. However, all research participants stated that they had grown in some capacity and continuously seek to sustain, maintain and enhance that growth. The following section elaborates on these unique findings, under the four foundational leadership components.

Social and emotional intelligence component

In the context of this study, improvements in self-awareness and the understanding of others were strongly evident. Through the young people's narrative accounts of the leadership programme, it was evident that the research participants understanding of 'self' was developed along with building awareness of how oneself interacts with others to achieve a common goal. The young people learnt how to identify their values and belief systems over the course of the leadership programme. They also developed a deeper understanding of themselves, enabling them to become more confident in their own abilities. The findings highlighted that positive youth development, in particularly in the area of youth leadership is associated with an internal locus of control and a positive social orientation, where individuals believe they can shape their own fate through their own actions (Lerner et al, 2005). Research shows that a leader's emotional resonance with others is a better predictor of effective executive leadership than their general intelligence (Hernez-Broome and Hughes, 2004; Goleman et al., 2002). To lead others one must know themselves well, they must know their own strengths as well as their weaknesses. This study found that when the young people seen

themselves as leaders, it appeared to be linked with better youth development outcomes. This suggests that self-efficacy played an important role which concurs with Bandura's (1977) view that self-belief and self-efficacy are key contributors to being able to carry something through to action, which often determines how well a person does in life.

These findings echo those of Stifung's qualitative study (2003), which found that young people reported an improvement in confidence, maturity and emotional intelligence to create a persuasive argument with others, through a youth leadership training programme. This finding is also congruent with research by Nelson (2010), who found that young people who began to see themselves as leaders developed strong self-perception attributes overtime. This in turn encouraged young people to align their personal attitudes and values to the leadership goals and a desire to have positive future expectations of themselves. Looking beyond the individual, a growing body of literature outlines that microsystems such as a sports club, school or community can play an important role in preparing young people for life success, once the microsystem focuses on the competencies that help young people be more self-aware. This greatly impacts the life outcomes of young people and their ability to thrive (Durlak et al., 2011), as a young person's social and emotional development is influenced by micro conditions, such as their immediate settings, and macro contexts within larger communities and society (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In this instance, the finding confirmed that the microsystem comprising the mentors, peers and the leadership programme was significant in fostering social and emotional intelligence and overall positive youth development. This contextual significance is explored in more detail later on.

Collaboration component

In this study there was emphasis on collaborative learning, with specific skill categories seen as appropriate starting points for collaborative work. The findings showed that these starting points nurtured through practices in collaborative pedagogies were instrumental, such as interpersonal activities, role play, group building skills, interactive debates and presentation skills. The capacity for teamwork to emerge as an outcome of positive youth development has always been important and remains of significant interest in the 21st century (Coakley,

2011). The concept of teamwork and the ability to effectively perform within a group in an authentic way was pertinent and imperative in this study. In team scenarios it was evident that the young people had defined roles or leadership positions and worked with others each week to achieve a common goal. In the context of this study, improvements were strongly emphasised on the processes the young people took to work as part of a team. This was confirmed by the mentors who echoed that facilitating young people to engage in teamwork provided an opportunity to reap the benefits of healthy behaviours while interacting with others.

However, according to Larson (2007) it is no easy task to develop the capacity for team engagement. This was evident in this study as the findings highlighted the transcended process the young people went through to shift away from their egocentric ways towards more altruistic group processes. Piaget (1965) argues that the balance between self and other in peer relationships allow young people to overcome egocentrism and learn how to see things from the perspective of others. The findings in this study supports Piaget's (1965) research as the young people and mentors reported how divided the group was at the start of the programme, particularly the sex divide. One participant stated how she never had the opportunity to socially engage in a learning environment with the opposite sex before and one mentor highlighted how the leadership programme broke down practical and social barriers, while also enhancing relationships outside the programme itself. As the young people progressed it was evident to see the young people moving through the different stages of teamwork, particularly moving from a sense of self sufficiency to collaborative engagement.

One pathway, as modelled by Larson's study (2007), suggests that during the beginning stage of teamwork, many young people approach a situation with a sense of self-sufficiency and distrust of others and therefore choose to work alone. During the second stage, young people begin to learn the benefits of mutuality and the exchange of feedback. They recognise that this type of interaction is helpful for all involved. These principles echo the findings in this study, as the leadership programme helped the young people develop parameters regarding their group level communication, relationships and decision making through the thought provoking programme content and empowering opportunities provided. It was evident

through the interview process that the young people used the word 'we' more and more as a descriptor of their experiences on the leadership programme. This was interesting as the results mapped out the young people's leadership journey as they went from an egocentric way to a more collaborative approach through the stages of teamwork.

Lower, Newman and Anderson (2017) proposed that if young people report elevated individual teamwork skills, they are also likely to demonstrate social competence and high commitment. In fact, life skills such as teamwork and social skills are protective factors predictive of healthy youth outcomes (Newman et al., 2014). The findings in this study support this proposition as the data was found to demonstrate concurrent validity with social competence and commitment, based upon significant positive connections and outcomes. One participant explicitly stated this during his interview and provided a specific example of when four of his teammates working on their community action project demonstrated social competence and high commitment overtime to complete their project, in addition to how they utilised their positive connections within the club. He went on to say how these connects are still strong today leading to protective factors for healthy youth development. This implies that the skills young people need for successful collaborative learning experiences were incorporated into the leadership programme explicitly but also implicitly through their surrounding environments.

Interestingly, there were no clear examples of conflict resolution or problem solving provided by either the participants or mentors during the interviews. While the findings showed that the young people were confident about their own abilities and values after completing the leadership programme, they seemed to be less sure about problem-solving and conflict resolution. Reasons for these omissions may include the following: the young people and mentors were not interested in these particular topics at the time or they were not very relevant at this stage of the young person's life. Another potential reason is they were uncomfortable about discussing such topics like confliction resolution and problem solving. However, there is insufficient data to do anything other than hypothesise. A further study could consider how young people learn conflict resolution or problem solving through the application of different strategies and how this strategy is applied in non-formal learning environments. In the case of this study, a need exists for additional research about whether

young peoples' processes differ when it comes to certain skill development and, if so, how and why. This recommendation will be discussed further in chapter eight.

Articulation component

All of the young people indicated that they developed strong communication skills, such as presentation, active listening, challenging others and speaking with people in authority. This was particularly evident during the development of their community action project. It is not surprising that communication skill development presented as a key finding, as it is a trait of effective mentoring and plays a significant role on the impact of social support on young people (Rhind, Jowett and Lorimer, 2013). Communication skills was the strongest skill to materialise from the findings. Participants reported that their opinion mattered and this was particularly true when they opened up and listened to the opinions of others. Furthermore, they described that if something arose that they did not agree with, even if it they found it difficult to challenge, they would. As time progressed, they felt they were more assertive in how they dealt with others. They had developed an ability to get their point across in a way that was respectful, yet true to themselves. Participants reported that their presentation skills had improved enormously through the range of presentations and discussion groups that they partook in over the course of the programme.

Counter to this, many participants reported being uncomfortable when public speaking. For some, this was down to feeling nervous and anxious that other people would judge them. However, as the young people went through the leadership programme, they felt their communication skills improved, through the group discussions, teamwork activities, presentations and debates. The research participants reported that they had more opportunities to express themselves, which meant they became more comfortable communicating with other people. As they progressed through each module, they had opportunities to communicate with their peers to people in authority to experts. While some participants found presenting quite nerve racking, all research participants reported feeling their communication skills had significant improved from their first attempt at presenting. These findings are supported by research from Jowett and Passmore (2012), who found that

communicating openly supports the development of effective communication skills and helps build stronger relationships.

This assertion is particularly interesting in the context of education, as all young people in this study are now in third level education. One participant in particular stated how he had witnessed a high dropout rate in year one of his college course as many young people in his course had no prior experience of working collaboratively e.g. delivering group presentations or working together to complete an assignment. This statement was supported by the programme director who stated that from his experience, young people go through life right up to adulthood without any experience of this type of learning. Interpersonal communication skills are believed to be greatly influenced by social interactions within young people's environments, which emphasis bidirectional influential relations between developing young person and their context (Rhodes et al. 2006). Swain et al., (1997) found that young people develop severe social anxiety, leading to mental health challenges and high dropout rates in the first year of college. Furthermore, Tinto (1996) states that colleges and universities continually look for ways to enhance retention, particularly from first to second year. Tinto's study is significant to this study because it fills a gap between what is known about skills acquired (i.e. communication skills) in youth programmes and how skills learned in a past context can influence an experience in a future context. The camp experience in Tinto's study can serve as a platform for acquiring skills that supports a student's transition into college. Tinto speculated this possibility, noting "It is understandable, for instance, that persons who have acquired skills in coping with new situations or have had past experiences in communicating effectively and making similar transitions seem to have less difficulty in making the transition to college than do other students" (Tinto, 1996 p.4). It was clear in this current study that the young participant's made friends, built and maintained relationships, and developed social and communication skills overtime. These skills transferred and influenced the students' transitions to college. This paper contributes, in addition to Tinto's study, to what is known about social and communication skills learned in youth programmes and those same skills used to persist in college.

Insight and knowledge component

The findings in this study illustrated that the headings insight and knowledge were not a leading topic of discussion. Of the four competencies, this competency was the least acknowledged directly under the skills of critical thinking, ethics, and facts. However, the participants did refer to the development of specific leadership skills and their increased knowledge and awareness of leadership. Reasons for this exclusion may include the following: the young people and mentors did not understand what was meant by those particular topics or they were not very relevant to them at this stage of their life. Even though they had the opportunity to discuss each component or look for explanations they did not do this. Therefore, there is insufficient data to do anything other than hypothesise.

However, what they did speak about was as the leadership programme progressed, they reported that they were more willing to put themselves forward for leadership positions and actively sought leadership opportunities. For example some young people took on leadership roles within their club and community, through the community based action project, such as running a GAA academy camp for the younger people within their club. MacNeil (2006) claims that young people's active engagement can help them develop self-esteem, confidence, and essential social and intellectual skills and can provide an important foundation for future civic involvement. Some learned valuable skills in understanding and believing they could take on leadership roles and were increasingly confident to actively seek opportunities to develop those skills. All participants and mentors reported that they were in a stronger position after being involved in the leadership programme. For some they described this as a profound personal change.

The findings in this study revealed that once the young people were put on a youth leadership pathway, including self-belief and self-efficacy as a leader, they continued to use their leadership skills, seize opportunities and gain positively. They also reported the ability to point out different leadership styles in leaders and how they had developed the necessary skills to identify and manage those situations. However, one participant did acknowledge that with leadership comes responsibility and how to manage those responsibilities in a productive way was challenging. These findings have similar resonance with the qualitive study by Bloom et al. (2008) which found that young people demonstrated improved social skills, leadership

skills, and an expanded sense of community responsibility through a youth leadership development intervention.

Learning leadership happens experientially, through involvement in opportunities to practice the skills, experimenting with approaches, and trying on the role of leader (MacNeil and McClean, 2006). The findings in this current study echo this claim. A fundamental tenet of the leadership programme was to learn by doing, particularly in the area of youth leadership. As the young people went through the leadership programme, they got more opportunities to experiment themselves in leadership positions and ultimately got to lead out on a real life project they were passionate about. This may happen in formal or informal experiences but needs to occur with intentionality. According to MacNeil and McClean (2006), to be most effective at supporting youth leadership development, it is important to identify or create more authentic opportunities and supportive environments for young people to practice leadership skills.

6.3 Participants transferred skills learned on the leadership programme into other life domains, both proximally and distally.

The findings of this study showed that the process of transfer of key skills is underpinned by multiple interrelated factors (e.g. the learner, the learning context, programmatic design features, quality programme mentors and other contextual and social agents). The predominant modes of transfer were divided into proximal transfer (in-programme outcomes) and distal transfer (out of programme outcomes). Even though the research participants were asked to give examples in five settings, a high proportion of distal transfer examples came from sport and college only, despite being provided with prompts and opportunities. Few examples were provided in the community, with none provided in the home. The findings in this study are unique as certain core proximal processes incorporated into the leadership programme became the primary engines of development. These proximal processes included a combination of programmatic design features, including the consistency of the four leadership components, a social constructivist learning approach, the interaction

with knowledgeable others (mentors), a trusted and fun network of peers, personal reflections and real life application. These unique mechanisms and factors are discussed below.

Unique mechanisms and factors that contribute to transfer

When we look at the term transfer itself, it suggests a simple pattern of learn-it-here, apply-it-there. However, some researchers (e.g. Lave, 1988) emphasised that transfer should be viewed far more broadly. A broader pattern of transfer is the direct application of an explanatory concept to new instances far removed from the initial learning (Perkins and Salomon, 2012). Interestingly, most examples of distal transfer in this study were seen to operate in a more proximal manner, contingent on a match or high level of similarity between elements in the initial learning and subsequent transfer setting. Furthermore, Schwartz, Chase, and Bransford (2012) contrast routine transfer with adaptive transfer, which involves not just applying but adapting and revising prior knowledge in the context of transfer. This view resonances with the findings in this study, as the participants reported on a number of occasions on how they revised prior knowledge they learnt on the leadership programme and how they adapted this learning into their college, sport and community life. For example, one participant demonstrated how she developed key communication skills by using prior knowledge learnt on the leadership programme and how she applied this new enhanced skill into her college presentations. Another participant illustrated how he learnt how to manage people who did not pull their weight when doing a team project, and how he was able to manage this situation more effectively in college. This proved that both behavioural and skill development occurred in other settings outside the leadership programme. However, when it comes to failure of transfer, Chi and VanLan (2012) state that one of the most prevalent explanations for this is superficial initial learning. This happens when learners do not achieve a sufficiently deep understanding of the content in the first place. Such cases always allow an alternative description – 'they weren't failures of transfer but failures of initial learning' (Perkins and Salomon, 2012 p.254). This view might explain why some areas were not mentioned by participants in this current study e.g. insight and knowledge.

The product of deeper learning is transferable knowledge including content knowledge in a domain and knowledge of how, why, and when to apply this knowledge. Pellegrino and Hilton (2013) state that the competencies are structured around fundamental principles of the content area and their relationships rather than disparate, superficial facts or procedures. It is the way in which the individual and community structures, organises the intertwined knowledge and skills—rather than the separate facts or procedures per se—that supports transfer. While other types of learning may allow an individual to recall facts, concepts, or procedures, deeper learning allows the individual to transfer what was learned in one setting and apply this learning into a new one. Deeper learning is defined as the proximal process through which an individual becomes capable of taking what was learned in one situation and applying it to new situations (i.e., transfer) (Pellegrino and Hilton, 2013). This claim is supported by the findings in this current study. The leadership programme was structured around the fundamental principles of the four foundational leadership components but rather than just providing facts and procedures it went much deeper into relational and social learning while providing the opportunity to learn by doing. Furthermore the leadership programme allowed transfer to happen as it moved the young person from module one to module two and then finally utilise their developmental skills in a real life project, allowing them to apply their learning into a new situations. Having this experience seemed to allow transfer to happen distally in predominantly college and sport settings, operating in a more proximal manner from the initial learning context.

Additionally, this study is distinctive as the interplay of environmental conditions, the young people's agency and the meso-time (9 months) in which the leadership programme was facilitated in, were shown to have significant positive impacts. This aligns to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) four defining properties of positive human development: person, context, process and time. In general, greater intensity (hours per week) and longer durations (consistency across months) of participation in youth development programmes are found to anticipate positive youth development outcomes. According to Bronfenbrenner (1998), for effective skill development, the interaction must occur on a fairly regular basis over extended period of time. Bronfenbrenner (1979) states that to adequately describe the dynamic nature of human development, proximal processes must be understood with reference to the fourth defining

property of development, namely, time. This was the case in this study. It was evident that proximal processes occurred in a specific time and place and within a specific cultural context.

The individual learner

According to the ecological perspective of human development, young people are agents of their own development (Lerner, 2005). Young people are more than passive recipients of external influences; instead they are actively involved in shaping their development by interacting with the people and opportunities made available within their environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The findings in this study indicate that the young people's awareness of transfer possibilities were heightened. It was evident that elements of meta-cognition took place within the leadership programme and that the young people's cognitive developments enhanced throughout the process. For instance, Joseph recalled a moment where he saw this heightened awareness taking place. He could see his fellow participants having a 'light bulb' moment when they were challenged on their thinking or how they could see themselves using these skills in other areas of their life. This finding confirmed that the young people assumed ownership of their learning and were producers and products of their own learning throughout the transfer process. This connects to a key tenet of Bandura's social learning theory (1977) in which he states that, learning is not purely behavioural, rather, it is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context. He notes that learning can occur by doing, observing, extraction of information from those observations, and making decisions about the performance of behaviour.

In the context of this study, the data results show that the young people on the leadership programme had the motivation and confidence in their own ability to apply these skills in other settings. The term 'confidence' was consistently used by the mentors suggesting a heightened level of self-efficacy and positive future aspirations among the young people. The findings suggested that the young people on the leadership programme had the confidence in their own ability to apply these skills in other settings. The young people demonstrated a positive disposition, displaying inherent qualities of mind and character, drawing upon different internal and external resources within the club to support development. This finding supports Hodge, Danish, Formernis and Miles (2016) claim that young people must have the

confidence to internalise life skills to develop and transfer them, which may occur implicitly or explicitly, while educators and coaches' characteristics and teaching strategies can also influence (Gould and Carson, 2008).

The data in this current study demonstrated that the agentic young people acted on their environments and life trajectories in contemplative and intentional-focused ways. For example, one mentor mentioned that a 'certain type' of young person seemed to apply for the leadership programme, "*an agentic high achiever who wasn't afraid to challenge themselves or come out of their comfort zone. They seemed to be young people who wanted to reach their full potential*". This was illustrated by the young people themselves when they showed their capabilities to volunteer in their club and local community. However, this raised a question in trying to understand why the leadership programme took hold for some young people perhaps more than others. This question is an important one and further research is recommended to see if those most motivated and connected with a programme or context is most likely to respond positively.

The findings in this section showed that the young people were active in structuring and extending their own learning, particularly when they had to take on leadership roles. As the leadership programme took place in a context in which the young people were naturally motivated in, this seemed to have an impact on mindful disposition when it came to bridging connections to aid transfer to other contexts. Motivations and dispositions play a key role in all three aspects of the detect–elect–connect framework (Perkins and Saloman, 2012). According to Engle et al. (2012), it is not whether significant transfer of learning can occur but under what conditions of learning. Teaching for transfer ideally not only prepares young people to figure out what has been learned but how it connects to new situations. One needs to be motivated to do so or have a general mindful disposition to look for possible bridges. The expansive framing of teaching/learning advocated by Engle et al. (2012) makes what is learned much more meaningful in a broad range of circumstances and therefore more meriting of attention. Engle et al. (2012) emphasises the meaningfulness and usefulness of what's being learned and its potential to relate to a range of other circumstances. This supports Belenky and Nokes-Malach's (2012) contemporary empirical work on the motivation-transfer-relationship, which instead demonstrates motivation can have a large

impact on skill transfer. This naturally puts learners in a better position to detect opportunities for transfer. They include cultivating expectations that what's being learned will speak to related settings; treating previous learning as continuously relevant; treating the use of prior learning as desired socially; and, broadly speaking, encouraging young people to see themselves as the agentic young people of their own learning and skill development.

The findings in this current study indicate that dispositional characteristics, such as motivation, individual values and beliefs influenced the transfer related processes of the youth leadership programme. Findings indicated that the young people were naturally motivated by the setting the leadership programme took place in. It was evident that the club's values and belief systems aligned to those of the young people. This cultural capital was extremely important to influence the transfer related processes and allowed the young people to have positive future aspirations. The graduation day demonstrated how the young people's 'present self', got to experience their 'future self' in both a positive and motivational manner. It inspired them to work really hard after the leadership programme and assisted them to visualise a brighter future. It gave them a sense of belonging well beyond the programme/club walls and made them feel a part of something special. This finding congruent with the examination of young people's efforts to transfer TPSR program goals (e.g., respect, effort, and self-direction), Lee and Martinek (2012) found that the individual played a role as an active transfer agent. Young people who had positive future aspirations and a high level of confidence placed more emphasis on programme participation and took the initiative to apply this knowledge to other settings. In addition, participants were more willing to apply this knowledge when their personal values and beliefs were aligned with that of the programme. This highlighted that personal characteristics were precursors to the willingness to transfer programme outcomes (Lee and Martinek, 2013). The mesosystem in this study allowed young people the time and space to detect meaningful and motivational authentic opportunities for deeper learning that in turn helped them to pursue their own interests, needs and objectives. This supports the proximal manner of distal transfer in which a high level of similarity between the leadership programme and subsequent transfer settings took place in, such as college presentations, team talks, leadership positions and community projects. It was clear from the findings that, once interest was sparked by the young person, learning opportunities were

capitalised on in different contexts. This highlights that the young people were committed and motivated learners with a high sense of self efficacy.

The findings in this study also highlighted the broader social ecological impact of the leadership programme on breaking down practical, gender and social barriers for the young people. Both mentors and participants stated how the logistical challenge of both the single sex schools and club grounds contributed to the lack of communal learning opportunities with the opposite sex and how the leadership programme brought another dimension to overcome this …*It wasn't quite like going to school or training…I was in a group that wasn't handpicked or with the same sex. I've never been in a social learning environment like this… with the opposite sex before… only time since was when I started college…*

Reflecting on the education system in Ireland, the number of single-sex schools is relatively high by international standards, which is regarded as a legacy of the denominational control of the education system and increased gender discrimination in school admissions. About 17 per cent of all primary schools in Ireland are single-sex, while about a third of secondary schools are either all-boys or all-girls (Department of Education, 2022). While some still believe that single sex schools perform better academically, researchers say otherwise. Smyth (2010) found that there is very little consensus on whether single-sex education is advantageous to the overall academic achievement of girls or boys. On average, single-sex schools tend to be in more affluent areas is a bigger factor behind the perception that they are academically superior. Interestingly, the Department of Education policy in Ireland has not sanctioned a new single-sex school in 24 years and since then the view of the department is that any new school has to be co-educational.

In light of social justice matters (e.g., systemic oppression, gender inequity) that have led young people in many countries to stand up for change, Camiré et al. (2012) states that there is a need to explore how positive youth development and life skills can be reimagined in order enhance youth development research. This is particularly important in community based sport settings, as they can be better positioned to promote dialogue and action on social justice issues in young people. In a society where greater emphasis on gender mix in politics, sport and business has accelerated, having single-sex schools makes it harder to break down barriers to gender equality and system oppression. Contriving a scenario where

young people do not learn side by side isn't reflective of society, particularly as young people enter third level education. The findings from this study shines a light on these particular situations. A further study exploring this relationship and the broader social ecological impact the leadership programme had on breaking down such practical, gender and social barriers for the young people is recommended. In additional to this, as the leadership programme seemed to attract a certain type of character and persona of that of a strong, determined young leader, further studies on whether this type of leadership programme attracts a certain type of profile would also be insightful.

Perception of similarities

The findings in this study showed that the young people were able to retrieve skill development from the leadership programme from both their memory and their perception of similarities. Interestingly, Resnick (1989) shares a view that cognitive strategies for transfer must interact with motivational, emotional and social aspects of a person's life. This suggests another explanation for both proximal and distal transfer outcomes found in this study. The data shows that there was strong interaction between the young people's self-efficacy, motives and social interplays of the programme setting and within the club environment itself. However, Gick and Holyoak (1980) found that retrieving from memory can only occur when indications are given. Cognitive strategies such as elucidating possibilities to transfer from one community to another is a central task of transfer. Situated learning approaches claim to achieve exactly this function, in the way of increasing the probability of successful transfer.

Interestingly, the bridges of detect, elect, and connect as used in Perkins and Saloman (2012) three bridge framework, seemed to be in place. For instance, participants illuminated the mechanisms of detect-elect-connect clearly by stating how they detected a possible link from the leadership programme, elected to explore this, and connect this learning to another context. On other examples, participants reported in detecting an opportunity, elected to pursue it, and connected a scenario from the leadership programme to a new setting. For example, two participants spoke about detecting an opportunity when it came to self-reflection practice. They stated how they made the connection between the first time they

came across this type of learning on the leadership programme and elected to use this prior knowledge and skill to their college course. This provided evidence of perception and behavioural development through experiential learning, reflective practice and immersion of experience, leading to a distal transfer outcome. This finding supports Lee and Martinek (2013) study which states that each context can affect the linkage to the goals and values of youth development programme in complex ways. In order to understand the transfer issue more clearly, it is important to be mindful of the various life experiences young people have in a variety of settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). While the findings in this study indicated that many experiences occurred during the leadership programme, the young people did mention on very rare occasions, how their lived experiences in other life domains contributed to their development. Thus, findings from this study support what Pierce and colleagues (2017) claim, that life skill development and transfer are ongoing, holistic processes. Moreover, the mechanisms and factors that contribute to the development and transfer of life skills are interconnected, dynamic, and cyclical in nature. In other words, learning related to development and transfer does not occur in isolation or during a single time point. These multiple contexts can consistently or inconsistently support youth development and leadership values. In the case of this single site phenomenon it was clear that the club's ideologies and values aligned to those on the leadership programme, provided an enhancing nurturing ground for growth. This sense of relatedness allowed the young people to feel connected and reflected upon similarities, which influenced their willingness to learn and transfer their skills.

However, Gordon and Doyle (2015) argue that transferring life skills to 'far' contexts might be more challenging. In fact, Pierce and colleagues (2018) demonstrated that the dissimilarities between sport and the classroom hindered life skill transfer. However, findings from this current study provide evidence that the young people, did in fact, perceive themselves as being able to transfer skills to 'far' contexts, such as college. Therefore, the types of opportunities afforded to young people in other contexts, which require the use of life skills, may help to promote transfer. Specifically in situations where young people are held accountable for responsibilities such as completing a college presentation, performing a group task and engaging with other social agents in a prosocial fashion.

Individual knowledge and experience

At this point of the discussion, it is important to be mindful of the numerous life experiences young people have in a variety of contexts such as peers, school and family. Pierce and colleagues (2017) put forward the claim that young people enter activities such as sport, with existing personal knowledge and personal experience that can influence learning. Even though the young people in this study were asked to only give explicit learning examples from their time on the programme, the findings support the claim, that the young people had previous experience of life skill and leadership opportunities, allowing them to further develop as well as transfer those skills. Lee and Martinek (2013) claim that pre-existing skills of young people, mediate the processes of life skill transfer. Supporting this notion, findings demonstrate that if young people possess previous knowledge of life skills, they may be more capable of transferring them to other contexts and situations in the future. However, Lee and Martinek (2013) also argue that, while "most youths possess life skills in various degrees…living in poor conditions often compromises these individual qualities" (p. 303). In agreement to this claim, findings from this study showed that young people in the study, who came from an affluent area, had good knowledge about life skills and transfer possibilities, through critical life experiences. Particularly through the club's structures, which represented valuable learning experiences. As a result, the capacity for working with peers needs to garner our full attention both as an end and a means of positive youth development.

Programmatic design features

In this study it was evident that the essence of the leadership programme was to empower young people to work together as a supportive learning team, through small group tasks, modelling, independent tasks and hands on discovery projects. Dinny the programme director complemented the teaching philosophies built into the programme and how this positively impacted the internalisation of each skill. He clearly alluded to the interactive role plays, discussions, processing questions and reflective practices, in addition to how these programmatic design features helped the young people to learn more effectively. It was through these approaches that the young people were given the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding and to challenge their way of thinking.

Drawing on the insights of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979), which offers an understanding of the casual multifaceted pathways, this knowledge application between various factors and positive youth development can guide the planning and design of positive youth development interventions. Furthermore, the leadership programme provided young people with the opportunity to utilise these skills into real life projects. Applying this type of knowledge through common language and personal connections like those supported in a community based sports club makes for meaningful learning to last. The findings in this study indicated that the young people's skills and capabilities of the four leadership components were greatly enhanced by authentic social interaction, reflective practices, experiential learning opportunities and collaboration, allowing a deeper learning to take place.

In the findings it was reported on a number of occasions, that the programme content was interactive and used a social constructivist learning approach. These multiple social situations allowed the participants learning to embed into the activities, culture and setting. Over time, it allowed the participants to acquire skills (particularly leadership skills) from an entry point to a mastery point, particularly through the stages of social interaction, mentor access and real life application. This is most evident in the example from Mary when she reflected on a time prior to the leadership programme when she got very nervous addressing her teammates before a match. When she delivered her group presentation at the end of the leadership programme, she felt the personal development journey she went on through the weekly social interactions and having access to supportive mentors for a full year. This really helped her to present her final project with more confidence and execution. Furthermore, she went on to give an example of how she applied this communication skill in real life by outlining how she was asked to go to her local school two years later by the programme mentor, to speak to a group of girls, She provided a clear example of how she was able to enjoy the experience much more while also executing her presentation in a more self-assured way. In the context of this study, real world content, elucidating guidance and opportunities seem to develop the young people's capacity to transfer skills to other life domains. Moreover, Rogoff (1991) emphatically claims that both formal instructions and informal social interactions are essential for bridging the old and new contexts. Other features include the

importance of routine activities, tacit as well as explicit communication, supportive structure of young people's efforts and transfer of responsibility for handling skills in real life situations.

It was evident that the leadership programme in this current study was structured around the fundamental principles of the four foundational leadership components and their relationships rather than learning just the facts and procedures of them. The content went further, supporting the intertwining of knowledge and skills to happen through the inclusion of a "practice" dimension, allowing all the young people to actively use and apply these skills – i.e., to transfer skills. The young people reported that their community based action project allowed them to use similar skills that they learnt in the leadership programme and apply the same skills to achieve their goals, whether in college, sport and community. This showed that the young people not only developed proximal transfer (in-programme) outcomes but also distal transfer (out-of-programme) outcomes. This level of real life leadership experiences placed the young people as community-integrated resources and intensified the young people's transferable skills. This ensured that young people not only had the chance to apply the skills they learned in the programme in a variety of settings but learn more about their community as well. Research suggests that this kind of community engagement, along with programme peer teaching, can both enhance the participants' self-confidence and facilitate the transference of programme skills to specific settings (Petitpas et al. 2005). This offers an explanation as to how and why these skills developed, including the social environment and context in which learning commenced. It was evident that the context in which the leadership programme was delivered was an optimal fertile ground for positive youth development, and that the mentors created an optimal learning and social environment for learning and transfer.

Programme mentors

The programme mentors who were especially influential were described by personal characteristics of being fun, friendly and encouraging. Moreover they were described as being positive to be around, and the young people indicated that they wanted to spend time with them. This provided additional opportunities for the development of life skills and transfer. Specifically, the young people discussed the explicit and implicit strategies of the programme mentors that uniquely contributed to their development and how they provided motivation and support and were seen as role models. This study highlights the importance of trust between participants and mentors. This enhanced better outcomes for activities and discussion groups and seemed to be critical to the effectiveness of the group as a whole. Furthermore, there seemed to be a level of trust built up during the initial learning period. This trust refers to trust with the organisation (the club), trust with the mentors and trust with the peers within the leadership programme. Having a trusted network of supports offers young people the sense that they belong and that they are important, something that Maslow (1962) highlighted as central to positive youth development. This form of social capital is instrumental in identifying external sources of knowledge through these networks (Hanson, 1999). The interview schedule did not explicitly have a question about trust but unprompted responses from the participants inevitably indicated this.

The trust between the young people and mentors was also viewed as essential because it increased the ease of knowledge flow between both. This trust was fostered through regular interactions, connectedness, consistent content and providing a safe and supportive environment. According to Rogoff (1991), trusted peers who serve as resources for one another in exploring a new domain should challenge and help each other. Trust in mentors is positively related to advice taking (Bonaccio and Dalal, 2006), which implies a higher probability of implementing new knowledge to another community setting. This is supported by Sewell et al, (2014) who state that the development of an honest, objective, mutual trust based on interactions with peers and mentors are important to cooperatively identify connections to allow for transfer to happen. However, in contrast Morris et al. (2017) states that poor and inconsistent advice and support can restrict the ability to achieve impact and lower the confidence of the young people. In this case, the mentors provided a great sense of belonging, playing a powerful role in creating authentic interactions, cooperation,

opportunities and common beliefs. McManus et al. (2012) states that a sense of belonging and common beliefs are positive attributes of local communities and empowers young people to continuously strive in life. The nature of the relationship between the mentors and young people is important and a study to explore if this relationship varied over time would be insightful. This research could highlight more factors that drive impact and that can harness future strategies to achieve transfer.

It was evident that the mentors supported and encouraged the young people to transfer their skills learnt in the programme and that the young people's perception of support for transfer was also identified. Catherine outlined the importance of one of the mentors on the leadership programme, who was also a lifelong volunteer in the club and how he constantly supported her well beyond the completion of the leadership programme. She stated how this mentor helped her to gain these opportunities outside the programme and encouraged her to adopt a better understanding of how to transfer these skills, while supporting her from a distance. This finding supports Rogoff's (1991) claim regarding guided participation, in which an active learner participating in culturally organised activities with knowledgeable others, as an important means to enhance transfer. Furthermore, the findings from this current study make inherent sense as previous research demonstrated that community sport based positive youth development programmes that are characterised as being fun and promoting a sense of belonging are often associated with life skill development (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2014; Bean & Forneris, 2014). Moreover, Bridgeland et al. (2013) forwarded that programming related to social and emotional learning should be grounded in supportive relationships that make learning engaging and meaningful.

However, according to Jacob and Wright (2018) it is important that mentors are encouraged to adopt an explicit focus on helping young people learn to transfer the skills and identities they develop in the programme to settings that have different, and at times, competing norms and values. This finding supports the TPSR literature which asserts the potential for helping young people develop and transfer knowledge and skills. The broader educational and sport based positive youth development research literature suggests that this transfer process may be far from automatic, especially for youth from underserved communities (Lee and Martinek, 2013). For instance, while the process of life skills and knowledge transfer may

initially depend on young people's skill development, they may not complete the transfer process if their teachers, peers, and family members do not support the direct use and application of content learned in the programme (Lave, 1997).

Advantaging Redmond and Dolan's youth leadership conceptual model (2010)

To purse this important work, mentors need to make youth adaptability across contexts an explicit, targeted learning outcome and pursuing this important goal may require the expansion of some programmes, theories, as well as additional training. This claim concurs with this current study as Redmond and Dolan's youth leadership conceptual model (2010) was not initially designed to identify skill transference. While the model readily identifies potential mechanisms and factors throughout a variety of contexts, the aim of the model was not to explicitly propose how particular skills are actually transferred and applied within specific contexts. While the model recognises the influence of learning, it does not explicitly include broader factors associated with other contexts. These broad transfer context factors may include the similarity of context, opportunities to use life skills, support for transfer, and rewards for transfer. To include this, chapter seven recommends an advancement of Redmond and Dolan's youth leadership conceptual model (2010)

6.4 The interplay of environmental conditions and the young person's agency enhanced positive youth development outcomes.

Organised youth development programmes in informal educational settings serve as an ideal context in which real life learning and application can take place. It is the strong influence of mentors that play a critical role in keeping young people's work on track and scaffolding their learning (Halpen, 2005; Rhodes, 2004). This study found that the combination of intentional engagement in collaborative activities and adult scaffolding happened organically within the club, providing more optimal conditions for young people to flourish. When it comes to scaffolding youth learning, leadership development in young people is an important area of consideration. According to Bronfenbrenner (1992), a learning ecology perspective

foregrounds the fact that young people are simultaneously involved in many settings and that they are active in creating activity contexts for themselves within and across settings. While interactions within co-located settings are critically important for development, it is also clear that there are learning processes that involve the creation of activity contexts in a new setting or the pursuit of learning resources that are found outside the primary learning setting.

The efforts to develop leaders among young people often focus on a particular issue that affect them and that they would like to change. It also requires intentionality, through explicit discussion, facilitating group deliberation and planning, and supporting young people in shaping, launching and managing a project. The results in this study indicated that all young people focused on a particular societal issue for their community based action project and were supported by their mentor along the way. For example, one group spoke about their passion for homelessness, another group focused on mental health awareness and how they could break down the stigma associated with mental illness. The mentors were able to provide clear examples of when they provided support to the young people during this process. In combination, these aspects of development are seen as an outcome of meaningful learning and engagement, a necessary foundation to develop effective young leaders. Hernez-Broome and Hughes (2004) echo this by stating that opportunities for youth leadership must be framed not only to develop skills and knowledge, but in the application of these skills in authentic ways.

Bandura and Vygotsky (2006) maintain that the fundamental mechanism of positive youth development is social interaction, especially with knowledgeable others who are intellectually advanced but still within the zone of proximal development. Through discussion and critical inquiry young people construct a 'scaffolding' framework during an activity to work collaboratively. Many researchers agree that learners construct knowledge during social interactions and that collaboration is essential to develop higher order thinking skills (Maor, 2000). The Family and Youth Services Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued a comprehensive report on youth development in 1996. The report recognised that positive developmental opportunities need to be available to young people in authentic ways. The report concluded that positive youth development means engaging young people and connecting them to caring adults to enable them to feel "useful, competent, and

powerful" (Johnson, Bassin and Shaw, 1996 p.42). This resonates with the environmental conditions in which the leadership programme was facilitated and all these factors appeared to have an enhanced positive impact on all learning outcomes. This is supported by Bellefeuille et al. (2005) who states that a social constructivist approach demands that learning is authentic and personally relevant, incorporating individual knowledge and experience, encouraging active engagement, personal autonomy and reflexivity to create shared meaning. Going one step further, situated learning is based on the concept that learning is not merely individual. Learning is deeper and more meaningful when knowledge is situated in context and culture (Leidner and Järvenpää, 1995). In fact this study indicated that the leadership programme ensured a student-centred approach accommodating differences in approaches to learning, cultural ideologies and personal values.

While previous research argues that sport alone may not promote life skill development and transfer (Gould & Carson, 2008), sport settings as a learning context does offer several features that are capable of promoting learning (Kendellen and Camiré, 2015). Results from this study help to support the latter. Specifically, findings indicated that community based sport settings are critical learning contexts that support the development and transfer of life skills. Findings in this study showed that the club offered a natural supportive environment by providing mentor access and authentic opportunities that enabled the research participants to practice and hone their leadership skills. Furthermore, the leadership programme empowered the club to move from providing a general youth focused supportive environment to form a more explicit support for personal and social development. The findings revealed that the social ecology made up of the club and mentors provided a fertile ground for the development and transfer of life skills, both proximally and distally.

Contextual factors

The findings in this study showed that the club played a crucial role in a number of ways. The data analysis revealed that much of what happened in the club was highly informal, providing a safe and fun space for young people to hang out and enjoy recreational activities, while also providing support for personal and social development. Access to facilities and an atmosphere that afford a sense of belonging and independence from the adult-dominated and rule-oriented contexts of school and home. This was seen as an important foundation for shaping the young people's identity and orientation to the wider world, and for their potential broader engagement in community and society. This claim was acknowledged by two participants in this study. They both spoke about how their school environment felt like a superficial initial learning space, where the timetable was driven by tests and exams, compared to the leadership learning environment, where they felt a more constructivist learning approach was applied, creating a more supportive two way dialogue of learning.

From the ecological and developmental systems perspectives, a variety of risk and protective factors throughout individual, family, and social domains contribute to the overall development of a young person (Anthony et al., 2009; Fraser et al., 2004; Hawkins et al., 2006). This study's findings links to Bronfenbrenner's theory of human development (1979) as the developing participants were consistently viewed as influencing and being influenced by their environment. More specifically, the young people in this study discussed the learning through the inherent demands of sport activities. The research participants acknowledged that participating in sporting activities for most of their lives required them to use life skills at some point, in order for them to succeed in sport. For instance, teamwork was important in order to function effectively with teammates. Therefore, as a learning context, findings indicated that sport offered the research participants the opportunities to practice using life skills and leadership capabilities in a variety of engaging ways, which in turn promoted the development and transfer of skills. Additionally, findings indicated that the community based sporting organisation provided some challenging experiences. For one participant she had to make very difficult choice between sport and study. This created a tug between two important and personal experiences from the same organisation. For a young person to challenge something they love and are committed to can cause internal conflict. This highlighted the difficult position the young person was put in and how the organisation was

unaware of the consequences for that young person. This raised a question about the scheduling of GAA activities and this study recommends further investigation.

The research literature is clear that skill transfer is best facilitated when young people's school, family, and community environments are governed by similar values and expectations for desired behaviour (Gordon and Doyle, 2015). Furthermore, it is important to be mindful of the numerous life experiences young people have in a variety of contexts (e.g. family, home, school) and such complexities require a shift of focus from the individual to the individual's interaction with diverse settings. Analysing the composition of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979), as well as the interactions between and within these systems and individual, behavioural and environmental factors are regarded as crucial in order to understand and explain developmental outcomes (Eriksson et al, 2018). Bronfenbrenner's perspective resonates with Bandura's social learning theory (1977) in which the environment, in this case the club, is explicitly or implicitly considered a crucial mechanism in development. In this case the club provided a holistic approach in personal and social development, which is crucial for fostering and supporting positive youth development. Furthermore, the club provided an important foundation for broader engagements and authentic opportunities and was used as a means to engage young people in activities they were already interested in but from which a sense of belonging and commitment to their community was naturally developed. The need to belong is central to the acquisition of skill development, as not having a sense of belonging can lead to disaffection engagement from learning (Maslow, 1962). This finding resonances with Erikson (1959) who proposed that, when young people identify with ideologies and histories of organisations, identities can be placed within a socioecological framework. This connects young people to traditions and communities that transcend from the club, therefore provided the young people with a sense of continuity, belonging and coherence with the past, present and future. As the research participants exhibited how the club provided that sense of belonging, this supported a positive learning outcome. This highlighted the significance of the clubs' unique position to facilitate such influential and social development, particularly the interactions between male and female. This study outlined the importance of using the club as a 'hook' to engage young people, with the aim of subsequently linking them with deliberative ideologies and

opportunities to develop leadership qualities. It also highlighted why a case study approach was appropriate as the unit of study rather than only conducting individual interviews.

Unfortunately, the literature indicates that, in many low-income communities, this 'correspondence' or 'congruence' in desired norms and social practices does not exist across school, family, and community contexts. Consequently, these disconnects loom as significant structural barriers to the successful design and implementation of youth leadership development programmes (Jacobs et al. 2017). Several important discussion points derive from this important claim. The first is that, in order to help get the conditions right for skill transfer, programme mentors should strive to marry programme goals with broader efforts. This can help them and other community leaders better synchronise and harmonise school, family, and community resources in support of young peoples' optimal development. But to make this important leap, youth leadership development programmes need to expand their orientation from a stand-alone programme to a social ecological intervention that targets organisational and context development (e.g., Unger, 2008). The findings in this study showed the lack of synchronicity and harmonisation between school, home and club. The club provided a place for both the young people and mentors to discuss important topics in a context, in contrast to school, where the young people felt they were treated more like adults. The study found that the comparison of school and the youth leadership programme cultures revealed incongruence between the two settings in terms of atmosphere and youth behaviour. The culture of the club was seen as exhibiting the characteristics of positive development efforts (i.e., meaningful relationships with mentors and peers, psychologically safe environments, organised authentic opportunity for personal growth), the culture of the school was seen as being strict, boring, and hierarchical. This finding indicates that the young people used the club space to express themselves, develop identity and allow their own interests, beliefs and aptitudes to emerge, providing further evidence that positive youth development programmes should be non-directive, emphasising the development of a supportive environment rather than prioritising the achievement of specific goals. This highlights a key recommendation from this study i.e. further investigate how to better synchronise and harmonise the leadership programme with school, family, and community resources to support optimal youth development.

Optimal conditions

The results of this study were in accordance with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) suggestion that the environment is characterised as a pattern of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by individuals or group of individuals in direct and indirect settings in which they were embedded. This supports the findings in this study where the interplay of environmental factors enhanced the positive impact of the leadership course and aided both proximal and distal transfer. The leadership programme empowered the club to move from providing a general youth focused supportive environment to form a more explicit support for personal and social development, enabling them to be active recipients of engagement in their local community. This included providing opportunities for critical discussion, drawing on young peoples and the mentors' experiences and cultivating environments that shape them, and providing opportunities for concrete action, which in this case was referred to as the community based action project.

Schilling, Martinek, and Carson (2007) identified two distinctive contextual characteristics affecting proximal processes in youth development programmes: (a) structure (e.g., providing skill development and cross-age teaching opportunities) and (b) atmosphere (e.g., safety, comfort and relationships with staff and peers). They claim that the structure provides empowerment opportunities for young people to make choices, take responsibility, and practice leadership thereby affecting their programme commitment and learning outcomes. In addition, the role-related experience (e.g., teaching/working with children, being responsible, and programme perks, such as group social events) and time (length of an intervention) also has an effect on participants' commitment to the programme. The findings of this study also reinforces the research findings of Catalano et al. (2002) in their review of effective positive youth development programmes. They found that outcomes of programmes lasting 9 months or more were better than those with shorter interventions. This finding harmonises with the leadership programme as it ran over a 9 month period. They also recommend that youth development programmes help young people develop into healthy adults by providing them opportunities to be active contributors within their community, skills to be successful contributors in other settings, and recognition when doing

well. The youth leadership development programme incorporated these three precepts into its content through its planned collaborative and constructivist learning activities, as well as the relationships encouraged between mentors and participants and between participants.

Positive youth development outcomes

The analysis of the young people's interview responses was to provide an explanation and support the reasons for the long term, positive impact of the leadership programme. At the heart of many positive youth development programmes is the ability to facilitate life skill development and for some, is to promote life skill transfer among young people. According to Newman (2019) the development of key skills and the ability to transfer the learning is critical for all young people. The findings of this current study indicate that the young people were not passive recipients of information. The data results showed that the young people internalised the development of these skills, while also heightening their awareness and understanding. It was evident that metacognitive development of certain skills took place. Metacognition is the awareness and understanding of one's own though processes, thinking about thinking, knowing about knowing, becoming aware of one's awareness and higher order thinking skills (Jacobs and Wright, 2018). Studies have shown that many young people become accustomed to having teachers, coaches or mentors and become more dependent on them for knowledge. However, through metacognitive strategies such as adapting, monitoring, self-regulation and reflection, young people think through their thinking. For example, responses to the interview question, 'What do you think the leadership programme was trying to achieve and what, if anything, did it do for you?' Participants noted that it taught them teamwork skills (connection), that they learnt how to treat others better (compassion), that they enhanced their communication and leadership skills (competence). They stated that they now understand themselves better (confidence), that they can identify their values and how to apply them into their life (character), they noted on several occasions how they practically learnt how to lead out on a real life project within their club and community (contribution).

Many of the findings in this study concur with Lerner's six Cs' framework of the measurement of effective youth development programmes (Lerner et al. 2005). This approach specifies that when youth develop high levels of the Five Cs, a 'sixth C' – contribution will emerge. The sixth C, contribution, is the cornerstone of linking young people as a community-integrated resource to multiple environments. When this aspect is applied to a youth leadership programme, as is the case within this study, higher levels of competence, character, caring/compassion, connection, and confidence are achieved (Learner et al., 2007). Lerner's approach complements the findings of this study, as the young people's narrative accounts touch on all six Cs'. It is particularly evident that the club provided a unique authentic learning environment which brought many additional benefits to the young people, supporting them to become that community-integrated resource and enabling them to develop higher levels of skill development, enabling transfer to happen.

In order to develop intellectually, emotionally, socially, and morally a human being, whether child or adult, requires the same thing: active participation in progressively more complex trusted reciprocal interaction with persons with whom he or she develops a strong, mutual, connection, and who, over time, become committed to each other's well-being and development, preferably for life (Bronfenbrenner and Evans, 2000). It was apparent that the knowledgeable others (i.e. mentors) had a strong connection with the young people, well beyond the programme itself. It was evident that this connection was developed over time before the leadership programme commenced and well into the young people's life. The knowledgeable others showed that they had some understanding of other primary settings in young people's lives, such a school and sport. They were adequately motivated and equipped after their training to foster a supporting learning environment, enabling them to create a safe balanced environment for all participants to engage in. As discussed above, the solid support and trust the participants received from the mentors coincided with the caring and connection aspects of positive youth development frameworks.

Key developmental assets such as prosocial and close peer networks are associated with positive youth development. In fact, life skills are recognised as important tools that help to prevent behavioural health problems as well as promote positive long-term development

(Botvin and Griffin, 2004). Studies has shown that young people who have strong and engaged relationships with adults, peers and their communities tend to have better outcomes (Bradly and Conway, 2016). Natural mentors such as sports coaches are often present in the lives of resilient young people, particularly at times of change or transition (Werner and Smith, 1982). The involvement in authentic adults and with one's traditional culture, is associated with positive developmental outcomes (Wexler, 2014). However, according to Bronfenbrenner and Evan (2000), there is a concern, that due to the changing modern society, young people do not have access to supportive relationships with adults and positive role models at home to a degree they once had. The absence of home examples within the data might be linked to Bronfenbrenner's (2000) new ideology of steady versus unsteady chaos in modern society and might be linked to why there is no data found to support transferability of skills in the home setting. This suggests that a more detailed study would be required to explore this phenomenon. However, the findings did highlight the significant role the club and the mentors played in cultivating the young people's skill development, environmental factors and commitment to action. This indicated that the reciprocal determinism which is a central concept of Bandura's social learning theory (1979), reverberates the three factors that influence participant behaviour: the individual, their environment and the behaviour itself.

To date, there is little research within sport based positive youth development in general, and more precisely community sport based positive youth development, that explore specifically how young people transfer certain skills in particular transfer contexts. While Kendellen and Camiré (2015), did discuss how life skills such as communication, social responsibility and self-control can be transferred and applied, they limited their study exclusively to the context of interscholastic sport. Therefore, the findings from this current study offers a greater overview, as well as specificity regarding this complex and dynamic process. Furthermore, it provides evidence of the unique position of community sport based positive youth development programmes and how they relate to the ecology of positive youth development outcomes. Therefore, when these programmes are designed and structured effectively, they have the capacity to engaging with other learning and transfer contexts as a way to maximise the development of young people.

6.5 Understanding lived experiences through a social constructivist paradigm

The findings from this study validate the use of social constructivist perspective to allow multiple interpretations to be heard. As mentioned in chapter four, a social constructivist paradigm is 'understanding and reconstruction of the constructions that people (including the inquirer) initially hold, aiming toward consensus but still open to new interpretations as information and sophistically improve' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p.113). Specifically, social constructivism emphasises the importance of culture and context when constructing knowledge, recognises that multiple realities exist, and seeks to understand the lived experiences of participants. In this study Hager and Hodkinson's transformation and reconstruction conceptual lens (2009) is used to understand the learning and transfer process. In this lens, learning is seen as a continuously evolving process in which the young person is an integral part. The young person brings unique combinations of dispositions (e.g., skills, knowledge, and experiences) and capital (e.g., social, economic, symbolic, and cultural) which together, influence how the young person constantly transforms or reconstructs their existing knowledge or skills.

The findings from this study were presented through the lens of the researcher, while intentionally acknowledging the unique perspectives and lived experiences of the research participants. As described in chapter four, the researcher's positionality, purpose of doctoral research, and social context that the research occurred within, was not overlooked while interpreting the study's findings. Moreover, from a social constructivist paradigm, factors such as the researcher's personal and professional lived experiences in youth work and sport, as discussed in chapter four, were not ignored. As described in chapter four, procedures to maximise validity and trustworthiness were implemented. In fact, the researchers' unique positionality and lived experiences should be valued as are the perspectives and experiences of the research participants involved in this study. As Patton, (2002) states, "a fully 'open' mind would not be able to focus on the details necessary to engage in 'normal science" (p. 99).

However, while acknowledging the researcher's own positionality and overarching context of the research, several methods were used to ground the research and the study's findings within the knowledge of the research participants. While the theoretical perspectives provided a guiding framework in this study, the findings were developed, and ultimately,

constructed by attempting to understand the experiences of the research participants involved in the study. Further, to honour the spoken words of the research participants, codes and themes related to the study's findings were constructed through both deductive and inductive processes and were described in the findings section, using vivid quotes. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were used to provide young participants the opportunity to discuss their unique knowledge through a conversational form of inquiry, rather than an explicit adult-driven question-and-answer format. This approach allowed young participants to lead the conversation while discussing their lived experiences. However, in order to clearly present the findings from this study, as well as honour the three distinct yet interconnected stages of the life skill and transfer process, unique findings were explicitly identified and discussed above. Specifically, the mechanisms and factors related to the individual learner, the learning context, programmatic design features, quality programme mentors and other contextual considerations to achieve positive youth development outcomes.

6.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to elaborate on the research findings in relation to the key objectives of this study and in light of the available literature in this area. In the first section a discussion took place on the initial developing and sustaining of the four foundational leadership skills over time. This discussion placed the findings in the context of other research and highlighted that the participation in the leadership programme demonstrated enhanced certain skill development capabilities overtime. The second section discussed how participants transferred skills learned on the leadership programme both proximally and distally. This discussion highlighted that the process of transfer of key leadership skills is underpinned by multiple interrelated factors. The third section of the discussion highlighted the unique contextual factors and how they were significant for cultivating the young people's skill development, transfer ability and commitment to action. The final section provided an explanation to support the reasons for the long term, positive impact of the leadership programme and understanding lived experiences through a social constructivist paradigm. The following chapter explores the implications for policy, practice, research and makes a set of recommendations to inform future work.

7.1 Introduction

The research areas of focus for this study included the following terms: positive youth development, youth leadership, youth development, life skills, leadership capabilities, skill transfer, informal learning environments, developmental outcomes, ecological approaches and educational models in leadership and transference. This study was about understanding and explaining youth leadership developmental outcomes within a bounded setting (e.g. the club) and how these skills transferred to other life domains. Drawing guidance from the landscape of positive youth development, Lee and Martinek's (2013) bioecological value transfer model and Hager and Hodkinson's (2009) transformation and reconstruction lens, assisted the conceptualisation of life skill learning and transfer that orients this study. In particular, it emphasises the importance of developmental dimensions of positive youth development and context specificity, which complemented a case study research tradition.

This study discovered that a variety of mechanisms and factors contribute to the development and transfer of key life skills and leadership capabilities. Such antecedents were underpinned by multiple interrelated factors (learning context, individual learner, time, proximal processes, programmatic features, transfer context factors and other social agents). Findings revealed that the young people were producers and products of the transfer process and drew upon different internal and external resources to achieve in and out of programme transfer outcomes. While some skills developed better (self-perception, teamwork, decision making, communication and leadership skills) than others (critical thinking and problem solving), the predominant modes of skill transfer found were proximal transfer (in-programme outcomes) and distal outcomes (out of programme outcomes – prominently sport and college). The findings revealed that the socioecological context in which the leadership programme was facilitated provided supportive conditions. Taken together, findings indicated that life skill and leadership development, as well as transfer might be most effectively promoted through a multi-systems approach. This study illustrates the complexity of exploring transference through a multiple of underlying factors that are interrelated in the transfer process. The next chapter discusses in detail some implications and recommendations on policy, practice and research. This chapter is broken down into each relevant section.

7.2 Practice implications and recommendations

Sport and community based organisations need to find ways of involving young people as leaders by seeing them as resources. Communities, sport clubs and schools also need to support positive youth leadership development programmes so that young people can enhance their skill set and significantly contribute to community based organisations and future organisations. However, an important implication for practitioners to consider is some programmes called youth leadership programmes can have a variety of focuses which does not necessarily emphasise becoming a leader. Paying attention to the environment is a key component for practitioners to ensure the group settlement. This is particularly important for mentors delivering the leadership programme. For example, some programmes focus heavily on personal development, others focus on prevention of youth antisocial behaviour, while others focus on the prevention of drugs and alcohol use with little focus on actually engaging in real life leadership application.

Practice recommendation 1: Practitioners need to find authentic ways for young people to become integrated community resources, so they can develop life skills but most importantly implement their leadership skills from the leadership programme to real life situations.

When it comes to understanding oneself, it is important for leadership programmes to build in reflective practices to make sure the young people gain a better understanding of themselves and detect transfer opportunities to other settings/situations. It is vital young people know themselves to grow themselves. Better understanding of oneself will lead to better leaders. This is particularly noteworthy when considering the contribution that young leaders can make in the lives of others when in leadership roles, as well as their own personal development. The community action project enabled young people to exercise their skills and apply these skills into real life situations. Therefore future youth leadership programmes should require that young people be involved in leading their own community action project, service learning or internship. Within leadership programme content every effort should be made to enable young people to make the connections to apply their learning into their own lives, whether this is at home, in sport and/or in the community. Making those connections is vital to aid the transfer process.

Practice recommendation 2: Practitioners need to incorporate reflective practices to enable young people to understand why they do what they do. This will create self-awareness and help create connections to apply their learning in other settings/situations.

When considering influencing future practices and policies, important lessons can be learned from the programme mentors and participants. Having an appropriate application process which enables young people to put forward their interest and commitment to the programme, while also getting mentors to nominate them for the leadership programme ensures that everyone gets the best out of the programme. Further to this, it may be worth considering targeting young people who would not typically see themselves as leaders, particularly those who are more marginalised or who experience adversity. However, youth leadership programmes have implications for practitioners and should encourage participants to reflect on what and how they learn, while examining the anticipated challenges and barriers to applying these skills to other contexts. Furthermore, practitioners need to consider how they can provide ample opportunities for participants to practice and hone those leadership skills, make plans for transfer, and share reflection on their transfer efforts outside the programme itself. The reflections of 'what' and 'how' can be important proximal processes facilitating transfer (Danish, 2000).

Practice recommendation 3: Practices need to implement an appropriate application process and be mindful how this can influence practice and policy procedures, while practitioners need to consider how they can provide ample opportunities to practice and hone leadership skills, make plans for transfer, and share reflection on their transfer efforts.

The tools that have been created by prior communities of practice serve as a critical facilitator of intellectual and social practices. The process of enhancing knowledgeable skills is subsumed in processes of changing identity in and through membership in a community of practice and this needs to be considered by organisations. Building a community of practice would be beneficial e.g. paving the way for previous completers of the leadership programme to contribute back and support newer recruits through the process, bringing further

leadership opportunities and responsibility to the leaders. Also, engaging parents, siblings and other community adults to help provide technical support and human resource links to the young people involved may support young people further through their journey. If young people gain greater supports their leadership skills will be enhanced; encouraging peer support, mentoring, parental involvement and community involvement would be beneficial.

Practice recommendation 4: Practitioners need to consider how best to develop a community of practice to empower pervious completers of the leadership programme to take on mentoring roles to support the next generation. This will create sustainability and identify other human resources within the community of practice.

Self-belief and awareness are important components in predicting leadership skills, therefore it is important for practitioners to take a closer look at how to incorporate methods to increase the self-belief and awareness of young people. This could be achieved through the use of affirmations, positive self-talk, cognitive labelling and reframing, transfer connections, cognitive behavioural therapy, formal recognition and the use of portfolios to record the transfer process and the impact they are making. These approaches can help to enable young people to reframe their thinking so that they begin to believe in themselves and easily transfer skills to other life domains, creating a positive reinforcing loop, something which does not just have implications for leadership but for just about every aspect of life. However, this can have implications for practitioners, as when it comes to programme implementation, how a programme is implemented can be the difference between reaching the desired outcomes and failing. A well implemented intervention with less efficacy can outperform a more effective one that is poorly implemented (Camino and Zeldin, 2002). Adequate training and ongoing support are necessary to ensure mentors are very comfortable with the content which will improve programme implementation.

Practice recommendation 5: Practitioners need to integrate more cognitive strategies into the leadership programme to enable young people to reframe their thinking, particularly around making those transfer connections. This can be supported by providing adequate training and ongoing support to mentors of the programme.

This research also brings to light the importance of research to link back to practice so that better outcomes are achieved for young people. Therefore, practitioners should take note of the development process of the programme as it may contribute towards the programmes ability to reveal positive outcomes for young people. Particularly, at the developmental stages of the programme, it is imperative that practitioners ensure that programmes are research based, needs-led, employs a consultation and planning process, including the voice of a young person. Furthermore, an integrated calendar of activities and events is required, to avoid any clashes for young people to compete against. Incorporating an application and nomination procedure as well as a yearly schedule of activities and the use of a pilot process can improve programme outcomes.

Practice recommendation 6: When it comes to the development of policy and practice, practitioners need to make sure that such developments are research based and implement the appropriate step by step procedures to allow sustainable positive outcomes to occur.

Advanced pathways for young people who have completed the leadership programme could be developed in topic specific areas e.g. sports, business, health promotion, event management, politics, arts, media, social justice. These advanced pathways can be linked to other duties/projects within the case study site. The youth leadership programme could be considered a starting point from where the young people can branch out into further areas of expertise. To enhance this process and allow young people to challenge systemic oppression so that they may contribute to the well-being of all people in their communities, they should be exposed to a diverse range of leaders based on gender, race, religion and leader type during the programme and beyond. This mix supports the advanced pathways for the young people to pursue and develop their critical consciousness ensuring equitable, increase their awareness of socially justice, and culturally responsiveness.

Practice recommendation 7: Practitioners need to identify advanced pathways that young people can pursue towards and provide opportunities to challenge systemic oppression and gender inequality, so they may contribute to the well-being of all people in their communities in an authentic way.

It seems transfer of learning in education calls for a shift of mind-set about what it means to know something and the kind of learning culture that fosters that kind of knowing. For transfer to happen it seems to be important to build the right bridges and build them in the right places. What is needed rather than a learning culture of demand, is a learning culture of collaboration and opportunity that the leadership programme seems to provide. Such a culture does not constantly organise young people's work as a series of highly targeted demands. It often engages young people in farther ranging and more open-ended experiences where real life application opportunities are available and supports are faded over time. Such a culture can anticipate counter habits and counter motivations undermining later opportunities and prepare young people to face them, through reflective practices, peer teaching, revived role play and participation in social and leadership initiatives within the community.

Practice recommendation 8: Practitioners need to create a social constructivist learning approach to encourage collaboration and opportunities for young people. This will create a more experiential learning experience and enhance a positive learning culture beyond the walls of the programme.

Having resources that are comprehensive, user-friendly, and accompanied by adequate training and support ensure that fidelity to the programme is high. The additional benefits that mentors gained from their involvement should be noted, particularly their perception of gaining an enhanced skill set and better linkages with the young people which meant they could access support easier. The mentors created authentic conditions for the young people to experience and practice their skill development, while also stimulating young people to generate ideas, to reflect, and to work hard to use these new ideas in practice. These types of multi context processes are important to develop trust and for informing practice, policy and research. This multifaceted strategy enabled all stakeholders to deliver support effectively and aid proximal and distal transfer outcomes.

Practice recommendation 9: Practitioners need to consider their training and supports to mentors. This proximal process component is a key cog within the development of leadership skills and transfer capabilities.

7.3 Policy implications and recommendations

This study showed that, for a short term investment, the participants continued to garner benefits beyond the life of the programme. This also positively impacted on both the club and community's capacity to resolve their own challenges in action orientated ways, while also adding to human capital. Furthermore, Parton (2006) recommend the concept of 'youth spaces' where young people's own agendas can be key, where they are seen as agents of their own lives and where they can be seen as co-constructors, with adults, of knowledge, identity and culture. From a policy perspective this is important because this illustrates that youth leadership programmes of this nature are capable of creating a space for young people where their own needs can be prioritised and that doing so has the potential to improve the quality of their lives. This is the only youth leadership programme within an Irish sports setting that receives a level 6 accreditation upon completion. This is both very attractive and beneficial to employees, businesses and college students. Having access to these skills are crucial for young people to experience growth and their full potential. Making organisations aware of this programme is an important piece for policy-makers as it can contribute to organisations in a more meaningful way. For example by endorsing the leadership programme, offering internships as part of their community based action project or make staff available to mentor young people will provide a multi integrated approach far beyond the leadership programme itself. This could also support more transfer outcomes in the workplace, benefiting both the young person, policymaker and organisation.

Policy recommendation 1: Policy makers need to make resources available and create 'youth spaces' to support young people to co-construct their identity and beliefs with trusted adults. They also need to provide access pathways to youth leadership development, at both a programme and organisation level.

It is important that policy makers thoroughly evaluate leadership programmes to ensure they result in positive outcomes for young people. There is likely to be a need for further youth leadership initiatives in Ireland and for these to be embedded into other national sporting bodies. This would bring added value to all sports people in Ireland, not just GAA members. However, due to insufficient resources, personnel etc., it would be very difficult to extend this

programme further without substantial investment of money, time and facilitators. It does however highlight the need and desire for positive youth development leadership initiatives on the ground. Policy makers need to protect this area and view it as an area for growth which will benefit society in the immediate and long term. Moving beyond evaluating leadership development programmes, research needs to be carried out on whether a youth leadership programme would have similar effects in a less socioeconomically advantaged area than the one in which this study was carried out. This could inform policy makers to look to youth leadership programmes as an opportunity for other demographic areas. When policy makers are investing in programmes for youth, greater accountability and emphasis in relation to evidence-based/informed practice are needed. As well as this, greater funding needs to be made available for organisations to develop evidence-based programmes within an Irish context.

Policy recommendation 2: Policy makers need to comprehensively evaluate leadership programmes to ensure positive outcomes and plan for future developments. They need to bring this learning and opportunity to other national sporting bodies in Ireland, with the support of resources and funding avenues.

Sustainability is a key issue. Programmes that demonstrate outcomes also need to have behind them suitably qualified staff and volunteers to implement them so they can achieve the desired outcomes. An increasingly overburdened Health Service Executive struggles to deal with the challenges presented to it and requires youth services to provide increasingly targeted services for young people in need. This focus may reduce further the capacity of projects to be able to respond to the development needs of young people and force them to focus solely on youth with very high levels of need. Policy makers need to explore embedding high quality youth leadership programmes within or parallel to the school curriculum to offer more youth opportunities, particularly those who may not traditionally see themselves as leaders.

Policy recommendation 3: Policy makers need to develop a governance infrastructure that connects to other youth settings to develop and maintain sustainable youth development overtime.

7.4 Research implications and recommendations

One key question raised by practitioners is how do policy makers design learning environments so that knowledge application is achieved, in other words – transfer becomes probable? One central aspect of transfer approaches in practice, policy and research is that pragmatic aspects need to be considered, particularly the individuals' motivations and the situational context. Additional research in this area will allow a close conceptual connection to be found between research on transfer and situated learning approaches. However, an implication for researchers to consider is the views of social cognitive theorist are so diverse that it is extremely difficult for researchers to reach a consensus on the nature and significance of transfer. When considering the development of leadership programmes to allow transfer to happen, a bridging educational style model that uses stimulated environments and specially designed social interactions, may be more appropriate to meet the real life need and bridge the gap between theoretical learning and actual practice. This can prepare young people to be good adaptive learners, so that they can perform effectively when facing transition or transferring skills to other life domains.

Research recommendation 1: Research is needed to allow a closer conceptual connection to be found between transfer research and situated learning frameworks.

There is a need for additional research in other clubs or with a larger group of graduates from the leadership programme to ascertain if the findings from the case study are generalisable. Additional research in different settings such as diverse environments, varying population bases, the area of high risk youths, in addition to studying the benefits gained from involvement in youth leadership programmes including a larger sample size is recommended.

Research recommendation 2: To allow the finding of this study to be generalisable, additional research in similar case study sites is required or the findings could be used to generate a larger study rather than a case study.

The oversimplified term and definition of transfer employed within the literature needs to be qualified and elaborated on, while the definition of life skills need to be refined. This can have

implications across all aspects of positive youth development constructs, but particularly through research. A larger scale study would be beneficial to further elucidate the impact of the leadership programme. Also, further longitudinal research would be beneficial to explore the impact over several years.

Research recommendation 3: To measure impact overtime a larger scale study that is longitudinal in nature would be beneficial in this area of research.

Further research and critical analysis of Redmond and Dolan's youth leadership conceptual model (2010) is needed to investigate any shortcomings or strengths located in the wider field. The model could be presented in a different way rather than for analysis and evaluation purposes. Advantaging and analysing the model more critically and positioning in the wider field than 'applied' could be beneficial. For example one might take the model, apply it and evaluate it in a different setting or using a different research method. Furthermore, Redmond and Dolan's youth leadership conceptual model (2010) was not initially designed to identify skill transference. While the model readily identifies potential mechanism and factors throughout a variety of contexts, the goal of the model was not to explicitly propose how particular skills are actually transferred and applied within specific transfer contexts. While the model recognises the influence of learning and transfer contexts, it does not explicitly include broader factors associated with other contexts.

Research recommendation 4: Further research and critical analysis of Redmond and Dolan's youth leadership conceptual model (2010) is recommended. Broader transfer context factors should include the similarity of context, opportunities to use life skills, support for transfer, and rewards for transfer. These factors would advance Redmond and Dolan's youth leadership conceptual model (2010).

Further research in the area of other youth leadership programmes to explore other factors which may contribute to youth leadership development and enable a broader understanding of additional components may be useful. A further study exploring this relationship and the broader social ecological impact of the leadership programme on breaking down such

practical, gender and social barriers for the young people is recommended. This includes the need to carry out research to see if there was a difference in male and female benefits in certain areas from the youth leadership programme and to understand the explicit cognitive processes of the transfer process. In additional to this, as the leadership programme seemed to attract a certain type of character and persona of that of a strong, determined young leader, further studies on whether this type of leadership programme attracts a certain type of profile would also be insightful to understand why a certain programme 'takes hold' for some young people perhaps more than others would be useful.

Research recommendation 5: Further research is recommended on the multiple interrelated factors associated with youth development and the transfer process. This will enable a broader understanding of any additional components that may be useful such as the broader social ecological impact of the leadership programme and why a programme may take hold for some young people and not for others.

7.5 Limitations

A limitation of a study design or instrument is the systematic bias that the researcher did not or could not control and which could inappropriately affect the results (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). It must be acknowledged that limitations occurred in this study, while every endeavour was made to reduce potential limitations as much as possible.

Sample size – case study is by its nature small and not generalisable. The sample size was also small in this study as some young people had moved on from the club. This may hinder findings from appearing significant and further research is needed with more case study sites to future examine this phenomenon.

Interviews – while every effort was made to ensure the interview script was broken up sufficiently into different sections/themes to keep the participants engaged, the length of the questions were long for some. Every effort was made to make sure the responses were based on what the participants experience on the leadership programme and not on what they learnt at home, school or in other activities/experiences. Conducting interviews straight after programme completion and then again in two years' time, using the sample instrument tool would be beneficial.

Self-reported - it is important to note that some findings (e.g. distal transfer) were mostly self-reported and it was not possible for such findings to be verified by the mentors. One such reason for this was the way in which this aspect of the study was conducted. An important element of this study was to ensure the young people had the time and cognitive skills to differentiate information learned from multiple contexts, identify sources of ability information across domains, and distinguish sources of social influence for learning skills. As half of the distal transfer examples took place in settings beyond the club and mentors, this led to examples being self-reported. A recommendation to increase this type of validity would include the voice of the parent or teacher in further studies.

Study duration and retention – the data gathering was conducted over one academic year and the length of time between when the young people completed the programme to when they completed the interview may have impacted on the retention of information. For a young person two years is a substantial amount of time considering so much happens in them informative years. However, getting involved in a leadership programme like this may well

affect the young people's motivations to remain involved. However, those most motivated and connected to the leadership programme were most likely going to respond positively. This limitation can have an effect on the young people's responses and hinder findings, towards young people who may not have connected as positively to the leadership programme.

Retrospective research - the retrospective nature of the study is also a potential limitation. Since interviews occurred approximately two years after the conclusion of the leadership programme, the ability to recall specific details regarding experiences may have been hindered. However, because life skill development and life skill transfer are recognised as ongoing processes (Pierce et al., 2017), interviewing three years after the conclusion of the programme allowed for multiple perspectives along the developmental continuum to be taken into consideration. Having interviews at the later timeframe also provided participants with additional opportunities to experience life skill transfer in a variety of situations and settings.

Insider research influence – as the researcher manages the leadership programme nationally her involvement is high. However, her direct participation in the leadership programme within the case study site is low. Every effort was made by the researcher to reflect on her own bias and her role as a researcher, in addition to her position within the organisation. A conscious effort was made to maintain a critical factual approach.

Data trustworthiness - a noteworthy limitation to the study is the trustworthiness of the data and the findings. While the document analysis was conducted using co-coding, the thematic analyses were performed by a solo researcher. To address the potential limitation of trustworthiness several methods were used, including member checks, participant journals, peer debriefs, thick description of the data, and triangulation of the data sources (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Similarly, the self-reflexively, self-awareness, and truthfulness of research participants also had to be assumed when they described their experiences and perspectives of skill development and transfer. However, grounded in a social constructivist perspective, the lived experiences of youth are valued. Specifically, the youth participants and their unique perspectives helped to construct additional knowledge and garner narrative insights that otherwise were previously overlooked.

7.6 Conclusion

This study explored whether young people who completed a youth leadership programme developed four foundational leadership components (i.e., social, and emotional intelligence, collaborate, articulate, insight and knowledge) and if so, did they utilise them in other life domains. Youth leadership programmes can add an important contribution to young people and their capacity to develop key life skills and recognise themselves as leaders and change makers within their communities. The ability to transfer these important life skills to other areas of young people's lives is important to enhance positive youth development and overall youth wellbeing.

In this study all leadership components within the leadership programme (e.g. social and emotional intelligence, collaborate, articulate, insight and knowledge) developed, however, the findings demonstrated some skills developed (e.g. self-perception, teamwork, decision making, communication and leadership skills) better than others (e.g. critical thinking and problem solving). The findings of this study validated the use of social constructivism emphasising the importance of culture and context when constructing knowledge, recognising that multiple realities exist to understand lived experiences. The features of the programme provided empowering opportunities and interactions for the young people that were consistent with the four leadership components. The training and support provided to the mentors allowed the implementation of this rich content delivery. Overall, the findings proved that core proximal processes (e.g. mentor-peer relationships, context related opportunities, timing, real life application, programmatic features, commitment levels, personal reflections and discussions) incorporated into the leadership programme were primary engines of development. This study found that the context, person and time affected those proximal processes.

This study revealed that the process of transfer is underpinned by multiple interrelated factors. The predominant modes of transfer found were proximal transfer (in-programme outcomes) and distal outcomes (out of programme outcomes). Even though the research participants were asked to give examples in five settings, no examples were provided in the home environment. What is unique about this study is the two prominent settings where distal transfer was explicitly stated was in sport and college. Most examples of distal transfer were seen to operate in a more proximal manner, contingent on the match or high level of

similarity between elements in the initial learning and subsequent transfer setting. This mode of transfer adds real value as an outcome to this study.

Interestingly, this study revealed that skill development and transfer is best facilitated when young people's environments are governed by similar values and expectations for desired behaviour and outcomes. As explored through this study, learning theories see the environment as the major force in development (Hoffman, 1993). Experiencing a unique combination of intrinsic motivation and concentration in a temporal arc of action towards a common goal, enabled the young people to acquire agency and initiative. Thus, within appropriately structured environments, the young people became active creators of their own positive development. If young people are producers of their own learning experiences, and if this is part of the process of internalising life skills, it is essential to create more thorough understandings of how they create these experiences.

This study revealed that the club offered a natural fertile ground for nourishing youth leadership development by providing mentor access and authentic opportunities that enabled the research participants to practice and hone their leadership skills. Furthermore, the leadership programme empowered the club to move from providing a general youth focused supportive environment to form a more explicit support for personal and social development. Thus, highlighting the significant role social ecology plays in skill development and transfer. Together, these conditions created a fertile context for the development of positive youth development outcomes.

It was evident that the young people felt connected to the club and community, in addition to feeling a sense of recognition and achievement for their contributions. The data shows that there was strong interaction between the young people's self-efficacy, motives and social interplays of the programme setting and within the club environment itself. Overtime the young people demonstrated an improved positive sense of self, the confidence to utilise their skills and take on leadership roles in other settings. It was particularly evident that the club provided a unique authentic learning environment which brought many additional benefits to the young people, supporting them to become community-integrated resources, enabling them to develop higher levels of skill development and allowing transfer to happen. Thus the

study highlights the significant role the club played in cultivating the young people's skills development, transfer process and commitment to action.

This study also emphasised that youth leadership development programmes supported by organisations like the GAA, are embedded in interpretive values, culture and historic meaning. In turn, young people who take part in leadership programmes and community contribution activities by the GAA, are likely to reflect on these justifications as potential meanings for their own actions. These meanings, with their historical richness and picturing of ideal future were seen as a nourishing platform for youth identity development. The leadership programme clearly had a positive impact on the lives of the young people beyond their acquisition of leadership skills. The snowball effect created self-perception and enhanced the young person's capacity to improve outcomes. This benefits the young person, the club, community and boarder society in general.

Taken together, findings indicate that the development and transfer of life skills may be most effectively promoted through a holistic, multi-systems approach. Aligning with a positive youth development approach, the ability to promote skill development and transfer is best understood through the ecological and developmental systems (Lerner, 2006). Specifically, findings from this study support the perspective that development is understood as a continuous and dynamic interaction between an individual and their environment, where protective factors are strengthened and risk factors are mitigated as a way to enhance positive youth development. Additionally, findings support the belief that community sport based youth development programmes are in an ideal position to promote skill development and leadership capabilities by engaging with other learning and transfer contexts, as well as collaborating with multiple social agents (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2011). Therefore, to promote the development and transfer of skills effectively, findings from this study point to the need for community sport based youth leadership programmes to maximise multi-faceted learning opportunities, particularly when serving a specific youth population. With more effectively designed and facilitated youth leadership development programmes, young people have better opportunities to develop critical life skills and leadership capabilities that can enrich their lives and the communities that they belong to for many years to come.

References

Allen, G. (2013). From the sports hall into the classroom: learning life skills through sport. *School of Sport and Education*. (Doctoral dissertation, Brunel University School of Sport and Education PhD Theses).

Allen, G., and D. Rhind. (2019). *Taught not caught: Exploring male adolescent experiences of explicitly transferring life skills from the sports hall into the classroom*. Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health. 11: 188-200.

Allen, G., D. Rhind, and Koshu. V. (2015). *Enablers and barriers for male students transferring life skills from sports hall to the classroom.* Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health. 7: 53-67.

Amodeo, M., and M. E. Collins. (2007). *Using a positive youth development approach in addressing problem-oriented youth behaviour*. Families in Society. 88(1): 75-85.

Anderson, S.A., R. A. Sabatelli, and J. Trachtenberg. (2007) '*Evaluation of Youth Leadership Training Programmes*'. Journal of Youth Development: Bridging Research & Practice. 1(3): 29-45.

Anderson-Butcher, D., A. Riley, A. Iachini, R. Wade-Mdivanian, and J. Davis. (2011). Sport and Youth Development. Springer: New York, NY.

Anthony, E., C. Alter, and J. Jenson. (2009). *Development of risk and resilience-based out-of-school time program for children and youths.* Social Work. 54(1): 45-55.

Argyle, M. (1978). Discussion chapter: an appraisal of the new approach to the study of social behaviour. *The social contexts of method*. London: Croom Helm.

Bachmetjevas, V. (2020). *Imaginary construction and lessons in living forward*. History of European Ideas. 23: 1-14.

Bandura, A. (2006). *'Toward a Psychology of Human Agency'*. Perspectives on Psychological Science. 1(2): 164-80.

Bandura, A. (1977a). Social Learning Theory. New York: General Learning Press.

Bandura, A. (1977b). '*Self-efficacy: toward a unifying theory of behavioural change'*. Psychological Review. 84: 191-215.

Bandura, A. (1986) Social Foundations of Thought and Action: a social cognitive theory. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bandura, A. (1997) Self-efficacy. New York: W.H. Freeman. Bandura, A. (1998) Swimming against the mainstream: accentuating the positive aspects of humanity. (Paper presented to the meeting of the American Psychological Association, San Francisco) 1998.

Bao, Y. and Li, C. (2019). *From moral leadership to positive behaviours: the mediating roles of value congruence and leader-member exchange.* Journal of frontiers of research in China, 13(6), 2-18.

Bass, B. M. (1998). Transformational leadership: Industrial, military, and educational impact. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Eribaum.

Bean, C., and T. Forneris. (2017). *Is Life Skill Development a By-Product of Sport Participation? Perceptions of Youth Sport Coaches*. Journal of Applied Sport Psychology. 29: 234-250.

Bedi, A., Alpaslan, C. M., & Green, S. (2015). A meta-analytic review of ethical leadership outcomes and moderators. Journal of Business Ethics, 139(3): 1–20.

Begley, S. (2000). '*Getting inside a teen brain'*. Newsweek. 135(9):58-59.

Belenky, D. M. and T. J. Nokes-Malach. (2012). *Motivation and transfer: The role of mastery-approach goals in preparation for future learning*. Journal of the Learning Sciences. 21(3): 399–432.

Bellefeuille, G. R. Martin, and M. Buck. (2005*). From Pedaogy to Technology in Social Work Education: A Constructivist Approach to Instructional Design in an Online, Competency-Based Child Welfare Practice Course*. Child and Youth Care Forum. 34(5): 1-27.

Bennett, M. (2016). *The convergence into an ideal thought: Critical thinking and metacognition.* Childhood Education. 92(1): 75–76.

Benson, l. P., P. C. Scales, S. F. Hamilton, and J. R. Sesma. (2007). Positive Youth Development: Theory, Research and Applications. *Handbook of Child Psychology*, John Wiley and Sons Inc: New York, United States.

Benson, P. L. (1997). All kids are our kids: What communities must do to raise caring and responsible children and adolescents. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.

Benson, P. L., M. Mannes, K. Pittman, and T. Ferber. (2004). Youth development, developmental assets and public policy. In R. M. Lerner & L. Steinberg (Eds.), *Handbook of adolescent psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 781–814). New York: Wiley.

Bernstein, R. J. (1983). Beyond Objectivism and Relativism. Oxford: Blackwell.

Besley, T. (2002). Counselling Youth: Foucault, Power, and the Ethics of Subjectivity. Westport, CT: Praeger

Bloom, G.A., T. M. Loughead, and J. Newin. (2008). *Team Building for Youth Sport*. Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. 79(9): 44-47.

Bonaccio, S. and R. S. Dalal (2006). *'Advice taking and decision-making: An integrative literature review, and implications for the organizational sciences'*. Organisational Behaviour and Human Decision Processes. 101(2): 127-151.

Botvin, G. J., and K. W. Griffin. (2004). *Life skills training: Empirical findings and future directions.* Journal of Primary Prevention. 25(2): 211-232.

Bourdieu, P. and L. J. D. Wacquant. (1992). An invitation to reflexive sociology. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bowers, E. P., A. V. Eye, J. V. Lerner, M. R. Arbeit, M. B. Weiner, P. Chase and J.P. Agans. (2011). *The role of ecological assets in positive and problematic developmental trajectories*. Journal of Adolescence. 34(6): 1151-1165.

Boyd, B. (2001). *Bringing leadership experiences to inner-city youth*. Journal of Extension. 39(4): 12-26.

Boyd, B., D. Herring, and G. Briers. (1992). *Developing life skills in youth*. Journal of Extension. 30(4): 1-10.

Boyd, B.L. (2001). *'Bringing leadership experiences to inner-city youth'*. Journal of Extension. 39(4): 28-44.

Bradley, J. L., and P. F. Conway. (2016). *A dual step transfer model: Sport and non-sport extracurricular activities and the enhancement of academic achievement*. British Educational Research Journal. 4: 703-728.

Brandtstadter, J. (1998). Action perspectives on human development. In W. Damon (Editor-in-Chief) and R. M. Lerner (Vol. Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology: Theoretical models of human development* (5th ed., pp. 807–863). New York: Wiley.

Braun V. and Clarke, V. (2013). *'Teaching thematic analysis: overcoming challenges and developing strategies for effective learning'*. The Psychologist. 26(2): 120-123.

Braun V. and Clarke, V. (2019). *'Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis'.* Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health. 11(4): 589-597.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006). *'Using thematic analysis in psychology'*. Qualitative Research in Psychology. 3(2): 77–101.

Brendtro, L.K. (2009). The Circle of Courage and RAP Training. *The Evidence Base*. Available at http://www.acwa.asn.au/Downloads/ForumProceedings/CC_and_RAP_Evidence_Base1.pdf (Accessed: 20 March 2020).

Bridgeland, J., M. Bruce, and A. Hariharan. (2013). The missing piece: A national survey on how social and emotional learning can empower children and transform schools. *Civic*

Enterprises with Peter D. Hart Research Associates. Retrieved from http://www.civicenterprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/CASEL-Report-lowres-FINAL.pd (Accessed: 10 November 2020).

Brodsky, A. (2008). Researcher as instrument. In L.M. Given (Ed.), The SAGE encyclopaedia of qualitative research methods (pp. 767-768). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bronfenbrenner, U. & Ceci, S. J. (1994). *Nature-nurture reconceptualized: A bioecological model.* Psychological Review. 101: 568-586.

Bronfenbrenner, U. and G. Evans. (2000). Developing Science in the 21st Century: Emerging Questions, Theoretical Models, Research Designs and Empirical Findings. Blackwell Publishers: Oxford. USA.

Bronfenbrenner, U. and P. A. Morris. (1998). The Ecology of Developmental Processes. In W. Damon (Series Ed.) and R. M. Lerner (Vol. Ed.). *The handbook of child psychology.* Theoretical models of human development (5th ed. Pp. 993-1028). New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design. Cambridge, M.A. Harvard University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Recent advances in research on the ecology of human development. In R. K. Silbereisen, K. Eyferth & G. Rudinger (Eds.), Development as action in context: Problem behaviour and normal youth development. New York: Springer Verlag.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1992). Ecological systems theory. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, United States.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1995). Developmental ecology through space and time: A future perspective. In Examining lives in context: Perspectives on the ecology of human development. ed. P. Moen, G.H. Elder Jr., and K. Laubscher, 619–647. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (2007). The Bioecological Model of Human Development Handbook of Child Psychology. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Brown, M. E., & Mitchell, L. K. (2010). Ethical leadership: A review and future directions. The Leadership Quarterly, 17(6), 595–616.

Bumbarger, B., and M. T. Greenberg. (2002). Next steps in advancing research on positive youth development. *Prevention and Treatment*. 5(16): 8-26.

Burrell, G. and G. Morgan.(1979). Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis. London: Heinemann Educational.

Calbert, M., S. Zeldin, and A. Weisenbach. (2002). Youth involvement for community, organisational and youth development: *Directions for research, evaluation and practice*. Chevy Chase, MD: Innovation Centre for Community and Youth Development.

Callow, N., M. J. Smith, L. Hardy, C. A. Arthur, and J. Hardy. (2009). *Measurement of transformational leadership and its relationship with team cohesion and performance level*. Journal of Applied Sport Psychology. 21: 395-412.

Camino, L. and S. Zeldin. (2002). *'From Periphery to Centre: Pathways for Youth Civic Engagement in the day-today life of Communities'*. Applied Developmental Science. (4): 213-220.

Camiré, M. and P. Trudel. (2011). *Preferred sporting environment and coaching behaviours: Perspectives from Canadian high school athletes*. PHENex. 3(3): 1- 16.

Camiré, M., P. Trudel, and T. Forneris. (2012). *Coaching and transferring life skills: Philosophies and strategies used by model high school coaches*. The Sport Psychologist. 26: 243–260.

Carnegie, D. (1936). How to win friends and influence people. Simon and Schuster: USA.

Case, A. D. (2017). *A critical-positive youth development model for intervening with minority youth at risk for delinquency*. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry. 87(5): 510-519.

Catalano, R. F., and J. D. Hawkins, M. L. Berglund, J. A. Pollard, and M. W. Arthur. (2002). *Prevention science and positive youth development: Competitive or cooperative frameworks?* Journal of Adolescent Health. 31: 230–239.

Catalano, R. F., L. M. Berglund, J. A. M Ryan. (2004) . *Positive youth development in the United States: research findings on evaluations of positive youth development programs.* Prevention Treatment. 5 (15): 9-21.

Cater, M., and K. Jones. (2014). *Measuring perceptions of engagement in teamwork in youth development programs*. Journal of Experiential Education. 37: 176–186.

Cawley, A. (2018). *The impact of knowledge transfer activities on farm level outcomes.* Department of Management. National University of Galway. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

Centre for Youth Development and Policy Research. (1996). Advancing youth development: A curriculum for training youth workers. Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development. Retrieved from https://www.nj.gov/dcf/documents/behavioral/providers/YDICurriculum.pdf (Accessed 02 February 2021).

Charmaz, K. (2006). Constructing Grounded Theory. Sage Publications: London.

Chamberlain, K. (2000). *Methodolatry and Qualitative Health Research*. Journal of Health Psychology. 5(3): 285–296.

Cheng, C. K., S. Chan, Z. Hong Wan, and H. K. Hung. (2015). *Towards a Curriculum Framework for Developing Teachers' Personal Knowledge Management Competencies*. International E-Journal of Advances in Education. 1(2): 105-125.

Chi, M. T. H., and K. A. VanLehn. (2012). *Seeing deep structure from the interactions of surface features*. Educational Psychologist. 47: 177–188.

Chickering, A. W,. and S. C. Ehrmann. (1996), *"Implementing the Seven Principles: Technology as Lever*." AAHE. 10: 3-6.

Chinkov, A. and N. Holt. (2016). *Implicit Transfer of Life Skills through participation in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.* Journal of Applied Sport Psychology. 28(2): 139-153.

Chu, P. S., D. A. Saucier, and E. Hafner. (2010). *Meta-analysis of the relationships between social support and well-being in children and adolescents*. Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology. 29(6): 624–645.

Clandinin, J. and M. Connelly. (2000). Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research. San Francisco. Jossey-Bass.

Coakley, J. (2011). *What counts as "positive development?".* Journal of Sport and Social Issues. 35(3): 306-324.

Cochran-Smith, M., and S. L. Lytle. (1999). *Relationships of knowledge and practice: Teacher learning in IJAEDU*. International E-Journal of Advances in Education. (1)2: 249-305..

Cohen L., L. Manion, and K. Morrison. (2007). Research Methods in Education (6th Ed). Routledge: New York.

Cohen L., L. Manion, and K. Morrison. (2011). Research Methods in Education (7th Ed). Routledge: New York.

Cohen L., L. Manion, and K. Morrison. (2018). Research Methods in Education (8th Ed). Routledge: New York.

Connell, J.P., M. A. Gambone, and T. Smith. (2001). Youth development in community settings: Challenges to our field and our approach. In P. Benson and K. Pittman (Eds.), Trends in youth development: Visions, realities, and challenges. Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Conner, J.O., And K. Strobel. (2007). *Leadership development: an examination of individual and programmatic growth.* Journal of Adolescent Research. 22(3): 275-297.

Corbin, J., and A. Strauss. (2015). Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory *(4th ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Côté, J., and J. Fraser-Thomas. (2007). Youth involvement in sport. In P. Crocker (Ed.), Sport psychology: A Canadian perspective (pp. 270–298). Toronto, Canada: Pearson.

Côté, J., and W. Gilbert. (2009). *An integrative definition of coaching effectiveness and expertise.* International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching. 4(3): 307–323.

Côté, J., J. Turnidge, and M.B. Evans. (2014). *The dynamic process of development through sport*. *Kinesiologic Slovenia*. 20: 14-16.

Covey, S. R. (1991). Principle-centred Leadership. New York: Fireside.

Covington, C. (1995). No Story, No Analysis? The role of narrative in interpretation. Wiley Online Library.

Cresswell, J. M. (1994). Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). Five Qualitive Approaches to inquiry. Qualitative inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among five Approaches. Pp. 53-84. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.

Cushion, C. (2010). Coach behaviour. In Sport coaching: Professionalisation and practice. Ed. J. Lyle and C. Cushion. Pp. 43–61. London: Elsevier

Daft, R.L (2011). The Leadership Experience. 6th Ed. Centage Learning: United States.

Damon, W. (2004). *What is positive youth development?* The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. 59: 13-24.

Damon, W,. and R. M. Lerner. (2006). Handbook of Child Psychology, Theoretical Models of Human Development. New York: Wiley publishing.

Gould D., and K. D. Voelker. (2012). *Enhancing Youth Leadership Through Sport and Physical Education*. Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance. 83(3): 38-41.

Danish, S. J. (2000). Youth and community development: How after-school programming can make a difference. In S.J. Danish, & T.P. Glottal. (Eds.), Developing competent youth and strong communities through after-school programming. (pp. 275–301). Washington, DC: CWLA.

Danish, S. J., and V. C. Nellen. (1997). *New roles for sport psychologists: Teaching life skills through sport to at-risk youth.* Quest. 49: 100-113.

Danish, S. J., R. J. Fazio, V. C. Nellen, and S. S. Owens. (2002). Teaching life skills through sport: Community-based programmes to enhance adolescent development. In J. L. Van Raalte & B.

W. Brewer (Eds.), Exploring sport and exercise psychology (p. 269–288). American Psychological Association.

Danish, S. J., A. J. Petitpas, and B. D. Hale. (1993). *Life development intervention for athletes: Life skills through sports.* The Counselling Psychologist. 21: 352–385.

Danish, S.J. (2002). Teaching Life Skills through Sport. In Gatz, M., Messner, M.A., & Ball-Rokeach, S.J. Paradoxes of Youth and Sport. State University of New York Press.

Denzin, N. K. and Y. S. Lincoln. (1994). Handbook of Qualitive Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Denzin, N. and Y. Lincoln. (2003). The landscape of qualitative research; Theories and issues. Second edition. London: Sage.

Department of Education and Skills Report (2012). Get Active! Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport for Children and Young People: A Guiding Framework. Published by The Professional Development Service for Teachers. Retrieved by https://assets.gov.ie/24930/e079cd26727e4d8283cde036c60683da.pdf (Accessed 04 June 2020).

Department of Education and Skills (2014). Discussion paper: National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland 2014-2020. Retrieved by https://www.scoilnet.ie/esd/ (Accessed on 02 February 2020).

Department of Human Services (2008). Changing Habits and Reaching Targets, Published in House. Retrieved by https://www.vgls.vic.gov.au/client/en_AU/search/asset/1162002 (Accessed on 06 April 2020).

Dewey, J. (1897). My Pedagogic Creed. The Demands of Sociology Upon Pedagogy. E.L. Kellogg & Company.

Dolan, P. and S. Redmond. (2010). Youth civic engagement and support: promoting well-being with the assistance for a UNESCO agenda. Pp. 111-126. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, Philadelphia, PA.

Dryfoos J. (1990). Adolescents at Risk: Prevalence and Prevention. New York: Oxford University Press.

Durlak, J., R. Weissburg, A. Dymnicki, R. Taylor, and K. Schellinger. (2011). *The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions.* Department of Psychology. 82(1): 405-432.

Eccles, J.S., B. L. Barber, M. Stone, and J. Hunt. (2003). *Extracurricular activities and adolescent development.* The Journal of Social Issues. 59: 865-889

Edelman, A., P. Gill, K. Comerford, M. Larson, and Hare, R. (2004). 'Youth Development and Youth Leadership: A Background Paper', Washington DC: Institute for Educational Leadership, National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth.

Eisenberg, N., T. L. Spinrad, and A. Knafo-Noam. (2015). Prosocial development. In M. E. Lamb & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), Handbook of child psychology and developmental science: Socioemotional processes (pp. 610–656). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Elias M. J., J. E. Zins and R. P. Weissberg. (1997). Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Engle, R. A., D. P. Lam, X. S. Meyer, and S. E. Nix. (2012). *How does expansive framing promote transfer? Several proposed explanations and a research agenda for investigating them*. Educational Psychologist. 47: 215–231

Erikson, E.H. (1959). *Identity and the life cycle*. Psychological Issues. 1:18-164.

Eriksson, M., M. Ghazinour, and A. Hammarstrom. (2018). *Different uses of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory in public mental health research: what is their value for guiding public mental health policy and practice?* Journal of Social Theory Health. 16:414–433.

Kendellen, K., and M. Camiré (2015). *Experiences of former high school athletes*. International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology. 15: 395-408.

King, N., and J. Brooks. (2017). *Thematic Analysis in Organisational Research*. In The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods, edited by C. Cassell, A. L. Cunliffe, and G. Grandy, 219–236. London: Sage.

Ferber, T. and K. Pittman, and T. Marshall. (2002). State youth policy: Helping all youth to grow up fully prepared and fully engaged. Takoma Park, MD: The Forum for Youth Investment. Retrieved on https://forumfyi.org/ (Accessed 10th April 2020)

Flanagan, C.A., J. M. Bowes, B. Jonsson, B. Csapo, and E. Sheblanova. (1998). *Ties that bind: Correlates of adolescents' civic commitments in seven countries*. Journal of Social Issues. 54: 457-475.

Flick, U. (2004). An Introduction to Qualitative Research (4th edition). London: Sage.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. Qualitative Inquiry. 12: 219-245.

Ford, D. H., and R. M. Lerner. (1992). Developmental systems theory: An integrative approach. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Forneris, T., M. Camiré, and P. Trudel. (2011). *Examining how model youth sport coaches learn to facilitate positive youth development.* Physical education and sport pedagogy. 19(1): 1-17.

Forneris, T., M. A. Whitley, and B. Barker. (2013). *The reality of implementing community based sport and physical activity programmes to enhance the development of underserved youth: Challenges and potential strategies.* Quest. 65: 313-331.

Forum for Youth Investment. (2001). Aligning Youth Agendas: A Rationale for the Forum for Youth Investment. Takoma Park, MD: International Youth Foundation. Retrieved on https://forumfyi.org/ (Accessed 03 June 2020)

Frankfort-Nachmias, C. and D. Nachimas. (1992). Research Methods in Social Sciences. London: Edward Arnold.

Franklin, T. (2009). *"How partnership works."* Development in Practice. 19(6): 789–792.

Fraser, M.W., L. D. Kirby, and P. R. Smokowski. (2004). Risk and resilience in childhood. In M. W. Fraser (Eds.), Risk and resilience in childhood: An ecological perspective (2nd ed. pp. 13-66). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Fraser, T., and J. Coté. (2009). *Understanding adolescents' positive and negative developmental experiences in sport*. The Sport Psychologist. 23: 3-23.

Fraser, T., J. Cóté, and J. Deakin. (2005). *Youth sport programs: An avenue to foster positive development.* Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy. 10: 19-40.

Freire, P. (2000). Pedagogy of the oppressed (30th Anniversary Edition). Continuum International Publishing Group.

Gadamer H-G. (2004). Truth and method. 2nd revised edn. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Gambone, M.A., H. C. Yu, H. Lewis-Charp, C. L. Sipe, and J. Lacose. (2004). *A comparative analysis of community youth development strategies*. CIRCLE Working Paper 23, October 2004. College Park, MD: CIRCLE: The Centre for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement. Retrieved on https://tischcollege.tufts.edu/research/circle Accessed 04 July 2020)

Garcia, E. (2002). *Integrating knowledge and expanding horizons in developmental sport psychology: A bioecological perspective*. Quest. 54: 1–20.

Gardner, J.W. (1987). Leadership Development. Leadership Papers. Leadership Studies Program sponsored by the Independent Sector, Washington, D.C.

Gardner, W., and B. Rogoff. (1990). *Children's Deliberateness of Planning According to Task Circumstances.* Developmental Psychology. 26(3): 480-487.

Gauvain, M. and B. Rogoff. (1989). *Collaborative problem solving and children's planning skills*. Developmental Psychology. 25(1): 139–151.

Geldhof, G.J., E. P. Bowers, S. K. Johnson, R. Hershberg, L. Hilliard, R. M. Lerner. (2013). Relational developmental systems theories of positive youth development: methodological issues and implications. In P.C.M. Molenaar, R.M. Lerner, & K. Newell (Eds.), Handbook of developmental systems theory and methodology (pp. 66–94). New York: Guilford.

Gibbs, G., C. Rust, A. Jenkins, and D. Jaques. (1994). Developing Students' Transferable Skills. The Oxford Centre for Staff Development. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Gick, M. L., and K. J. Holyoak. (1980). *Analogical problem solving*. *Cognitive Psychology.* 12(3): 306–355.

Giedd, J.N., J. Blumenthal, N.O. Jeffries, F. X. Castellanos, H. Liu, A. Zijdenbos, T. Paus, A. C. Evans and J.L Rapoport. (1999). *'Brain development during childhood and adolescence: a longitudinal MRIstudy'*. Nature Neuroscience. 2(10): 861-863.

Ginwright, S., and J. Cammarota. (2002). *New terrain in youth development: The promise of a social justice approach.* Social justice. 29(4): 82-95.

Glasbergen, P. (2007). *"*Setting the scene: the partnership paradigm in the making." In Partnerships, Governance and Sustainable Development. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

Glaser, J. and G. Laudel. (2013). *Life with and without coding: two methods for early-stage data analysis in qualitative research aiming at casual explanations*. Qualitative Social Research. 14(2): 1-24.

Godfrey, E. B., and E. Burson. (2018). *Interrogating the intersections: How intersectional perspectives can inform developmental scholarship on critical consciousness.* New directions for child and adolescent development. 161: 17–38.

Godfrey, E. B., and J. K. Grayman. (2014). *Teaching citizens: The role of open classroom climate in fostering critical consciousness among youth*. Journal of Youth and Adolescence. 43: 1801–1817.

Goleman, D., R. Boyatzis, and A. McKee. (2002). The New Leader: Transforming the Art of Leadership into the Science of Results. London: Time Warner.

Gonzalez, M., M. Kokozos, C. M. Byrd, and K. E. McKee. (2020). *Critical positive youth development: A framework for centring critical consciousness.* Journal of Youth Development. 15(6): 24-43.

Goodson, I. F., and P. Sikes. (2001*). Studying teachers' life histories and professional practice.* In P. Sikes (Ed.), Life history research in educational settings-learning from lives (57-74). Buckingham: Open University Press.

Gordon H. R. (2009). We Fight to Win: Inequality and the Politics of Youth Activism. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Gordon, B., and S. Doyle. (2015). *Teaching personal and social responsibility and transfer of learning: Opportunities and challenges for teachers and coaches*. Journal of Teaching in Physical Education. 34(1): 15-161.

Goudas, M., and G. Giannoudis. (2010). *A qualitative evaluation of a life-skills programme in a physical education context*. Hellenic Journal of Psychology. 7: 315–334.

Gould, D., and S. Carson. (2008). *Life skills development through sport: Current status and future directions.* International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology. 1: 58-78.

Govan R. H., J. S. Fernandez, D. G Lewis. (2015). *International perspectives on youth leadership development through community organising*. New Directions for Student Leadership. 148: 87–99.

Green, C. (2008) 'Sport as an agent for social and personal change', in V. Girginov (ed.) Management of Sports Development, Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Green, M. (2006). From *'Sport for All' to Not About 'Sport' at All? Interrogating Sport Policy Interventions.* European Sport Management Quarterly. 6(3): 217-238.

Griffin, K. W.*,* G. Scheier, J. Botvin, and T. Diaz. (2001). *"Protective Role of Personal Competence Skills in Adolescent Substance Use: Psychological Well-Being as a Mediating Factor."* Psychology of Addictive Behaviours. 15 (3): *194–203.*

Gruber, H., L. C. Law, H. Mandl, and A. Renkl. (1996). *Situated Learning and Transfer*. Contemporary Educational Psychology. 23(1): 90-108.

Guba, E. G., and Y. S. Lincoln. (1994). *Competing paradigms in qualitative research. Moving beyond the metaphor of transfer of learning.* British Educational Research Journal. 35: 619-638.

Hall, Stuart. (1990). "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." In Identity, Community, Culture, Difference, edited by J. Rutherford, 222–237. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Hallberg, L. R. M. (2006). *The "core category" of grounded theory: Making constant comparisons*. International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being. 1(3): 141–148.

Halpern, R. (2005). *Instrumental relationships: A potential relational model for inner-city youth programs*. Journal of Community Psychology. 33: 11-20.

Hamby, S. E. Taylor, A. Smith, K. Mitchell, L. Jones and C. Newlin. (2019). *New measures to assess the sociology of youth: A mixed-methods study*. Journal of Community Psychology. 2: 1-16.

Hammersley, M. and P. Atkinson. (1983). Ethnography: Principles in Practice. London: Routledge.

Hammersley, M. (2000). Taking Sides in Social Research: Essays on Bias and Partisanship. London: Routledge.

Hammersley, M. (2007). *The issue of quality in qualitative research*. International Journal of Research and Method in Education. 30(3): 287-305.

Hansen, M.T. (1999). *"The search-transfer problem: the role of weak ties in sharing knowledge across organizational subunits"*. Administrative Science Quarterly. 44(1): 82-111.

Harley, D. (2015). *Perceptions of hopelessness among low-income African-American adolescents through the lens of photovoice.* Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work. 24(1): 18-38.

Hawkins, J. D., J. Jenson, J. DeVylder, R. Catalano, G. Botvin, M. Fraser, and B. Bumbarger. (2016). Policy Recommendations for Meeting the Grand Challenges to Ensure Healthy Development for all Youth. Grand Challenges for Social Work Initiative Policy. Cleveland, OH: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare. Retrieved on https://aaswsw.org/ Accessed 30 November 2020).

Heberle, A. E., L. J. Rapa, and F. Farago. (2020). *Critical consciousness in children and adolescents: A systematic review, critical assessment, and recommendations for future research*. Psychological Bulletin. 146(6): 525-551.

Heifetz, R.A. (1994). Leadership without Easy Answers. Cambridge, MA: Belk nap Press.

Hellison, D. R. (2011). Teaching personal and social responsibility through physical activity. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Hellison, D., and D. Walsh. (2002). *Responsibility-based youth programmes evaluation: Investigating the investigations*. Quest. 54: 292-307.

Hernez-Broome, G. and R. Hughes. (2004). *'Leadership development: Past, present and future'. Human Resource Planning*. 27(1): 24-32.

Hilliard, R. C., L. C. Blom, and M. A. Sullivan. (2019). *Positive youth development and citizenship behaviours in young athletes: U.S. and Canadian coaches' perspectives*. Physical Educator. 76(5): 1135-1156.

Histro, L. (2001). Children in their learning Environments: Theoretical perspectives. Unit of Educational Psychology Research Reports. University of Helsinki. Retrieved on https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/14915607.pdf (Accessed on 08 May 2020).

Hodge, K. P. (1989). *Character-building in sport: Fact or fiction.* New Zealand Journal of Sports Medicine. 17: 23-25.

Hodge, K., S. Danish, T. Forneris, and A. Miles. (2016*). Life skills and basic psychological needs: A conceptual framework for life skills interventions*. *In N. L. Holt (Ed.),* Positive youth development through sport (2nd ed., pp. 45–56). London: Routledge.

Hoffman, L. W. (1993). Hoffman Developmental Psychology Today. McGraw-Hill Companies.

Holt, K., and K. Seki. (2012). *"Global Leadership: A Developmental Shift for Everyone."* Industrial and Organizational Psychology. 5(2): 196–215.

Holt, N. L., and M. I. Jones. (2008). Future directions for positive youth development and sport*.* In N. L. Holt (Ed.), Positive youth development through sport (pp. 122–132). London: Routledge.

Holt, N. L., and K. C. Neely. (2011). *Positive youth development through sport: A review*. Revista de Iberoamericana de Psicología del Ejercicio y el Deporte *(English version)*. 6: 299–316

Holt, N. L., C. J. Deal, and C. Smyth. (2016). Future directions for positive youth development through sport. In N. L. Holt (ed.), Positive youth development through sport (2nd ed., pp. 229–240). London: Routledge.

Holt, N. L., K. C. Neely, L. G. Slater, M. Camire, J. Cote, J. Fraser-Thomas, and K. A. Tamminen. (2017). *A grounded theory of positive youth development through sport based on results from a qualitative meta-study*. International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology. 10(1): 1–49.

Holt, N. L., K. A. Tamminen, D. E. Black, J. L. Mandigo, and K. R. Fox. (2009). *Youth sport parenting styles and practices.* Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology. 31: 37 –59.

Holt, N. L., L. N. Tink, J. L. Mandigo, and K. R. Fox. (2008). *Do youth learn life skills through their involvement in high school sport? A case study*. Canadian Journal of Education. 31(2): 281–304.

Holt, N.L., and Z. L. Sehn. (2008). *Processes associated with positive youth development and participation in competitive youth sport.* Positive youth development through sport. pp.24–33. London, UK: Routledge.

Hooks, b. (1994). Teaching to transgress. Routledge.

Hopson, B. and M. Scally (1981). Life Skills Teaching*.* London: McGraw-Hill.

Hudson, A.C. and A. C. Bentley. (2010). *Human Development in Societal Science*. Annual Review of Psychology. 61:411–37

Hurrelmann, K. (1988). Social structure and personality development. The individual as a productive processor of reality. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Imani-Fields, N., F. Moncloa, and C. Smith. (2018). 4-H social justice youth development: A guide for youth development professionals. London, UK: Routledge.

Irish Teachers Journal (2018). Irish National Teachers' Organisation. Volume 6 number 1. Retrieved on https://www.into.ie/app/uploads/2019/07/IrishTeachersJournal2018.pdf (Accessed on 28 November 2019).

Jacobs, J. M., and P.M Wright. (2018). *Transfer of life skills in sport-based youth development programs: A conceptual framework bridging learning to application*. Quest. 70: 81 –99.

Jacobs, J. M., M. Lawson, V. N. Ivy, and K. R. Richards. (2017). *Enhancing the Transfer of Life Skills from Sports-based Youth Development Programmes to School, Family and Community Settings*. Journal of Amateur Sport. Family Issue. 17: 20-43.

Jelicic, H., D. Bobek, E. D. Phelps, J. V. Lerner, and R, M, Lerner. (2007). *Using positive youth development to predict contribution and risk behaviours in early adolescence: Findings from the first two waves of the 4-H study of positive youth development.* International Journal of Behavioural Development. 31(3): 263–273.

Johnson, Bassin and Shaw (1996). Reconnecting Youth & Community: A Youth Development Approach. National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth. Available from the National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED402402.pdf Accessed on 01 February 2021).

Johnson, W. D., R. T. Johnson, and E. D. Holubec. (1994). The Nuts and Bolts of Cooperative Learning. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Jones, M. I., and D. Lavallee. (2009). *Exploring perceived life skills development and participation in sport.* Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise. 1: 36 –50.

Jones, M.I., D. Lavallee, and D. Tod. (2011). *Developing communication and organization skills: The ELITE life skill reflective practice programme.* The Sport Psychologist. 25: 159-176.

Jørgensen, H., P. N. Lemyre and N. Holt. (2019). *Multiple Learning Contexts and the Development of Life Skills Among Canadian Junior National Team Biathletes*. Journal of Applied Sport Psychology. 0: 1-24

Josselson, R., and A. Lieblich. (1995). The narrative study of lives, Interpreting experience: The narrative study of lives. Sage Publications, Inc.

Jowett, S., K. Kanakoglou, and J. Passmore. (2012). *The application of the 3+1Cs relationship model in executive coaching*. Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research. 64(3): 183–197.

K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (2011). Handbook of qualitative research (pp. 105-117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Kahn, L., S. Hewes, and R. Ali. (2009). Taking the lead: Youth leadership in theory and practice, TheYoung Foundation. Retrieved at:

http://www.youngfoundation.org/files/images/takingthelead.pdf (Accessed: 21 January 2021)

Kendellen, K., and M. Camiré. (2015). *Examining former athletes' developmental experiences in high school sport*. SAGE. 6: 1-10.

Kendellen, K., and M. Camiré. (2017). *Examining the life skill development and transfer*. International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology. 15(4): 395-408.

Kendellen, K., (2019). *Life Skill Transfer from Sport to Life*. Psychology of Sport and Exercise. *40*: 23-32.

Kiely, E. and R. Meade. (2018). *Contemporary Irish Youth Work Policy And Practice: A Governmental Analysis.* Journal of Child & Youth Services. 31(2): 1-26.

Kimmel, A. J. (1988). Ethics and Values in Applied Social Research. Beverley Hills, CA: Sage.

Klau, M. (2006*). Exploring youth leadership in theory and practice*. New Directions for Youth Development. 106: 57–87.

Klau. M. (2006). '*Exploring youth leadership in theory and practice'*. New Directions for Youth Development. 106: 57-87.

Kochanek, J., and K. Erickson. (2019). *Interrogating Positive Youth Development Through Sport Using Critical Race Theory*. Quest. 1-17

Kouzes, J.M. and B. Z. Posner. (1995). The leadership challenge: How to keep getting extraordinary things done in organisations. San Franciso: Jossey-Bass.

Krebs, R. J. (2009). *Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development and the process of development of sports talent.* International Journal of Sport Psychology. 40: 108–135.

Krebs, R. J. (2009). *Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory of Human Development and the process of development of sports talent*. International Journal of Sport Psychology. 40: 108 –135.

Kruger, R., and M. Casey. (2009). Focus groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research. Sage, Los Angeles, California.

Lardier, D., P. Garcia-Reid, and R. Reid. (2018). *The interacting effects of psychological empowerment and ethnic identity on indicators of well-being among youth of colour.* Journal of Community Psychology. 46(4). 489–501.

Larson, R. (2000). *Toward a psychology of positive youth development*. American Psychologist. 55: 170–183.

Larson, R., J. Eccles, and J. A. Gootman, J. A. (2004). *Features of positive developmental settings.* Prevention Researcher. 11(2): 8-13.

Larson, R., D. M. Hansen, and G. Moneta. (2006). *Differing profiles of developmental experiences across types of organised youth activities.* Developmental Psychology. 42: 849–863.

Larson, R., K. Walker, and N. Pearce. (2005). *A comparison of youth-driven and adult-driven youth programs: Balancing inputs from youth and adults.* Journal of Community Psychology. 33: 57–74.

Lave, J. (1988). Cognition in practice: Mind, mathematics and culture in everyday life. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press

Lave, J. Wenger, E. (1991). Situated Learning Legitimate Peripheral Participation. Cambridge University Press.

Leberman, S., L. McDonald, and S. Doyle. (2006). The transfer of learning: Participants' perspectives of adult education and training. Berlin: Gower Publishing Ltd.

Lee, O., and T. Martinek. (2012). *Factors influencing transfer of responsibility-based physical activity program goals into classrooms*. Physical Educator. 69: 188-207.

Lee, O., and T. Martinek. (2013). *Understanding the transfer of values-based youth sport program goals from a bioecological perspective*. Quest. 65: 300–312.

Lefevre, M,. K. Tanner, and B. Luckock. (2008). *Developing social work students' communication skills with children and young people: a model for the qualifying level curriculum.* Child and Family Social Work. 13(2): 166-176.

Leidner, D., and S. Jarvenpaa. (1995). *The use of information technology to enhance management school education: A Theoretical View*. MIS Quarterly. 19(3): 265-291.

Lerner, R. M. (1998). Theories of human development: Contemporary perspectives. *In W. Damon (Editor-in-Chief) & R. M. Lerner (Vol. Ed.),* Handbook of child psychology: Theoretical models of human development (5th ed., pp. 1–24). New York: Wiley.

Lerner, R. M. (2004). Liberty: Thriving and civic engagement among American youth. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lerner, R. M., and D. R. Castellino. (2002). *Contemporary developmental theory and adolescence: Developmental systems and applied developmental science*. Journal of Adolescent Health. 31(6): 122-135.

Lerner, R. M., and D. R. Castellino. (2002). *Contemporary developmental theory and adolescence: Developmental systems and applied developmental science*. Journal of Adolescent Health. 31(6): 122-135.

Lerner, R. M., and J. B. Benson. (2011). *Positive Youth Development*. Advances in Child Development and Behaviour. 41: 2-415.

Lerner, R. M., C. Brentano, and E. M. Dowling, and P. M. Anderson. (2002). *Positive youth development: Thriving as the basis of personhood and civil society*. New Directions for Youth Development. 95(10): 11–33.

Lerner, R. M., J. D. Brown, and C. Kier. (2005). Adolescence: Development, diversity, context, and application (Canadian Ed). Toronto: Pearson.

Lerner, R. M., J. V. Lerner, E. Bowers, and G. J. Geldhof. (2015*).* Positive youth development and relational developmental systems. In W. F. Overton & P. C. Molenaar (Eds.), Theory and method. The handbook of child psychology and developmental science*.* pp. 607–651. John Wiley & Sons.

Lerner, R.M. & L. Steinberg. (2009). Handbook of contemporary issues*.* (3rd edn). London: Wiley.

Lerner, R.M., A. E. Alberts, and D.Bobek. (2007). Thriving Youth, flourishing civil society. How positive youth development strengthens democracy and social justice. In Civic Engagement as an educational goal. Retrieved https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/Projekte/Jungbewegt/Downloads/Fachexpertisen/ShortPaper_Lerner.pdf (Accessed on 23 June 2020).

Lerner, R.M., J. V. Lerner, J. B. Almerigi, C. Theokas, E. Phelps, (2005). *Positive Youth Development, Participation in Community Youth Development Programs, and Community Contributions of Fifth-Grade Adolescents: Findings from the First Wave of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development*. The Journal of Early Adolescence*.* 25(1): 17-71.

Libby, M., M. Sedonaen, and S. Bliss. (2006). *The mystery of youth leadership development: the path to just communities*. New Directions for Youth Development: Youth Leadership. 109: 13- 25.

Lincoln, Y. S., and E. G. Guba. (1985). Naturalistic Inquiry. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Lobato, J. (2012). *The actor-oriented transfer perspective and its contributions to educational research and practice*. Educational Psychologist. 47: 232–247.

Lorion, R. P., and H. Sokoloff. (2003). Building assets in real-world communities. In R. M. Lerner & P. L. Benson (Eds.), Developmental assets and asset-building communities (pp. 121–156). New York: Kluwer Academic.

Lower, L., T. Newman, and D. Anderson-Butcher. (2017). *Validity and Reliability of the Teamwork Scale for Youth*. Research on Social Work Practice. 27(6): 716-725.

Lundy, O., and A. Cowling. (2000). Strategic Human Resource Management, Cracow: Oficyna Ekonomiczna

MacNeill, C.A. (2006). Bridging generations: applying "adult" leadership theories to youth leadership development. *New Directions for Youth Development*. 109, pp. 27-43.

Maguire, M. H. (2005). *What if you talked to me? I could be interesting: ethical research considerations in engaging with bilingual/multicultural child participants in human inquiry. Qualitative Social Research*. 6 (1), pp. 1-24.

Mahoney, J., Larson, R., & Eccles, J. (2005). Organised activities as contexts of development: extracurricular activities, after school, and community programmes*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Maor, D. (2000). A *teacher professional development program on using a constructivist multimedia learning environment. Learning Environments Research.* 2: pp. 307-330.
Martinek, T., & Hellison, D. (2009). Youth leadership in sport and physical education. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Martinek, T., & Hellison, D. (2016). Learning responsibility through sport and physical activity. In N. L. Holt (Ed.), Positive youth development through sport (2nd ed., pp. 180-190). London, UK: Routledge.

Martinek, T., & Lee, O. (2012*). From community gyms to classrooms: A framework for values-transfer in schools. Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*. 83: pp. 33-51.

Martinek, T., Schilling, T., & Johnson, D. (2001). Transferring personal and social
Maslow, A. (1962). Toward a psychology of being. D Van Nostrand.

Masten, *A*. 2001. *"Ordinary Magic: Resilience Processes in Development."* American Psychologist. 56 (3): 227–238.

McDaniel, M. (2017). *Social justice youth work: Actualizing youth rights*. Journal of Youth Development. 12(1), 136-148.

McDonough, M., Ullrich-French, S., Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A.J.,   & Riley, A. (2013). *Social relationships predict social responsibility among low-income youth in sport-based positive youth development programs*. Journal of Applied Sport Psychology. 25: 431–447.

McLaughlin, M. (2000). Community counts: How youth organizations matter for community development. Washington, DC: Public Education Network.

McMahon, S. (2018). Governing Youth Work Through Problems: A WPR Analysis of the Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Programmes. Thesis. Doctor of Social Science in the Faulty of Social Sciences: Maynooth University.

McManus, P., J. Walmsley, N. Argent, S. Baum, L. Bourke, J. Martin, B. Pritchard, and T. Sorenson. (2012). *"Rural Community and Rural Resilience: What is important to farmers in keeping their country towns alive?"*. Journal of Rural Studies. 28(1): 20-29.

Mead, G. H. (1934). Mind, self and society. From the standpoint of a social behaviourist. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Mercer, N. (2010). *The analysis of classroom talk: methods and methodologies*. British Journal of Educational Psychology. 80 (1): pp.1-14.

Merriam, I. (2013). Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Metz, R., J. Goldsmith, and A Arbreton. (2008). Putting It All Together: Guiding Principles for Quality After-School Programs Serving Preteens. Guiding principles for quality afterschool programs serving preteens. Philadelphia, PA: Public Private Ventures. Retrieved from http://www.issuelab.org/resource/putting_it_all_together_guiding_principles_for_quality_after_school_programs_serving_preteens (Accessed on 11 November 2020).

Miles, M. B., and A. M. Huberman. (1994). Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook (2nd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.

Morris, W., A. Henley, and D. Dowell. (2017). *"Farm diversification, entrepreneurship and technology adoption: Analysis of upland farmers in Wales."* Journal of Rural Studies. 53: 132-143.

Mortimer, J. and R. Larson. (2002). The changing adolescent experience: societal trends and the transition to adulthood. Cambridge University Press.

Mumford, M.D., S.J. Zaccaro, F. D. Harding, T. O. Jacobs and E. A. Fleishman. (2000). *'Leadership Skills for a Changing World: Solving Complex Social Problems'*. Leadership Quarterly. 11(1): 23-45.

Muro, M., and P. Jeffrey. (2008). *A critical review of the theory and application of social learning in participatory natural resource management processes*. Journal of environmental planning and management. 51(3). 325-344.

Murphy, S. E. and R. J. Reichard. (2011). Preface. In S. E. Murphy & R. J. Reichard (Eds.), Early development and leadership: Building the next generation of leaders (pp. 3-38). New York, NY: Routledge.

Nabavi, R. T. (2012). Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Social Cognition Learning Theory. Theories of Developmental Psychology. University of science and culture.

National Collaboration for Youth. (2003). What works: Essential elements of effective youth development programs. Retrieved from www.nydic.org/nydic/elements.html. (Accessed on 12 December 2020).

National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002). Community programs to support youth development. In Jacquelynne Eccles and Jennifer A. Goodman, (Eds.), Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth: Board on Children, Youth and Families, Division of Behavioural and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences.

Newman, T. J. (2019). *Exploring Life Skill Development and Transfer: Experiences of Youth in a Community Sport-Based Positive Youth Development Program*. Thesis: in social work in The Ohio State University.

Newman, T., L. Lower, R. Wade-Mdivanian, A. Riley, and D. Anderson-Butcher. (2014). Promoting positive youth development among underserved youth in the United States through The Ohio State University's LiFEsports. In K. Gilbert & K. McPherson (Eds.), Urban Sports Development. Chicago, IL: Common Ground Publishing.

Newton, M., M. Fry, D. Watson, L. Gano-Overway, M. Kim, M. Magyar, and M. Guivernau. (2007). *Psychometric properties of the caring climate scale in a physical activity setting.* Revista de Psicologia del Deporte. 16: 67 –84.

Northhouse, P.G. (2004). Leadership: Theory and Practice. Sage Publications Inc., California.

O'Sullivan, M. (2010). *"Is this a partnership or a relationship? Concern worldwide maps the difference."* Development in Practice. 20(6): 734–739.

Ode, E. and Ayavoo. (2019). *The mediating role of knowledge application in the relationship between knowledge management practices and firm innovation.* Journal of Innovation and Knowledge. 5(3): 1-9.

Olenik, C. (2019). *The evolution of positive youth development as a key international development approach*. Global Social Welfare. 6(1), 5-15.

Overton, W. F. (1998). Developmental psychology: Philosophy, concepts, and methodology. In W. Damon (Editor-in-Chief) & R. M. Lerner (Vol. Ed.), Handbook of child psychology: Theoretical models of human development (5th ed., pp. 107–187). New York: Wiley.

Overton, W. F. (2013). *A new paradigm for developmental science: Relationism and relational developmental systems*. Applied Developmental Science. 17: 94-107.

Papacharisis, V., and M. Goudas. (2005*). The effectiveness of teaching a life skills program in a sport context*. Journal of Applied Sport Psychology. 17: 247-254.

Parton, N. (2006) Safeguarding Childhood: Early Intervention and Surveillance in a Late Modern Society. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). Qualitative research & evaluation methods. 3rd edition. Thousand Oaks.

Pellegrino, J. W., and M. L. Hilton. (2013). Education for Life and Work: Developing Transferable Knowledge and Skills in the 21st Century. Centre for Education; Division on Behavioural and Social Sciences and Education; National Research Council. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Perkin N. D., and G. Salomon. (2012*). Knowledge to Go: A Motivational and Dispositional View of Transfer.* Educational Psychologist. 47(3): 248-258.

Perkins, D.F. and L. M. Borden. (2003). Key elements of community youth development programs*.* In F.A. Villarruel, D.F. Perkins, L.M. Borden, and J.G. Keith, (Eds.), *Community youth development: Programs, policies, and practices* (pp.327-340). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Petitpas, A. J., A. E. Cornelius, J. L. Van Raalte, and T. Jones. (2005). *A framework for planning youth sport programs that foster psychosocial development*. The Sport Psychologist. 19: 63–80.

Pierce, S., K. Erickson, and R. Dinu. (2018). *Teacher-coaches' perceptions of life skills transfer from high school sport to the classroom*. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*. 31(4): 451–473.

Pierce, S., D. Gould, and M. Camiré. (2017). *Definition and model of life skill transfer.* International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology. 10: 186-211.

Pittman, K. J., and M. Cahill. (1991). A new vision: Promoting youth development. Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development, Centre for Youth Development and Policy Research.

Politis, J.D. (2003). *The connection between trust and knowledge management: what are its implications for team performance*. Journal of Knowledge Management. 7(5): 55-66.

Pozo, P., A. Grao-Cruces, and R. Pérez-Ordás. (2018). Teaching personal and social responsibility model-based programmes in physical education: A systematic review. European Physical Education Review. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Pring, R. (2015). Philosophy of Educational Research. London: Bloomsbury.

Ramsing, R., and J. Sibthorp. (2008). *The Role of Autonomy Support in Summer Camp Programs: Preparing Youth for Productive Behaviours*. Journal of Park and Recreation Administration. 26(2): 325-387.

Rauste-von Wright, M. (1986). *On personality and educational psychology*. Human Development. 29: 328-340.

Redmond, S., and P. Dolan. (2014). '*Towards a conceptual model of youth leadership development'.* Child and Family Social Work. 9(1): 1-10.

Resnick, L. B. (1989). *Developing mathematical knowledge*. American Psychologist. 44(2): 162–169.

Rew, L*.,* and S. D. Horner. (2003). *"Youth Resilience Framework for Reducing Health-Risk Behaviours in Adolescents."* Journal of Paediatric Nursing. 18(6): 379–388.

Rhind, D., S. Jowett, and R. Lorimer. (2013). *The Impact of Social Support on Student Athletes' satisfaction in individual sports*. Journal of sport and athletes in education. 5(1): 73-84

Rhodes, J. (2004). The critical ingredient: Caring youth-staff relationships in after-school settings. In G. Noam (Ed.), *Afterschool worlds:* Creating a new social space for development and learning (pp. 145-161). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Rhodes, J. E., R. Spencer, T. E. Keller, B. Liang, and G. Noam. (2006). *A model for the influence of mentoring relationships on youth development.* Journal of Community Psychology. 34(6): 691–707.

Ricketts. J., and R. Rudd. (2002). *A Comprehensive Leadership Education Model to Train, Teach, and Develop Leadership in Youth*. Journal of Career and Technical Education. 19(1): 1-17.

Ricketts. J.C. and R.D. Rudd. (2002). '*A comprehensive leadership education model to train, teach and develop leadership in youth'*. Journal of Career and Technical Education. 19(1): 7-17.

Riley, A., D. Anderson-Butcher, J. Logan, T. Newman, and J. Davis. (2017). *Staff practices and social skill outcomes in a sport-based youth program*. Journal of Applied Sport Psychology. 29(1): 59–74.

Roberts, Y. (2009). Grit: The skills for success and how they are grown. London: The Young Foundation.

Rogoff, B. (1984). Introduction: Thinking and learning in social context. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Rogoff, B. (1991). The joint socialisation of development by young children and adults. London, Routledge.

Rogoff, B., M. Gauvain, and S. Ellis. (1991). Development viewed in its cultural context. London, Routledge.

Rogoff, B., and J. V. Wertsch. (1984). Children's learning in the Zone of Proximal Development. New directions of child development. San Fransico: Jossey-Bass.

Rosa, E.D., and J. Tudge. (2013). *Urie Bronfenbrenner's Theory of Human Development: Its Evolution From Ecology to Bioecology*. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*. 5: 243–258.

Rose, P. (2010). *"Achieving education for all through public-private partnerships?"* Development in Practice. 20(4): 473–483.

Roth, J., and J. Brooks-Gunn. (2003). *What exactly is a youth development program? Answers from research and practice.* Applied Developmental Science. 7(2): 94–111.

Saidin, K., and A. Yaacob. (2016). Insider Researchers: Challenges and Opportunities. International Seminar on Generating Knowledge Through Research, University Utara Malaysia. Retrieved from http://ojs.umsida.ac.id/index.php/icecrs (Accessed on 12 August 2020).

Salomon, G., and D. N. Perkins. (1989). *Rocky roads to transfer: Rethinking mechanisms of a neglected phenomenon.* Educational Psychologist. 24: 113–142.

Sampson, R. J., S. W. Raudenbush, and F. Earls. (1997). *Neighbourhoods and violent crime: A multilevel study of collective efficacy*. Applied Development Science. 277(5328): 918–924.

Schilling, T., T. Martinek, T, and S. Carson. (2007). *Youth leaders' perceptions of commitment to a responsibility-based physical activity program*. Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport. 78(2): 48-60.

Schoenfeld, A. (1999). *Looking Towards the 21st Century: Challenges of Educational Theory and Practice*. Educational Researcher. (28)7: 4-14.

Schwartz, D. L., C. C. Chase, and J. D. Bransford. (2012). *Resisting overzealous transfer: Coordinating previously successful routines with needs for new learning*. Educational Psychologist. 47: 204–214.

Scribner, S. and M. Cole. (1973). *Cognitive Consequences of Formal and Informal Education*. Science of New Series. 182(4112): 553-559.

Seemiller, C. (2018). *A Competency-Based Model for Youth Leadership Development*. Journal of Leadership Education. 17(1): 56-72

Seevers, B.S., and T. J. Dormody. (1995). *Leadership life skills development: Perceptions of senior 4-H youth*. Journal of Extension. 33(4): 27-43.

Sewell, A. M., D. I. Gray, H. T. Blair, P. D. Kemp, P. R. Kenyon, S. T. Morris, and B.A. Wood. (2014). *"Hatching new ideas about herb pastures: Learning together in a community of New Zealand farmers and agricultural scientists*." Agricultural systems. 125: 63-73.

Shek, D.T. (2016). The role of positive youth development and family functioning in Chinese adolescent well-being: theoretical considerations and empirical evidence. In: Maggino F, editor. *A Life Devoted to Quality of Life*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Shek, D. T. (2012). *"Development of a Positive Youth Development Subject in a University Context in Hong Kong."* International Journal on Disability and Human Development. 11(3): 173–179.

Shen, J., S. Hiltz, and M. Bieber. (2008). *Learning Strategies in online collaborative examinations*. IEEE Transactions on Professional Communications. 51(1): 44-59.

Sherrod, L. R., C. A. Flanagan, and J. Youniss. (2002). *Dimensions of citizenship and opportunities for youth development: The what, why, when, where and who of citizen development.* Applied Developmental Science. (6): 264-272.

Sherrod, L. R., C. A. Flanagan, R. Kassimir, and A. K. Syvertsen. (2006). Youth activism: An international encyclopedia. Greenwood Publishing.

Shields, C. M. (2010). *Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts*. Educational Administration Quarterly. 46(4): 558-589.

Shields, C. M. (2016). Transformative leadership primer. Peter Lang.

Shriberg, A., D. L. Shriberg, and R. Kumari. (2005). Practicing Leadership; Principles and Applications. USA: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Sikes, P. (2006). *On Dodgy ground? Problematic and ethics in educational research.* International Journal of Research and Method in Education. 29(1): 105-17.

Small, S., and M. Memmo. (2004). *Contemporary models of youth development and problem prevention: Toward an integration of terms, concepts, and models.* Journal of Family Relations. 53: 3–11.

Smyth E. (1999). Do Schools Differ? Academic and Personal Development among Pupils in the Second-Level Sector Dublin. Oak Tree Press.

Smyth E. (2010). Single Sex Education: What does the research tell us? Economic and Social Research Institute. 171(1): 47-55.

Spence, J., and R. E. Lee. (2003). *Toward a comprehensive model of physical activity.* Psychology of Sport and Exercise. 4: 7–24.

Spruit, A., C. Van Der Put, E. Van Vugt, and G. J. Stams. (2018). *Predictors of intervention success in a sports-based program for adolescents at risk of juvenile delinquency.* International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology. 62(6): 1535-1555.

Stake, R. E. (1995). The Art of Case Study Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stanley, J. G., R. N. Amanchukwu, and N. P. Oloube. (2015). *A Review of Leadership Theories, Principles and Styles and Their Relevance to Educational Management*. Journal of Educational Foundations and Management. 12(4): 1-14.

Steinberg L., and R. M. Lerner. (2004). *The scientific study of adolescence: a brief history*. Journal of Early Adolescent. 24(1):45–54.

Stewart, K., and G. Townley. (2019). *Intrapersonal and social–contextual factors related to psychological well-being among youth experiencing homelessness*. Journal of Community Psychology. 47(4): 772–789.

Stiftung, F.E. (2003) Youth Leadership Training Programme: Young political leaders for good governance and development: a review of the project 2000-2003 Tanzania, Tanzania: Retrieved on http://www.fes-tanzania.org/ doc/yltp-2003 (Accessed on 15 October 2020).

Strachan, L. A. (2008). *An ecological approach to examine positive youth development in competitive youth sport* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Queen's University, Ontario, Canada.

Swain, R. C., F. Beauvais, E. L. Chavez, and E. R. Oetting. (1997). *The effect of dropout rates on estimates of adolescent substance use among three racial/ethnic groups.* American Journal of Public Health. 87: 51–55.

Taylor R. D., E. Oberle, J. A. Durlak and R. P. Weissberg. (2017). *Promoting positive youth development through school-based social and emotional learning interventions: a meta-analysis of follow-up effects.* Journal of Child Development. 88(4):1156–1171.

Tinto, V. (1996). *Restructuring the first year of college*. Planning for Higher Education. 25: 1–6.

Tolan P., K. Ross, N. Arkin, N. Godine, E. Clark. (2016). *Toward an integrated approach to positive development: implications for intervention.* Applied Development Science. 20(3): 214–236.

Travis, R., T. G. L. Leech. (2014). *Empowerment-based positive youth development: A new understanding of healthy development for African American youth*. Journal of Research on Adolescence. 24: 93-116.

Trottier, C., and S. Robitaille. (2014). *Fostering Life Skill Development in High School and Community Sport: A Comparative Analysis of the Coach's Role.* Human Kinetics Publication. 28(1): 10-21

Tuckman, B,W., and M. C. Jensen. (1977). *Stages of small-group development revisited*. Group and Organisation Studies. 2(4): 419-427.

Tuckman, B.W. (1972). Conducting Educational Research. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Turnidge, J., J. Cote, and D. J. Hancock. (2014). *Positive youth development from sport to life: Explicit or implicit transfer*? Quest. 66(2): 203-217.

Tyler, C. P., J. Geldhof, K. L. Black, and E. P. Bowers. (2019). *Critical reflection and positive youth development among white and black adolescents: Is understanding inequality connected to thriving?* Journal of Youth and Adolescence. 49: 757-771.

Ungar, M. (2008). *Resilience across cultures*. British Journal of Social Work. 38(2): 218–235.

United Nations. (2005). World youth report 2005: Young people today and in 2015. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. United States Agency for International Development. Retrieved from https://www.usaid.gov/ (Accessed on 20th October 2020).

United Nation (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child. Retrieved on: http://www2.ohchr.or...ish/law/crc. htm (Accessed 25th November 2019).

Van Linden, J.A., and C. I. Fertman. (1998). Youth Leadership: A Guide to understanding Leadership Development in Adolescents. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Vargas-Tonsing, T. (2007). *Coaches' preferences for continuing coaching education.* International Journal of Sports Science and Coaching. 2(1): 25–35.

Vella, S., L. Oades, and T. Crowe. (2013). *The relationship between coach leadership the coach athlete's relationship, team success, and the positive developmental experiences of adolescent soccer players.* Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy. 18: 549–561.

Vella, S., L. Oades, and T. Crowe. (2011). *The role of the coach in facilitating positive youth development: Moving from theory to practice.* Journal of Applied Sport Psychology. 23: 33–48.

Vygotsky L. S. (1962). Thought and language. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Walsh, D. S., J. Ozaeta, and P. M. Wrigh. (2010). *Transference of responsibility model goals to the school environment: Exploring the impact of a coaching club program*. Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*.* 15: 15-28.

Wang, Y., and B. Wang. (2009). Conceptual Model of Youth Leadership: A Review: International Colloquium on Computing, Communication, Control, and Management. Sanya: China

Watt, D., (2007). *On becoming a qualitive researcher: the value of reflexivity.* Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health. 12: 82-101.

Wehmeyer, M. L., M. Agran, M and C. Hughes. (1998). Teaching self-determination to students with disabilities: Basic skills for successful transition. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Weiss, M.R., (2016). Old wine in a new bottle: Historical reflections on sport as a context for youth development. In N. L. Holt (Ed.), Positive youth development through sport (2nd ed., pp. 7-20). New York NY: Routledge.

Weiss, M.R., C. P. Stuntz, J. A. Bhalla, N. B. Bolter, and M. S. Price. (2013). *'More than a game': impact of The First Tee life skills programme on positive youth development: project introduction and Year 1 findings.* Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health. 5(2): 214-244.

Werner, E.E., and R. S. Smith. (1982). Vulnerable but Invincible: A Study of Resilient Children. McGraw-Hill, New York.

Werner, E. E., and R. S. Smith. (2001). Journeys from Childhood to Midlife: Risk, Resilience, and Recovery. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Wexler, L. (2014). *Looking across three generations of Alaska natives to explore how culture fosters indigenous resilience*. Transcultural Psychiatry. 51(1), 73–92.

Wheeler, W., and C. Edlebeck. (2006). '*Leading, learning and unleashing potential: Youth leadership and civic engagement'.* New Directions for Youth Development. 109: 89-97.

Whitehead, G. (2009). *Adolescent Leadership Development: Building a Case for an Authenticity Framework*. Educational Management Administration Leadership. 37(4): 847-872.

Whitley, M. A., T. Forneris, and B. Barker. (2015). The reality of sustaining community.
Wolcott, H. (2001). Writing up qualitative research (2nd Ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

World Health Organization (1999). Partners in life skills education. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization, Department of Mental Health. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/mental_health/media/en/30.pdf (Accessed on 12 March 2021).

Wright, A., and J. Côté. (2003). *A retrospective analysis of leadership development through sport.* The Sport Psychologist. 17: 268-291.

Wright, D. (2008). *For us, by us. Young people's leadership, participation and agency in a youth-led project for community development*. Faculty of the Graduate School of Education of Harvard University.

Yin, R. K. (2009). Case Study Research: Design and Methods (4th Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Youngblade, L. M., and C. Theokas. (2006). *The Multiple Contexts of Youth Development: Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice.* Applied Developmental Science. 10(2): 58-60.

Youniss, J. A. McLellan and M. Yates. (1999). *Religion, community service and identity in American youth.* Journal of Adolescence. (22): 243-253.

Youniss, J., and M. Yates. (1997). Community service and social responsibility in youth. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Zacharatos, A., I. Barling, and E. K. Kelloway. (2000). *Development and effects of transformational leadership in adolescents*. Leadership Quarterly. 11(2): 211-226.

Zauderer, D. G. (1992). Integrity An Essential Executive Quality, Business Forum. pp. 12-16. Retrieved from http://www.dzauderer.com/writings.html (Accessed on 14TH April 2021).

Zeldin, S., and L. Camino. (1999). *Youth leadership: linking research and program theory to exemplary practice.* New Designs for Youth Development. 15: 10–15.

Zeldin, S. (2004). *Youth as agents of community development: Mapping the process and outcomes of youth engaged in organisational governance.* Applied Developmental Science. 8(2): 75-90.

Zeldin, S. and L. Camino. (1999) '*Youth Leadership: Linking Research and Program Theory to Exemplary Practice'.* New Designs for Youth Development. 15(1): 10-15.

Zins, J. E., R. P. Weissberg, M. C. Wang, and H. J. Walberg. (2004). Building academic success on social and emotional learning: What does the research say? New York: Teachers College Press.

Appendices

Appendix A: Gatekeeper Information and Consent Form

Appendix B: Participants Information and Consent Form

Appendix C: Audit Trail Coding Manual

Appendix D: Participants Interview Guide

I Stacey Cannon, the National Learning and Development Officer for the GAA, am undertaking a research study as part of my Professional Doctoral research to examine the degree of transference of the four foundational leadership components *(social and emotional self-efficacy, collaboration, articulation, and insight and knowledge*) used in the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative.

Research study title: **Transference of a youth leadership conceptual model to a sports environment or beyond: exploring the impact of the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative.**

What is the research and why are we doing it?

Opportunities and possibilities to develop youth leaders are now greater than ever, hence the need for more research in this area. Empirical interest in youth leadership development through sport has increased in recent years. This is due to youth leadership programmes being able to represent a tangible way to contribute meaningfully to young people's communities as well the community benefiting directly from their endeavours.

Over the last decade there had been constructive dialogue in whether sport programmes should rely on life skills being gained implicitly, as an automatic outcome of sport participation, or explicitly, as a result of international and deliberate integration of life skill lessons taught in conjunction with sport skills content (Hodge, 1989; Turnidge, Cóté, & Handcock, 2014).This outlines a gap that supports the rationale for this research, where perhaps researchers and practitioners need to provide more adequate educational opportunities to train coaches and mentors on how to develop leadership most effectively in young people.

There is also a significant gap in the literature concerning the development of leadership among young people and the factors that contribute to youth leadership education. Teachers and educators cannot meet all leadership needs of today's youth on their own. This identifies an opportunity in that a community itself, such as the GAA can be a resource

for educating and developing youth leadership skills through a recognised youth leadership conceptual model which is employed in the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative.

It's clear that youth leadership research, theoretical developments and measurements are clearly needed. Youths need to learn not only how leaders should behave but also how to understand the needs of their peers, read a situation, and adapt their leadership style in order to be effective. The youth leadership conceptual model used in the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative has been piloted in several projects both nationally and internationally and the research indicates that it achieves an increase in skill development upon completion, and as such cultivates key competencies necessary for leadership. However, reviewing the literature the youth leadership conceptual model has never been explored or evaluated before within a community-based sports setting, such as the GAA. Going beyond this, the model has never explored if the foundational leadership skills within the youth leadership conceptual model are transferable within a young person's sporting environment and beyond.

What I need your assistance with?

The Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative Steering Committee is the main gatekeeper for the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative, acting as the board of management. To meet ethical standards, I require formal consent from the committee, through the chairperson to start my research. I have discussed this research proposal with the committee at various national committee meetings, confirming verbal permission to undertake this study. I now seek formal consent to meet the ethical standards of Maynooth University. The gatekeeper role is simply one of granting permission and any interested participants should contact the researcher directly, not the gatekeeper. If at any stage the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Steering Committee does not want to take part in the study and they wish to withdraw their consent, they can do so by informing me in writing (contact details below). Alternatively, they can also contact my supervisor from Maynooth University, Dr. Rose Dolan (contact details below).

What will happen if a participant decides to take part in this study?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Eight GAA participants and 3 GAA mentors over the age of 18 will be asked to participant in individual semi structured interviews to explore their experiences of the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative, while exploring the transferability of leadership skills learnt in the initiative. Interviews should take approximately 40 minutes to 1 hour and will commence from October 2019 to May 2020. All participants will be asked to allow their interviews to be recorded and to allow data to be used in any outputs with identifying details removed.

How will the data be used?

All information provided will be anonymous and confidential. The information gathered in this study will used to provide direction and inform the future development of youth leadership programmes, while also examining the degree of leadership transference within the GAA environment and beyond.

How will I protect your privacy?

All of the data collected will be confidential and will not be shared with any unauthorised individual or third party. Data sheets will be locked in a secure filing cabinet and any computerised files will be kept in a password-protected computer. The findings from this research will be presented as part of a dissertation and possibly a conference paper. All publications will be presented in a way that ensures no individual is identifiable.

If you have any questions regarding the research, please do not hesitate to contact me as follows:

Researcher: Stacey Cannon, Department of Education, Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

Email: stacey.cannon.2017@mumail.ie

Supervisor: Dr. Rose Dolan, Department of Education, Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

Phone: 01 7083686

Email: rose.dolan@mu.ie

Thank you for your help and co-operation.

Stacey Cannon   Dr. Rose Dolan

Consent Form

I ………………………………………………………. agree to participate in Stacey Cannon's research titled: **Transference of a youth leadership model to a sports environment or beyond: exploring the impact of the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative.**

Please tick each statement below:

The purpose and nature of this study has been explained to the national steering committee in writing. The committee has been able to ask questions, which were answered ☐
satisfactorily.

The national steering committee is participating voluntarily. ☐

The national steering committee understands they can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether that is before it starts or while they are ☐
participating.

The national steering committee understands that they can withdraw permission to use the data right up to data analysis. ☐

It has been explained how the data will be managed and the national steering committee may access it on request. ☐

The national steering committee understands the limits of confidentiality as described in ☐ the information sheet.

They national steering committee wishes to receive details of the study results. ☐

Signed……………………………………………………. Date………………………………

Chairperson on behalf of the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative Steering Committee

Participant's name in block capitals……………………………………………………….

I the undersigned have taken the time to fully explain to the above national steering committee the nature and purpose of this study in a manner that they could understand. I have explained the risks involved as well as the possible benefits. I have invited them to ask questions on any aspects of the study that concerned them.

Signed……………………………………………….   Date………………………………

Researchers name in block capitals………………………………………………………...

If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact the Secretary of the Maynooth University Ethics Committee at research.ethics@mu.ie or +353 (0)1 708 6019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

For your information the Data Controller for this research project is Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare. Maynooth University Data Protection officer is Ann McKeon in Humanity house, room 17, who can be contacted at ann.mckeon@mu.ie. Maynooth University Data Privacy policies can be found at https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/data-protection.

I Stacey Cannon, the National Learning and Development Officer for the GAA, am undertaking a research study as part of my Professional Doctoral research to examine the degree of transference of four foundational components *(social and emotional self-efficacy, collaboration, articulation, and insight and knowledge)* used within the youth leadership conceptual model to that of a young person's sporting environment and beyond.

Opportunities and possibilities to develop youth leaders are now greater than ever, hence the need for more research in this area. Empirical interest in youth leadership development through sport has increased in recent years. This is due to youth leadership programmes being able to represent a tangible way to contribute meaningfully to young people's communities as well the community benefiting directly from their endeavours. There is a significant gap in the literature concerning the development of leadership among young people and the factors that contribute to youth leadership education. This identifies an opportunity in that a community itself, such as the GAA, can be a resource for educating and developing youth leadership skills through a recognised youth leadership conceptual model which is employed in the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative.

What is the research and why are we doing it?

Young people need to learn not only how leaders should behave but also how to understand the needs of their peers, read a situation, and adapt their leadership style in different situations in order to be effective. The youth leadership conceptual model used in the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative has been piloted in several projects both nationally and internationally and the research indicates that it achieves an increase in skill development upon completion, and as such cultivates key competencies necessary for leadership. However, reviewing the literature the youth leadership conceptual model, used in the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative has never been explored or evaluated before within a community-based sport setting, such as the GAA. Going beyond this the model has never explored if the foundational leadership skills within the youth leadership conceptual model are transferable within a young person's sporting environment and beyond.

What will happen if you decide to take part in this study?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in a semi structured interview to explore your experiences of the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative and explore the transferability of leadership skills learned in the initiative. According to Gould and Carson (2008) the transferability of skills is the "belief that acquired skills and qualities from a sports programme are valued in other settings", along with athletes having "the confidence in their ability to apply skills in different settings". Interviews should take approximately 40 minutes to 1 hour and will commence from September 2019 to May 2020 in Cuala GAA Club. You will be asked to allow your interviews to be recorded and to allow gathered data to be used in any outputs with identifying details removed.

How will the data be used?

All information provided by you is anonymous and confidential. The information gathered in this study will allow us to inform the future development of youth leadership and examine the degree of leadership transference within the GAA environment and beyond.

How will I protect your privacy?

All of the data collected will be confidential and will not be shared with any unauthorised individual or third party. Your name will not be assigned to any material. Your name will not be found in any report of results of this study. Data sheets will be locked in a secure filing cabinet and any computerised files will be kept in a password-protected computer. If you wish, the data that you provide can also be made available to you at your own discretion.

'It must be recognized that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful authority. In such circumstances the University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.'

What are the benefits of taking part?

Your participation will provide me with very useful information regarding the development of youth leadership initiatives within the GAA. It will help us examine how effective the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership initiative is and whether it impacts your sporting environment or beyond.

What are the risks of taking part?

I do not envisage any risk to your wellbeing by participating in this study. The only issue is protection of your personal information and we will ensure that we enforce rigorous data protection procedures (locked filing cabinets for paper records, password protected computer files and computer storage) at all times.

Can you change your mind and withdraw at any stage?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary.   if you do not want to take part or if at any stage throughout the study you wish to withdraw your information, just inform Stacey Cannon (contact information below). Alternatively, you can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Rose Dolan (contact details below).

How will you find out what happens with this project?

If you wish to receive details of the study results, please indicate this on the consent form.

If you have any questions regarding the research, please do not hesitate to contact me:

Researcher: Stacey Cannon, Department of Education, Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

Email: stacey.cannon.2017@mumail.ie

Supervisor: Dr. Rose Dolan, Department of Education, Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

Phone: 01 7083686

Email: rose.dolan@mu.ie

Thank you for your help and co-operation.

Stacey Cannon   Dr. Rose Dolan

Consent Form

I ……………………………………………… agree to participate in Stacey Cannon's research study titled: **Transference of a youth leadership model to a sports environment or beyond: exploring the impact of the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative.**

Please tick each statement below:

The purpose and nature of this study has been explained to me in writing. I've been able to ask questions, which were answered satisfactorily. ☐

I am participating voluntarily. ☐

I agree to participant in a semi structured interview. ☐

I agree to participate in a follow up interview if requested to do so. ☐

I understand I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether that is before it starts or while I am participating. ☐

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data right up to data analysis. ☐

It has been explained how my data will be managed and I may access it on request. ☐

I understand the limits of confidentiality as described in the information sheet. ☐

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview. ☐

I wish to receive details of the study results. ☐

Signed……………………………………. 	Date………………………………

Participant's name in block capitals……………………………………………………………….

I the undersigned have taken the time to fully explain to the above participant the nature and purpose of this study in a manner that they could understand. I have explained the risks involved as well as the possible benefits. I have invited them to ask questions on any aspects of the study that concerned them.

Signed……………………………………………   Date………………………………….

Researchers name in block capitals…………………………………………………………....

If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact the Secretary of the Maynooth University Ethics Committee at research.ethics@mu.ie or +353 (0)1 708 6019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

For your information the Data Controller for this research project is Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare. Maynooth University Data Protection officer is Ann McKeon in Humanity house, room 17, who can be contacted at ann.mckeon@mu.ie. Maynooth University Data Privacy policies can be found at https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/data-protection.

My approach to initial coding:

Questions for the data that connect to the study:

1. What are the participants telling me?

2. What did they develop/learn? In the programme and then beyond it?

3. What hard/practical skills they learn?

4. What soft/personal skills did the learn?

5. Did transfer happen? ... and if so, highlight key examples

6. What impact has this had on them?

7. How are they utilising skill development?

8. Did their environment have any impact on these outcomes? If so how?

Key sub codes under four foundational leadership components:

- Understanding self (S&EI)

- Becoming aware of others (S&EI)

- Overcoming challenges (I&K)   -

- Confidence development (S&EI)

- Competence development (I&K)

- Community action (ACTION)

- Character building (S&EI)

- Opportunities (ENIVROMENTAL CONDITIONS)

- Empathy (S&EI)

- Resilience (S&EI)

- Self-esteem (S&EI)

- Decision making (COLL)

- Critical thinking (I&K)

- Communication skills (ART)

- Goal setting (ENIROMENTAL CONDITIONS)

- Teamwork (COLL)

- Problem solving (I&K)

- Concrete support/guidance (ENIROMENTAL CONDITIONS)

- Improved attitude (I&K)

Defining my codes (colours used to highlight each code on interview scripts:

Code	Description/Definition	Notes
Understanding self	I understand why I do what I do.	
Leadership development	An activity that makes me become a better leader and perform in leadership roles.	
Becoming aware of others	I understand that people have different views and opinions.	

Relationship development	Repetitive connection and evolution towards accomplishing a common purpose of two or more people.	
Overcoming challenges	I am able to overcome my fears and teach myself how to control it.	
Confidence development	I belief in my own ability overtime.	
Competence development	I can effectively accomplish goals and emerge with greater confidence.	
Community contribution	Anything I have done to contribute positively on my community	
Character building	I understand my traits and values, and these influence my choices in my live.	

Opportunities	I understand when a situation presents itself to attain a goal of mine.	
Empathy	I try to understand what other people feel and think.	
Resilience	I try to finish what I started and able to bound back from adversity.	
Self esteem	I recognise my own talents and abilities with confidence.	
Decision making	I think and look for information to a problem before I make a choice.	
Critical thinking	I keep my mind open and think effectively to different ideas when planning on making a decision.	

Communication skills	I can organise thoughts in my head before speaking and understand what another person is saying before I respond.	
Goal setting	I understand the steps needed to achieve a goal.	
Teamwork	I can work with others who have different opinions than me and can stand up for myself without putting others down.	
Problem solving	I figure out what the problem is and compare possible solutions with others to find the best one.	
Concrete support/guidance	I can depend on someone or something for advice or support when needed.	
Improved attitude	A change to a more positive way of thinking or feeling about something.	

Stage 1: How I came up with the above codes?

- I revised my overarching research question and narrowed it down from the original question on my ethics form. I did this my revising the data and highlighting key words that gave me some sub questions to ask myself while analysing the data. I also revised a similar PhD that was conducted on the Leadership for Life programme for Foróige in 2010. This looks in detail at the youth leadership conceptual framework I am using in my study. Within its appendix it had key themes and codes and I started to review them individually. I reviewed ones in detail that I felt linked to my study and defined them. This gave me the idea to do the same for my codes so I could set some ground rules, outlining from the start what each code meant to me when reviewing my data. The language used by the participants in the study also produced some initial codes too. I then went through the data for participant 1 in detail with the colour coordinated codes open in front of me. Having the definition in front of me beside was instrumental, as at times a sentence could have meant a few different codes but when I looked at how I defined it, it helped me to colour the sentence with the right code from my viewpoint.

Stage 2: Next steps after initial coding….

Once I completed my initial coding with the following 20 codes I went through each code and the meaning I ascribed to it. I then tried to see which code fitted into each category of the 4 skills section on the youth leadership conceptual model used in the DEYLI.

- Social and Emotional Intelligence

- Collaboration

- Articulate

- Insight and Knowledge

Then into the Environmental Conditions section (e.g. authentic opportunity, club and mentor access) on the youth leadership conceptual model

Then finally into the action section of the youth leadership conceptual model

- Community Contribution

Final coding section was labelled miscellaneous (1). This was any text or data which didn't fit into any of the above labels.

Stage 3: Reviewing the literature again…

Explored if the youth leadership conceptual model used in the DEYLI aligned to some of the youth development models/theories reviews in the literature. This gave me food for thought as I read over the literature again and again. Some ideas came to mind - 3 big headings

1. Practical outcomes

2. Personal outcomes

3. Social outcomes

Lerner's (2006) 5C's framework was also evident:

1. Confidence
2. Competence
3. Connection
4. Character
5. Caring

Then I linked some of the 20 initial codes into the following 4 sub codes:

1. Understanding self (Personal outcomes)

2. Understanding & relating to others (Personal and social outcomes)

3. Communication development (Personal and social outcomes)

4. Leadership & contribution (Practical outcomes)

CF	Social & Emotional Intelligence	Collaborate	Articulate	Insight & Knowledge
Sub Code	Understanding Self	Understanding & relating to others	Communication development	Leadership & Contribution
4	Understanding self	Becoming aware of others	Communication skills	Leadership development
4	Overcoming challenges	Relationship development	Critical thinking	Competence development
3	Confidence development	Empathy		Opportunity development
2	Character building	Teamwork		Community contribution
2	Resilience development	Concrete support & guidance		
1	Self esteem			
1	Decision making			
1	Goal setting			
1	Problem solving			
1	Improved attitude			
Themes	(Personal outcomes)	(Personal and social outcomes)	(Personal and social outcomes)	(Practical outcomes)

I found this process useful to help me put my data into a systematic order. I noticed my decision making to each code was sharp and I did alter some codes as they became more clearer as I was transferring the data from word to MaxQDA. Interestingly, when I coded the examples of the community-based action project I can see multiple codes and skills developed in this process alone.

I went back to my findings a couple of months later, as I was finding it difficult to classify what 'kind' of transfer took place. It was evident that transfer did happen but I needed a system or labelling to outline exactly what kind of transfer happened.

Using the bioecological value transfer model of youth sport programmes, it enabled me to divide the programme outcomes under proximal transfer outcomes (In programme outcomes – changes in behaviour and/or perceptions during the programme) and distal transfer outcomes (Out of programme outcomes -changes in behaviour and/or perceptions in other settings). Table below outlines this:

PROXIMAL TRANSFER: In programme outcomes – changes in behaviour and/or perceptions during the programme	DISTAL TRANSFER: Out of programme outcomes -changes in behaviour and/or perceptions in other settings
50 examples	38 examples

Examples per setting:

Transfer outcome	Programme	College	Sport	Community	Work	Home
Proximal	44			6 examples – In module 3		
Distal		17 examples	18 examples	3 examples – outside module 3	none	none

Stage 4: Confirmed Themes

To be able to gain a deeper understanding of the research participants skill acquisition (evidence based knowledge) over a prolonged length of time, the young people were asked about the skills they learnt in the time they spent doing the programme and provide concrete examples of such skill development. This provided a structure to gain insight into how the young people who completed the leadership programme, utilised the four foundational leadership components within the programme. This initial theme provided a framework to investigate if the young people gained tact knowledge during the programme, allowing the opportunity to demonstrate if skill transfer took place beyond the programme.

This gave me my three themes:

Knowledge Acquisition – within leadership programme

Knowledge transfer – Learning activities through a constructivist approach – e.g. the internalisation of skills

Knowledge application – evidence of transfer of skills in other life domains

Stage 4: Findings

After reviewing the findings thoroughly, I identified three key findings, that answered my research question. These include:

1. The leadership programme appeared effective in developing and sustaining leadership skills over time.

2. The leadership programme appeared to support and increase the young people's capacity to transfer key skills into other life domains. (Young peoples – motivation, confidence, attitude) (Proximal processes - collaboration, reflection, experiential learning, proximal development, scaffolding effect, authentic opportunities)

3. The environmental conditions in which the leadership programme was facilitated in appeared to have an enhanced positive impact on these outcomes. (The Club).

Next steps – Discussion – food for thought

How did they use these 4 components? Strongest components? (communication and self)

How do they use other life domain?

What does this all mean? This development and insight links to the strong idea of agentic people in the following

How was it easier to provide examples of applied knowledge in sport and college than home and community?

Transitional aspect to adulthood – age significance and teacher versus mentor – impact on learning

All questions were similarly explained throughout the interview. Flow and data consistency was evident across all interviewees and common themes.

Appendix D: Analytical Memo

My analytic diary ended up being spread across many platforms including Microsoft Teams, EndNote, MaxQDA and numerous paper notebooks (e.g. sample 1). My memo on the research combined of notes on things to look up or get (sample 1); useful observations for ideas using mind mapping (sample 2); and reflexive note on my own process within the research (sample 3).
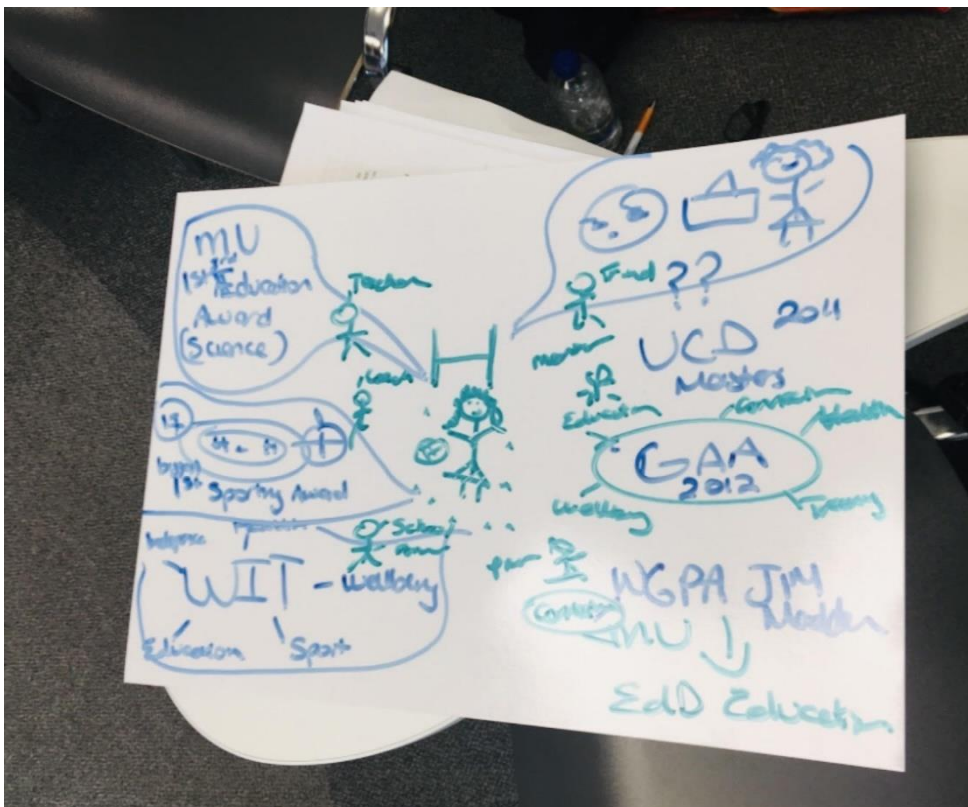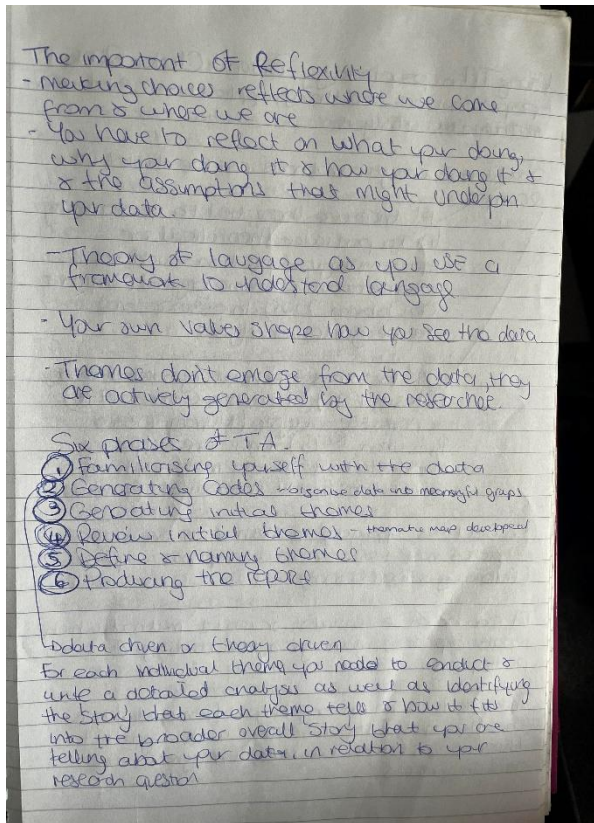
Sample 1: Things to do
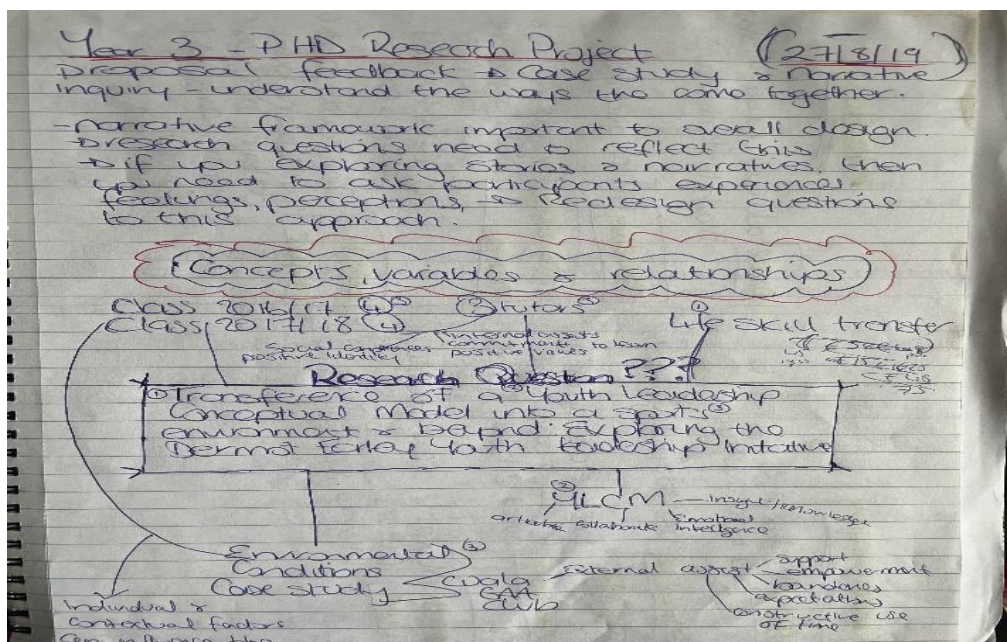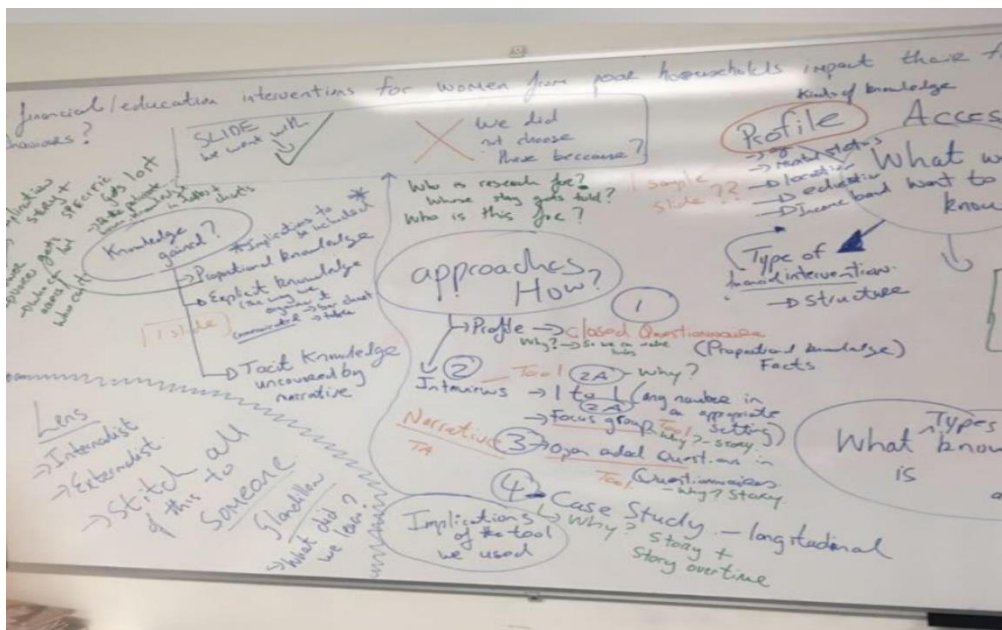
Sample 2: Mind mapping ideas
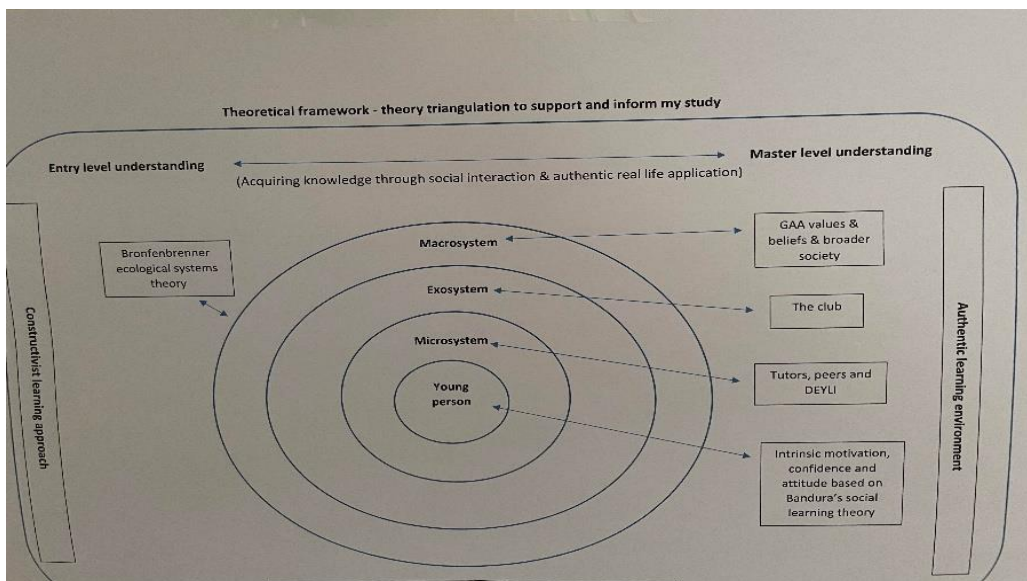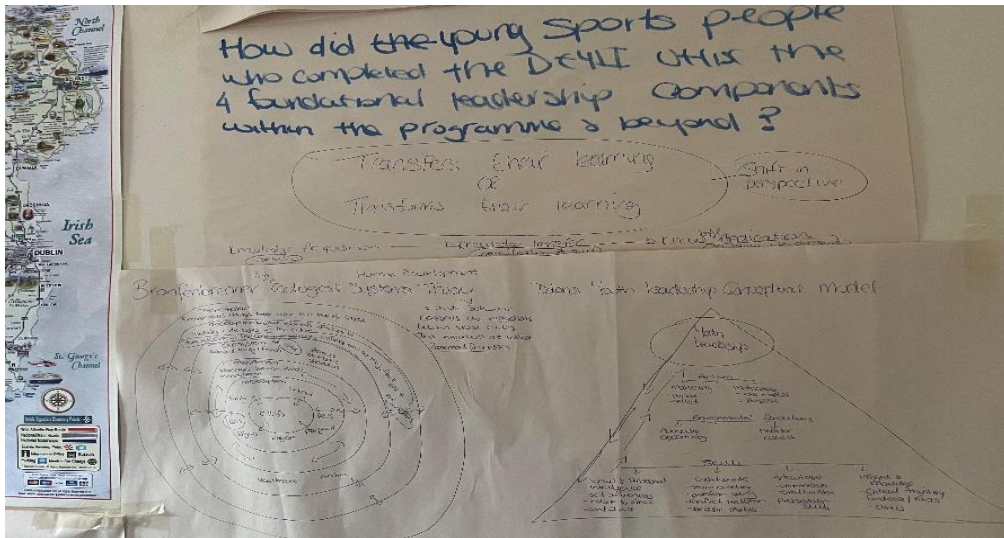
Sample 3: Reflective notes

Dear participant,

Thank you for taking part in this study. Please read the attached information and consent form before commencing the interview (I'll provide this on the day of the interview).

Interview questions below focus on your perception to recall your ability to transfer 4 leadership competences/skills of the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative (DEYLI) into other life domains such as sport (on and off the pitch), school, home, community etc.

- <u>The research question we are trying to answer is:</u> **How do young people who completed the DEYLI utilise the skill development and key leadership competencies in their sporting environment and/or beyond?**

The interview will be divided into five sections.

1. The first section asks questions about you.

2. The second section is about key leadership competencies learnt in the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative (DEYLI).

3. The third section asks questions about the transferability of four key leadership competencies to other areas (sport, home, school etc) of your life.

4. The fourth section will explore if the GAA is an appropriate setting for the DEYLI?

5. The fifth gives you an opportunity to reflect and add anything else you fell is relevant to your experience of the DEYLI.

I cannot emphasis enough that responses should be based on what you learned because of your participation in the DEYLI, and not because of what you learned at home, at school, or in other activities. Please review your DEYLI workbooks before commencing the interview, to help reflect on your experiences of the DEYLI. You can also bring your workbook with you to the interview. This will help focus your memory to obtain experiential examples.

Finally, there is no right or wrong answer and everything you say is confidential so please be as honest as you can. I personally never went through the DEYLI as a participant. Therefore, you as a past participant hold the knowledge that will help answer the research question.

Thank you for your time.

Section 1 – Individual and programme context

- o Your name and DOB?

- o What level do you play or manage in Gaelic Games?

- o Are you working, in college or both? If so, please provide some details.

- o Are you involved in local community or volunteering in any way? If yes, how and why?

- o How and why did you come to apply for the DEYLI?

- o What year did you complete the DEYLI?

- o Can you tell me what you thought of the DEYLI and what was it trying to achieve?

- o What were the three most important things you learnt on the programme?

- o Did you complete all three modules, and if so, did you graduate from NUIG with a Certificate in Youth Leadership and Community Action? If not, why?

Section 2 – Key competencies/skills developed and perceptions of transferability

LIFE SKILL ONE: Social and Emotional Intelligence *(self-awareness & character)*

Life skill development in DEYLI:

- o Do you think the DEYLI helped you learn better **social skills** and be more **self-aware** (e.g. understand your values and others more)? If so, how and please give an example from the programme? If not, why?

- o Do you think the DEYLI helped you learn how to manage and understand your **emotions** better (e.g. anger, frustration, and/or excitement)? If so, how and please give an example from the programme? If not, why?

Life skill application beyond the DEYLI:

- o Since completing the DEYLI has the programme helped you to manage your **emotions** better, improve your **social skills** and be more **self-aware** now as an adult and have you used any of these skills in other area of your life?

- o If so, can you think back how and give an example in each life domain below? If not, why?

Sport (on and off pitch)	School/college/work	Home	Community	Other
Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:

LIFE SKILL TWO: Collaborate *(teamwork and decision making)*

Life skill development in DEYLI:

- o Do you think the DEYLI helped you improve your **teamwork skills**? If so, how and please give an example from the programme? If not, why?

- o Do you think the DEYLI helped you improve your **decision making**? If so, how and please give an example from the programme? If not, why?

Life skill application beyond the DEYLI:

- o Can you discuss if you believe your **teamwork** and **decision-making skills** improved now as an adult and have you used these skills in any other areas of your life?

- o If so, how and please give an example in each life domain below? If not, why?

Sport (on and off pitch)	School/college/work	Home	Community	Other
Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:

LIFE SKILL THREE: Articulate *(communicate & relate to others)*

Life skill development in the DEYLI:

- o Do you think the DEYLI improved your ability to **relate to others?** If so, how and please give an example from the programme? If not, why?

- o Do you think the DEYLI improved your ability to **communicate** better? If so, how and please give an example from the programme? If not, why?

Life skill application beyond the DEYLI:

- o Since completing the DEYLI has the programme helped you to **relate to others** and **communicate** better now as an adult and have you used any of these skills in other areas of your life?

- o If so, how and please give an example in each life domain below? If not, why?

Sport (on and off pitch)	School/college/work	Home	Community	Other
Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:

LIFE SKILL FOUR: Insight & Knowledge *(critical thinking & leadership)*

Life skill development in the DEYLI:

- o Do you think the DEYLI helped you develop a greater **understanding of leadership**? If so, how and please give an example from the programme? If not, why?

- o Do you think the DEYLI helped you develop a greater understanding of your **critical thinking skills**? If so, how and please give an example from the programme? If not, why?

Life skill application beyond the DEYLI:

- o Can you discuss if you believe your **leadership skills** have improved along with your **critical thinking skills** now as an adult and have you used these skills in other areas of your life?

- o If so, how and please give an example in each life domain below? If not, why?

Sport (on and off pitch)	School/college/work	Home	Community	Other
Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:

Section 4 – reflect and review

- o Is the GAA club a suitable setting to deliver the DEYLI? If so, why?

- o Did you feel the programme equipped you with the right skills to contribute to your community through your action project? If so, how?

- o Was there a key mentor/role model/parent/coach you admired or looked up to throughout the DEYLI?

Section 5 – reflect and review

- o What did you enjoy most about the DEYLI?

- o Is there anything you would change about the DEYLI?

- o Do you have any other comments or opinions on your experiences of the DEYLI?

Thank you very much for taking part!

Dear mentor,

Thank you for taking part in this study. Please read the attached information and consent form before commencing the interview.

Interview questions below focus on mentor's perception to recall participants ability to transfer 4 leadership competences/skills of the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative (DEYLI) into other life domains such as sport (on and off the pitch), school, home, community etc.

- The research question we are trying to answer is: **How do young people who completed the DEYLI utilise the skill development and key leadership competencies in their sporting environment and/or beyond?**

The interview will be divided into five sections.

6. The first section asks questions about you

7. The second section is about key leadership competencies participants learnt on the Dermot Earley Youth Leadership Initiative (DEYLI).

8. The third section asks questions about participants transferability of four key leadership competencies to other areas of your life.

9. The fourth section will explore if the GAA is an appropriate setting for the DEYLI?

10. The fifth gives you an opportunity to reflect and add anything else you fell is relevant to your experience of the DEYLI.

I cannot emphasis enough that responses should be based on your participation in the DEYLI, and not because of what you learned at home, at school, or in other activities. Please review your DEYLI mentor manual before commencing the interview, to help reflect on your experiences of the participants on the DEYLI. You can also bring your manual with you to the interview. This will help focus your memory to obtain experiential examples.

Finally, there is no right or wrong answer and everything you say is confidential so please be as honest as you can.

Thank you for your time.

Section 1 – Individual and programme context

- o Your name and DOB?

- o What level do you play or manage in Gaelic Games?

- o Are you working, in college or both? If so, please provide some details.

- o Are you involved in local community or volunteering in any way? If yes, how and why?

- o How and why did you come to apply as a mentor for the DEYLI?

- o What year did you complete your training for the DEYLI?

- o Can you tell me what you thought of the DEYLI and what was it trying to achieve?

- o What were the three most important things you learnt on the programme?

- o Did you complete NUIG Certificate Diploma in Training and Education? If so, did it help in any other areas of your life. If not, why?

Section 2 – Key competencies/skills and the mentor's perceptions of transferability

LIFE SKILL ONE: Social and Emotional Intelligence *(self-awareness & character)*

Life skill development in DEYLI:

- o Do you think the DEYLI helped young people enhance their **social skills** and be **more self-aware** (e.g. understand your values and others more)? If so, how and please give an example from the programme? If not, why?

- o Do you think the DEYLI helped young people learn how to manage and understand their **emotions** better (e.g. anger, frustration, and/or excitement)? If so, how and please give an example from the programme? If not, why?

Life skill application beyond the DEYLI:

- o Can you discuss if you believe that young people are able to manage their **emotions, social skills** and be more **self-aware** now as an adult and are they using these skills in other area of your life?

- o If so, were relevant can you give an example in each life domain below? If not, why?

Sport (on and off pitch)	School/college/work	Home	Community	Other
Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:

LIFE SKILL TWO: Collaborate *(teamwork and decision making)*

Life skill development in DEYLI:

- o Do you think the DEYLI helped young people to improve their **teamwork skills**? If so, how and please give an example from the programme? If not, why?

- o Do you think the DEYLI helped young people improve their **decision making**? If so, how and please give an example from the programme? If not, why?

Life skill application beyond the DEYLI:

- o Can you discuss if you believe the young people's **teamwork** and **decision-making skills** has improved now as an adult and have, they used these skills in any other areas of their life?

- o If so, were relevant please give an example in each life domain below? If not, why?

Sport (on and off pitch)	School/college/work	Home	Community	Other

Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:

LIFE SKILL THREE: Articulate *(communicate & relate to others)*

Life skill development in the DEYLI:

- o Do you think the DEYLI improved young people's ability to **relate to others?** If so, how and please give an example from the programme? If not, why?

- o Do you think the DEYLI improved young people's ability to **communicate** better? If so, how and please give an example from the programme? If not, why?

Life skill application beyond the DEYLI:

- o Since completing the DEYLI has the programme helped young people to **relate to others** more and **communicate** better now as an adult and have these used any of these skills in other areas of their life?

- o If so, how and please give an example in each life domain below? If not, why?

Sport (on and off pitch)	School/college/work	Home	Community	Other
Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:

LIFE SKILL FOUR: Insight & Knowledge *(critical thinking & leadership)*

Life skill development in the DEYLI:

- o Do you think the DEYLI helped young people develop a greater **understanding of leadership**? If so, how and please give an example from the programme? If not, why?

- Do you think the DEYLI helped young people develop a greater understanding of their **critical thinking skills**? If so, how and please give an example from the programme? If not, why?

Life skill application beyond the DEYLI:

- Can you discuss how you think the young people's leadership skills have improved along with your critical thinking skills now as an adult and have they used these skills in other areas of their life?

- If so, were relevant please give an example in each life domain below? If not, why?

Sport (on and off pitch)	School/college/work	Home	Community	Other
Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:	Example:

Section 4 – reflect and review

- Is the GAA club a suitable setting to deliver the DEYLI? If so, why?

- Did you feel the programme equipped you with the right skills to deliver the programme and enhance your own leadership journey? If so, how?

- Was there a key mentor/role model/parent/coach you admired or looked up to when delivering the DEYLI?

Section 5 – reflect and review

- What did you enjoy most about the DEYLI?

- Is there anything you would change about the DEYLI?

- Do you have any other comments or opinions on your experiences of the DEYLI?

Thank you very much for taking part!