Designing, implementing and evaluating a resilience-based life skills intervention for adolescents within West Wales via the ‘vehicle’ of golf

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Abstract

Sport has been used as a ‘vehicle’ for youth development where coaches, researchers and practitioners have focused on a strengths-based approach to support adolescents’ transition into adulthood. Such a positive youth development (PYD) approach, rather than a deficit-reduction paradigm, has informed the creation of sport-based life skills interventions. Given the challenges and potential adversities that adolescents face during such a transition, interventions targeting life skills associated with resilience could provide a catalyst in supporting adolescents to manage challenging situations they currently face and those that they will face in the future as adults. However, sport-based life skills interventions utilising resilience as a theoretical basis are scarce. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis was to design, pilot and implement a resilience-based life skills intervention and evaluate its effectiveness within the sport of golf. A secondary aim was to understand the role of the intervention facilitator, which in this case was a trainee sport psychology consultant (author). The context of this programme of research involved a collaborative partnership between a university and a small enterprise (golf club) based in a convergence zone (outlined by Welsh Government) as part of a Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarship (KESS) project. The purpose of pairing a research institution (university) and an external organisation (golf club) was to provide the opportunity for research to have a direct and immediate impact on society.

Study 1 targeted the pilot process involved in designing a life skills intervention via an action research methodology. Three pilot interventions were delivered with separate participants. The key findings from Study 1 related to the importance placed upon building rapport with participants to aid potential life skill transfer, as well as the format and structure of sessions to support participant understanding of life skills. Following the pilot process, a 16-hour intervention was devised and subsequently implemented across four separate intervention groups as part of Study 2. A process and outcome evaluation was carried out through a mixed methods approach to determine the intervention’s efficacy and effectiveness. Continuing the action research methodology, Study 2 demonstrated the importance in the structure and contextual factors when implementing a life skills intervention. In addition, it aligned with previous research highlighting the importance towards building rapport with participants and targeting experiential learning as a key teaching strategy. Finally, the process of designing and delivering a life skills intervention to numerous groups of adolescents has highlighted the crucial importance of adapting content and structure towards the needs and abilities of the individuals. To capture the experiences of the author in delivering the intervention via an action research methodology, the thesis concludes with a reflective epilogue that documents his journey in developing as a practitioner and researcher. This programme of research has highlighted the contextual and interpersonal implications involved in designing and implementing a resilience-based life skills intervention. In addition to its novel approach of integrating resilience theory and life skills research, the practical applications could potentially support sport psychology practitioners, coaches and youth programme leaders in designing sport-based life skills interventions.
CHAPTER 1

Introduction
**Introduction**

Sport has long been considered as a ‘tool’ or ‘vehicle’ for developing the social and personal skills of young people (Petitpas, Cornelius, Van Raalte, & Jones, 2005; Guest, 2008). What that vehicle looks like, who is driving it, how it is fuelled and how it arrives at its destination, are all questions that researchers and applied practitioners have attempted to address within the field of sport for development. Similarly, across the positive youth development (PYD) literature, the social and personal benefits of sport have been discussed (Phelps et al., 2009). Although some recognise sport as an inevitable guarantee of social and personal development and success, there is growing concern regarding what should be considered as development for youth through sport (Coakley, 2011). More specifically, it is now widely documented that sport participation alone does not guarantee any personal or social developmental outcomes but rather depends on a number of factors that can potentially have an effect on such outcomes (Gould & Carson, 2008). Therefore, it is important to understand what factors influence the development of key skills that have the potential to positively impact the immediate and future lives of youth.

Preparing youth for the inevitable challenges and adversities they will experience in adulthood can be considered a primary ‘objective’ of adolescence (Coleman, 2011). As such, a growing field of research within the sport-based PYD literature has focused on the development and subsequent transfer of cognitive, behavioural and inter-personal life skills beyond the context of sport. A move away from a deficit-reduction paradigm towards a strength-based approach supports the growth of developmental assets and provides a platform for exploring life skill development (Benson, 2007). As a relatively new line of inquiry within PYD, there are several gaps within the current literature that
are worth exploring in order to aid our understanding of life skill development through sport.

Firstly, there is a lack of research exploring the design and development of sport-based life skills interventions (Petitpas et al., 2005). A lack of design parameters and recommendations prevents researchers, coaches, and youth workers from creating evidence-based interventions to support youth development. Secondly, the lack of mixed-method intervention evaluations presents a unilateral conception of life skill development. Sport-based life skills interventions have, to date, been single-method designs, providing a lack of depth and limited triangulation between associated outcomes (Gould & Carson, 2008). As a result, there is limited evidence for the application and transfer of life skills developed through sport to be utilised in other context such as school or home (Hodge, Danish, & Martin, 2013). Linked to the verification of life skill development is the lack of an objective or self-report measure of life skill learning and transfer (Hardcastle, Tye, Glassey, & Hagger, 2015). Ultimately, the evaluation of life skills interventions is problematic and complex, presenting issues with their application within recreational and performance sports environments.

A greater understanding of life skill development, via sport-based interventions, will provide an important contribution to existing knowledge in both the applied and research domain. A holistic understanding as to ‘what works’ in life skills interventions could support applied sport psychology practitioners and coaches working with youth athletes to develop individuals’ skills for all aspects of their lives, rather than purely sport. In addition, supporting adolescents with the necessary skills and strategies to be able to cope with the challenges of life whilst fostering their resiliency could support their capacity to become contributing members of society, an outcome of PYD (Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005).
Purpose of the thesis

The aim of this thesis was to design, implement and evaluate a resilience-based life skills intervention for adolescents. The reflective narrative that weaves through the thesis will explore the experiences of a trainee sport psychology consultant (author) in producing a programme of research that aims to support positive youth development through sport. Therefore, the specific objectives were to: (a) design and create a theoretically-grounded life skills intervention based on the concept of resilience; (b) pilot the intervention to test suitable delivery methods; and (c) implement the post-pilot intervention and evaluate its effectiveness in developing life skills and fostering resilience. In doing so, the overarching goal of this programme of research was to produce a professional product that is market-ready and has the potential for growth and extended impact beyond the confines of the Ph.D. Therefore, in addition to the objectives highlighted, the enterprise components (e.g., marketing and advertising) presented an ongoing commitment to the establishment of a branded product, and subsequently the personal development of the author.

Overview of the thesis

The thesis consists of six chapters that contain two studies to address the aims and objectives. A reflective epilogue is provided to capture the thread of personal and product development that summarises the four-year programme of research. Following this initial introductory chapter, a comprehensive literature review is outlined in Chapter 2. To provide context for the sport-based life skills intervention, the review covers literature surrounding positive youth development before narrowing the focus to sport-based literature and the overlap with resilience theory.

Chapter 3 (Study 1) documents the process of designing and piloting the intervention. The chapter is introduced by a brief review of life skills intervention
literature and critiques the use of action research as an appropriate method to develop a rigorous youth development programme. The delivery of three pilot interventions is outlined via a reflexive narrative to capture the immersion and involvement of the author within the field of research. This chapter is currently under review: Cox, H., Neil, R., Oliver, J., & Hanton, S. (under review). PasSport4life: A trainee’s perspective on developing a resilience-based life skills program. *Journal of Sport Psychology in Action.*

The implementation and evaluation of the post-pilot intervention is documented in Chapter 4 (Study 2). Programme evaluation research and the use of internal versus external evaluators are critiqued within the introduction. The evaluation consists of a mixed-methods design that also incorporates measures of physical fitness and body composition to provide descriptive health markers for the participants involved across four interventions.

Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the overall findings from Study 1 and Study 2 and addresses the strengths and limitations associated to the research. Reference is made to the conceptual and theoretical issues encountered in implementing an evidence-based intervention within an applied environment. Finally, future directions informed by the strengths and limitations of this thesis are outlined.

The thesis is concluded through the documentation of the four-year process undertaken by the author via a reflective narrative. The epilogue aims to highlight the entrepreneurial journey and personal development of the author in an attempt to provide a resource prompting discussion towards the future of doctoral study and the inclusion of enterprise in academia.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review
Introduction

The purpose of the present chapter is to provide a review of literature on PYD alongside its involvement within sport in order to provide context for this programme of research. Specifically, the narrative will explore: (a) sport being used as a vehicle for youth development; (b) origins of PYD inquiry; (c) theoretical and conceptual models within PYD; (d) PYD through sport and developmental assets; and (e) specific structural and contextual questions of sport-based PYD programmes that this thesis will explore. Finally, to narrow the review towards the aims and objectives of this thesis, the final section will discuss resilience theory and its complimentary association towards PYD through sport. As this chapter will provide a holistic literature review to contextualise subsequent chapters, a brief, targeted review of literature will be included within following chapters in order to explore specific themes relevant to the progressive research programme.

Sport for Development

The term “sport for development” has been used in tandem with the PYD research across a number of disciplines, including sociology (Coalter, 2010), education (Schafer, 1969) and international health policy (Kidd, 2008). This term has been associated with the development of a number of key skills and psychosocial factors that youth sport programmes have targeted, such as: self-esteem (Richman & Schaffer, 2000), goal setting (Papacharisis, Goudas, Danish, & Theodorakis, 2005) and leadership (Gould & Voelker, 2010). Furthermore, sport has been used as a means of developing communities where social deprivation and delinquency is prevalent (Faulkner et al., 2007; Kay & Bradbury, 2009). During the 1980s and 1990s, numerous programmes were established in the USA focusing on inner-city communities where crime and unemployment levels were high (Bessone, 1991). Whilst providing youth with a means of developing skills to be used in
later life, such as sportsmanship and adherence to rules, these programmes also helped create a ‘distraction’ from the struggles of everyday life (Guest, 2008). Although youth programmes may be providing opportunities for individuals to develop, Coakley (2011) argued that such an individualistic approach simply promotes personal success, rather than functional societal integration.

Focusing on individual achievement and development within sport creates little or no opportunity for an individual to learn the skills necessary to function in society and promote civic engagement (Coakley, 2011). As a well renowned sport sociologist with nearly 50 years of experience researching youth sport, Coakley (2011) stated, “there is a need for research that focuses on the impact of these [youth development] programs on larger issues of social and structural change at the neighbourhood and community levels” (p. 316). Such discrepancy in approaches (i.e., focus on personal assets or societal integration and functioning) to youth development programme outcomes ultimately creates numerous definitions of the term ‘youth development’. It is important at this stage that such definitions are reviewed with the purpose of providing a consistent definition of PYD to inform the rest of this thesis and, potentially, the broader literature base. Alongside defining youth development, the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings will be discussed in relation to how sport is used as a vehicle for developing youth.

**Positive Youth Development**

The concept of *positive development*, in relation to youth programmes, has provided a plethora of research and a global presence within policy development and government initiatives. Over the past 25 years, researchers have presented a number of definitions and frameworks in an attempt to understand its use in our society. A definition of *positive development* still commonly used is that coined by Roth, Brookes-Gunn, Moray and Foster (1998), which referred to “the engagement in pro-social behaviours and
avoidance of health-compromising and future-jeopardizing behaviours” (p.426). This definition aptly summarises findings from research conducted by the Search Institute (research organisation targeting youth development) exploring developmental assets during the 1990s.

The Search Institute outlined a 40-item Developmental Assets Framework (20 internal, 20 external) that incorporated an extensive list of psychosocial factors, personal values, interpersonal strengths and social competencies that contribute to becoming a healthy, responsible and proactive member of society (Benson, 2003). Having created this Developmental Assets Framework with colleagues from the Search Institute, Benson (1997, 1998) concluded that individuals with a greater number of assets engaged in less risk-taking behaviours, such as drug and alcohol abuse, sexual intercourse and violence. The definition above provided by Roth et al. (1998) and associated research exploring the development of assets begins to establish a strength-based approach for PYD. Such an approach that focuses on individuals’ potential rather than reducing the prevalence of risk-taking behaviours forms the basis of strengths development.

Following the Developmental Assets Framework (Benson 1997, 1998), researchers across different fields and disciplines have targeted alternative approaches in conceptualising PYD to form a strengths-based composition. Hamilton, Hamilton and Pittman (2004) provided a review incorporating three aspects of youth development: the principles, practices and natural process. In reference to the process, optimal development “enables individuals to lead a healthy, satisfying and productive life, as youth and later as adults, because they gain the competence to earn a living, to engage in civic activities” (Hamilton et al., 2004, p. 3). Youth development is most commonly referred to as a process, whereby individuals are continuously developing lifelong skills and experiences dependent on their environmental interactions. The practices of youth development refer
to the application of principles and overall ethos to actively support youth to develop on an interpersonal and intrapersonal level. Arguably, there is little semantic or even etymological difference between optimal, positive and good in relation to youth development, according to Fraser-Thomas, Côté and Deakin (2005) “It has been suggested that through optimal development ‘good youth’ emerge” (p. 20). However, referring back to the definition of positive development by Roth et al. (1998), those who do not partake in high-risk behaviours might not necessarily be classed as ‘good youth’. Therefore, a reliance on a deficit-reduction approach may not provide opportunities for individuals to positively contribute to society.

Historically, youth programmes have targeted specific problems and anti-social behaviours, with a view that we should be ‘fixing’ youth (Danish, Petitpas & Hale, 1992). Following the work of Benson and the Search Institute, there has been a paradigm shift towards a strength-based approach (Lerner et al., 2006) where youth programmes focus on developing key skills and behaviours that emanate success and development across the lifespan. In embracing this paradigm, researchers have adopted an asset-generating system whereby cognitive, behavioural and inter-personal skills are targeted within youth programme development (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004). Ultimately, if young people are to develop into responsible, contributing civic members of society, a focus must be placed on a strength-based approach rather than a deficit-reduction paradigm (Benson, 2007). By taking such an approach, a greater emphasis is placed on the potential strength and civic contribution of individuals. The engagement in a communal society promotes not only individual self-efficacy but also collective efficacy (Christens & Dolan, 2011). In taking a community engagement approach to youth development, society can potentially decrease the need for professional services that
target the reduction of high-risk, health-compromising behaviours (e.g., alcohol abuse, adolescent pregnancy, anti-social behaviour).

Although a holistic approach (combination of strengths-based and deficit-reduction) may provide the most beneficial outcome, focusing on a deficit-reduction approach “as a dominating paradigm, it may unintentionally strengthen both the over-professionalisation of care and civic disengagement” (Benson, Leffert, Scales, & Blyth, 1998, p. 141). As a result, professional services become highly specialised and ultimately their demand increases. However, an integrated system whereby interventions adopt a strength-based approach whilst educating youth on the dangers of health-compromising behaviours, could potentially ‘water-down’ the specialisation of such professional services.

Exploring an eclectic representation of its process-oriented facets allows associated disciplines to agree on the defining characteristics of PYD, rather than a unified definition. Given the breadth of research incorporating developmental science, adolescent well-being, psychology and philosophy, PYD, as a concept, provides a platform for youth programmes and interventions dedicated to supporting adolescents and their contribution to society. However, all too often the theoretical foundations of a phenomenon are left collecting dust on the shelves of university libraries, rather than translating their worth to applied practice. It is important, therefore, to explore the relevance of grounded theoretical research in contexts both within and beyond academia.

**Theoretical and conceptual framework of PYD.**

Due to its expanse across numerous disciplines, researchers have attempted to theorise how youth develop as individuals and as members of society. Subsequently, a number of theoretical frameworks have been introduced as a method of understanding
and exploring the process involved in human development (see Scarr & McCartney, 1983; Lerner, 1991; Järvilehto, 1998; Benson, 1998; Hodge, Danish, & Martin, 2013). This section of the review will highlight key frameworks and literature addressing youth development within the context of developmental science and wider biospsychosocial standpoints.

An understanding of developmental science and ontogeny is required when considering early debates of a biopsychosocial nature-nurture paradigm within human development. Within this context it is important to consider the relationship between the organism (i.e. the individual) and the environment as an interactive process within which development occurs. Nevertheless, the importance of individual differences when making conclusions towards human development must not be overlooked:

Moreover, because of the organismic and contextual components of the causal, dynamic interactions constituting the basis of human development will not occur in the same way or at the same exact ontogenetic time across all people, lawful individual differences in developmental pathways, and not a generic developmental trajectory, characterize human life. (Lerner, 1991, pp. 29)

Therefore, the inter-individual variability within the organism-environment interaction allows sufficient adaptation in order to feed evolutionary development within an interdependent system (Lerner, 1991). If a standardised pathway of development occurred, then the human race, or any species for that matter, would be far more unified as a result of less environmental interaction. Consequently, developmental systems theory situates human development as an evolving interactional phenomenon that occurs within an inexorable context (Griffiths & Gray, 2005).
Developmental systems theory (DST), stemming from psychobiology, incorporates numerous theoretical concepts in order to provide a philosophical critique on human development (Ford & Lerner, 1992). Research by Lewontin (1982) and Scarr and McCartney (1983) suggested that organisms construct themselves within a given environment whilst selecting evolutionary factors that determine their existence. Within this view the organism-environment interaction prompts phenotypic plasticity (the ability to adapt to an environment and later specific characteristics to survive), allowing successful (or unsuccessful) evolution. Furthermore, an organism’s ability to construct adaptively supports its development, rather than following a ‘one-size-fits-all’ ruling. However, taking a more philosophical approach to what is ultimately a biological rationale for human development allows for a greater emphasis on human phenotype analysis. In doing so, we are able to generate a profile of observable (as well as unobservable) characteristics associated with human behaviour that have been constructed as a result of individual-environment interaction. In relation to youth development, researchers and practitioners are able to create an environment that supports developmental outcomes.

Informed by developmental science in defining and understanding developmental assets (Benson, 1990), aspects of youth development, as we know it today, were originally conceptualised from developmental systems metatheory, incorporating psychobiology, probabilistic epigenetics (Gottlieb, 2001) and developmental ecology (Brofenbrenner, 1979). Within this framework, the significance of individual–context interactions (see Figure 1) when considering ecological (external) and individual asset development, should be considered within youth development.
Lerner et al. (2005) first incorporated developmental contextualism, derived from broader developmental systems theory (Lerner, 1991; see Figure 1), in order to provide a theoretical grounding for PYD. The premise of this theoretical perspective of youth development is based upon an individual continuously evolving as a result of interacting with their surrounding contexts, depicted by the outer circles in Figure 1 (i.e., community, society, culture). This process is by no means linear, as the fusion of constantly changing contextual levels allows an individual to develop, as well as influence those involved within such contexts (Lerner, Ostrom, & Freel, 1997). Lerner and colleagues (2005) examined PYD through Lerner’s (2004) Five Cs model (i.e., competence, confidence, character, connection and caring/compassion). Originally, Little (1993) introduced the four Cs (competence, confidence, connection, character) as latent constructs that
represent the numerous developmental outcomes associated with PYD (see Lerner et al., 2005 for a review). The Five Cs model represents a collective vocabulary that summarises the numerous meta-indicators of PYD. However, it is only the relationship between an individual and their environment that is captured within the Five Cs (e.g., connection), rather than the potential impact they could have on their surrounding contexts.

In addition to the Five Cs, some researchers (e.g., Lerner, 2004; Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003) have eluded to a sixth “C” which encompasses an evolving, thriving individual (through development of the Five Cs) to make positive contributions to their surrounding contexts. The sixth “C” of contribution suggests a process whereby an individual is making a significant, functional influence within their contextual surroundings (family, community, society), which in turn will develop their moral compass and promote further contributions towards their civic society (Lerner et al., 2003; Lerner 2004). Highlighted in Figure 2, the journey towards the sixth “C” suggests a thriving process defined as “a developmental concept that denotes a healthy change process linking youth with an adulthood status enabling society to be populated by healthy individuals oriented to integratively serve self and civil society” (Lerner et al., 2003, p. 176). In order to analyse this developmental thriving process into adulthood, Lerner et al. (2005) have taken a longitudinal approach.
4-H, a youth development organisation dedicated to empowering youth towards positive change, initiated a longitudinal investigation to gain an understanding for the processes involved in PYD as a result of developmental contextualism. The 4-H study was designed to test the latent construct of PYD whilst tracking the path a youth may take, earmarked by the thriving process, whilst making positive contributions to their surrounding contexts (Lerner et al., 2005). Lerner and colleagues (2005) based their rationale for the 4-H PYD study on providing a longitudinal data set which analyses both the empirical composition of the existing five Cs and the existence of a sixth C which has a bidirectional influence with youth development. Only data for Wave 1 of the study, collected in 2002 and 2003, is presented in the report. An extensive sample across 57 schools and 4 after-school clubs over 13 states generated a sample of 1700 adolescents (10-11yrs old) and 1117 parents/guardians of the participants. In order to test their rationale, certain items were selected from the following measures:

Figure 2. A Developmental Contextual View of PYD (Lerner et al., 2005).
Profiles of Student Life – Attitudes and Behaviours Survey (PSL-AB)
Teen Assessment Project (TAP) Survey Question Bank
Child’s Report of Parenting Behaviours Inventory (CRPBI)
Parental Monitoring Scale (PMS)
Target-Based Expectations Scale (TBES)
Self Perception Profile for Children (SPPC)
Peer Support Scale (PSS)
Eisenberg Sympathy Scale (ESS)
Social Responsibility Scale (SRS)
Centre for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D)
Selection, Optimisation and Compensation (SOC) Questionnaire

In addition to the above measures, a number of open-ended and likert-scale questions - designed to assess ideology regarding community contribution, indicators of risk behaviour and delinquency, school and career aspirations or expectations and thoughts about the future - were also used as part of the survey. Demographic data, measures of puberty and participation in activities were assessed using the Puberty Development Scale (PDS), Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory (EPSI). Through utilising structural equation modelling, clear definitions of the Five Cs were sourced from previous research (Lerner, 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003) in order to test the latent construct of PYD.

Results from the initial Wave 1 of the longitudinal 4-H study demonstrated empirical support for the Five Cs and latent construct of PYD. As the report only contains data from the first wave from the larger study, the analysis presented confirms only the uni-temporal status of the Five Cs. Lerner and colleagues have reported an adequate fit of the Five Cs model (utilising structural equation modelling) in reference to PYD. However, it is important to highlight that all measures were self-report, which could have
an impact on the true objective representation of some of the Cs, such as competence and confidence (Lerner et al., 2005). It is also the first study to analyse the inclusion of a potential sixth C (contribution) within a developmental contextualism framework and provide evidence of its relationship with the Five Cs and PYD. However, due to the parameters discussed, and the process of thriving, this study was unable to provide a comprehensive understanding of its existence due to the cross-sectional methodology and arguably limited levels of contribution a 10/11 year old makes to their surrounding contexts.

Phelps et al. (2009) utilised data presented by the 4-H study and expanded their reach to include the original Grade 5 participants but also included Grades 6 and 7. To assess the longitudinal effects, confirmatory factor analysis was used to test the covariance model of the Five Cs as well as the goodness of fit for the PYD model to 5th-7th Grade pupils. Results supported the earlier work of Lerner at al. (2005) in providing evidence of PYD demonstrated by the Five Cs. The concept of PYD continues to be an accurate representation of the 5Cs across 5th, 6th and 7th grade pupils. However, due to the longitudinal nature of the research, three of the Cs (competence, caring, character) were revised based on alternative definitions. Lerner and colleagues (2005) demonstrated high inter-factor correlations between a number of Cs suggesting potential conceptual overlap (Gorsuch, 2003). Yet, Phelps et al. (2009) failed to report inter-factor correlations, so limited conclusions can be drawn on whether the Five Cs are conceptually independent, limiting the conceptualisation of PYD. This study provides a longitudinal perspective to the growing literature in conceptually defining PYD whilst also providing programme facilitators with a means to discuss the practical application of PYD (i.e., what skills to educate within a PYD programme). Moreover, it provides evidence to support the longitudinal effects of PYD in early adolescents. Despite this contribution to the
knowledge base, there is limited scope in its use within alternative contexts, such as sport and physical education.

Jones et al. (2011) tested the latent dimensionality of PYD with reference to the Five Cs through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). In doing so, they devised a 30-item questionnaire (PYD-Sport) in order to measure PYD within a sporting context. Following previous recommendations in using CFA (Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum & Strahan, 1999; Gorsuch, 2003) they selected 30 items (6 per factor) that were informed by the 78-item PYD measure used by Phelps et al. (2009), 26 of which were modified for relevance to sport. In using a sample of 258 youths (59 males, 199 females) aged between 12-16 years old, Jones and colleagues were able to test their 5-factor model hypothesis. Results from the CFA suggested that a good fitting model was not achieved. Due to high inter-factor correlations (50% ranged from .81 to .94), there was significant conceptual overlap between numerous factors. Although the findings from Jones et al. (2011) present a new dilemma relating to the construct validity of PYD, Phelps et al. (2009) did not report any inter-factor correlations yet still evidenced support for the Five Cs. This led to further analysis to be carried out in the form of exploratory factor analysis (EFA).

Despite the results from the CFA and EFA not supporting previous conclusions by Lerner et al. (2005) and Phelps et al. (2009), Jones et al. (2011) did demonstrate two overarching PYD factors of pro-social values and confidence/competence. Due to the number of overlapping factors, their research did not support the Five Cs of PYD. Nevertheless, Jones and colleagues suggested that their results could be affected by which items were selected from Phelps et al.’s (2009) measure of PYD. It is also important to highlight the contextual nature of the participant sample (i.e., summer sports camp) and how relevant it is to select this group in comparison to secondary school athletes. The cultural climate of a sports camp is arguably different from that of a school or university sports team, ergo
displaying alternative motivational climates and emphasis on participation rather than competition (Lowe Vandall, Pierce, & Dadisman, 2005). Although the study provides an important progression in understanding the commonly accepted colloquial concept of **PYD through sport** and presents a novel 2-factor construct of PYD, its results should be considered with caution when comparing to more traditional sporting environments. However, its contribution to the wider literature is demonstrated in providing an initial basis to explore the capacity for youth sport programmes to foster PYD.

Over the past two decades researchers have tried to understand the developmental outcomes pertaining to sport. Although the construct validity of PYD in reference to the Five C's is questionable, it is important not to stagnate theoretical, cross-sectional research surrounding this illusive concept. More recently, a wealth of applied research into PYD through sport participation has allowed researchers and applied practitioners to grasp the **real-world** impact on youth, and their surrounding communities. This next section of the literature review will highlight some of the key findings and future directions in research associated with youth sport programmes, developmental outcomes and skills that are transferable to other domains of life.

**Positive Youth Development Through Sport**

Sport for Development (SfD) is a relatively new term which is being more widely used and associated with developmental interventions (Brunelle, Danish, & Forneris, 2007), applied psychology research (Catalano et al., 2004) and policy reports (Órla Cronin, 2011). As this is a vast area of research, key findings will be drawn from the research involving organised youth sport programmes; curriculum-based physical education and personal/social development interventions pertinent to this thesis. Returning to an earlier point that suggested sport is a vehicle to develop youths’ personal and social skills (Guest, 2008), the individual points relevant to this metaphor will be
discussed in succession, therefore: what the vehicle looks like, who is driving it, how it is fuelled and how it arrives at its destination. Furthermore, specific youth sport programmes will be analysed regarding their relevance and success in enhancing youths’ skills and developmental outcomes, which have potential use in other areas of their life.

**Developmental assets.**

An important starting point to this section is to identify research that highlights the additional advantages and facilitative assets that promote youth development, building on previous research incorporating the developmental assets framework (Benson, 2003). The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (NRCIM) produced a report highlighting key considerations for youth programme planning to foster health and well-being through development (NRCIM, 2002; 2004). Table 1, taken from the report brief (NRCIM, 2004), provides a summary of personal and social assets that contribute to adolescent development. From a non-empirical, anecdotal perspective, many adults delivering sports programmes might argue that a number of the developmental assets highlighted in Table 1, are evident outcomes in their practice when working with adolescents. However, research supporting the measurement and longitudinal impact of such assets within sporting contexts is less prominent and presents a significant gap in the literature. In addition, there are a limited number of empirical frameworks for planning and delivering sport programmes that facilitate the development of assets and skills.
Table 1.

*Personal and Social Assets that Facilitate Positive Youth Development (NRCIM, 2004)*

| Physical Development | • Good health habits  
<table>
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<th>• Good health risk management skills</th>
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</table>
| Intellectual Development | • Knowledge of essential life skills  
|                        | • Knowledge of essential vocational skills  
|                       | • School success  
|                      | • Rational habits of mind – critical thinking and reasoning skills  
|                      | • In-depth knowledge of more than one culture  
|                      | • Good decision-making skills  
|                      | • Knowledge of skills needed to navigate through multiple cultural contexts |
| Psychological and Emotional Development | • Good mental health, including positive self-regard  
|                                      | • Good emotional self-regulation skills  
|                                    | • Good coping skills  
|                                   | • Good conflict resolution skills  
|                                  | • Mastery motivation and positive achievement motivation  
|                                | • Confidence in one’s personal efficacy  
|                               | • “Planfulness” – planning for the future and future life events  
|                              | • Sense of personal autonomy/responsibility for self  
|                             | • Optimism and coupled with realism  
|                            | • Coherent and positive personal and social identity  
|                           | • Prosocial and culturally sensitive values  
|                          | • Spiritually or a sense of a “larger” purpose in life  
|                         | • Strong moral character  
|                        | • A commitment to good use of time |
| Social Development | • Connectedness – perceived good relationships and trust with parents, peers, and some other adults  
|                     | • Sense of social place/integration – being connected and valued by larger social networks  
|                    | • Attachment to prosocial/conventional institutions, such as school, church, and non-school youth programs  
|                   | • Ability to navigate in multiple cultural contexts  
|                  | • Commitment to civic engagement  
|
What does the vehicle look like?

Although research surrounding PYD has received significant attention in the past two decades, there is limited literature on youth programme design and structure within academia. Given that one of the most important factors in a successful youth development programme is the structure in which it facilitates person-context interactions with significant others, a large proportion of knowledge is provided by youth leaders, coaches, community organisations and programmes (Intrator & Siegel, 2014). Therefore, it is important to discuss the structure and format of current sport-based youth development programmes.

*Is it a Mercedes or a Ford?*

If sport is used as a vehicle for developing adolescents, what does the vehicle look like (i.e., what does the sport programme look like)? A number of programmes are described, to a varying degree of detail, within research articles (e.g. Berlin, Dworkin, Eames, Menconi, & Perkins, 2007; Brown & Fry, 2011; Goudas & Giannoudis, 2008; Papacharisis et al., 2005). Those commonly cited within the literature include the Sports United to Promote Education and Recreation (SUPER) programme (Danish, 2002b), First Tee (Weiss, Kipp, Bhalla, & Boulter, 2008) and Going for the Goal (GOAL) programme (Danish, 2002a). A critique of the aforementioned interventions is provided within Chapter 3. However, there are numerous youth development programmes beyond the reach of academia, often devised by local-authority-funded organisations (Intrator & Siegel, 2014). Such programmes constructed by ‘front-line’ staff often present an alternative method of design due to the vast knowledge of their creators: youth workers, coaches, and teachers. Berlin and colleagues (2007) provided an apt summary of four youth development programmes. In doing so, they created a much needed resource that presents the creation, sustainability, rationale and evaluation of such youth programmes.
as the Harlem RBI, Tenacity, Snowsports Out-reach Society and Hoops & Leaders Basketball Camp (Berlin et al., 2007). The article covers a significant gap in the literature by exploring the day-to-day operation of successful youth development programmes. Detailing the content and design of each programme, as well as the links to external stakeholders and organisations, provides a resource for newly-established youth programmes to base their operations on best practise. Due to the restricted page limit within academic journals, such level of detail is often not provided and a shortened description of the programme is substituted. A brief description of the programme delivers little rigour in the design and implementation, with limited external validity.

The scarcity of sport related research creates an issue with respect to research replication and an absence of coherent collaboration between youth organisations and researchers. The lack of evidence to support policy and practise results in an outcome-oriented literature base and confines the advancement of research to what has worked rather than why it has worked. Within a vast, evolving discipline this creates a problem whereby numerous ‘vehicles’ are on the road of youth development who have no horns to communicate with each other.

The majority of sport-based youth development programmes take the form of after-school activities, unaffected by school curricula but plagued with barriers such as retention, funding and recruitment. After-school programmes provide opportunities for youth to partake in constructive skill-building activities and, therefore, limiting the time available for participation in high-risk anti-social behaviours. According to Roth and Brookes-Gunn (2003), there are three defining characteristics of a youth development programme: goals, atmosphere and activities. After surveying 71 programmes, 77% reported competency building as a goal that characterised the developmental outcomes of their programme. Although it would seem that the shift from a deficit-reduction paradigm
to a strength-based approach is becoming more prominent, 90% of programmes agreed that a key goal to the programme involves targeting the reduction of high-risk behaviours. Roth and Brookes-Gunn (2003) provided a pertinent evaluation of youth development programme rationales. However, given the age of the research, an updated survey would potentially provide evidence to support their findings that included programmes established within the past ten years. As well as understanding the defining characteristics of youth sport programmes, there is a need to understand how programmes operationalise PYD and the structures involved in promoting developmental outcomes.

**How is the vehicle fuelled?**

How is the programme implemented? How is sport used as a method of implementation? What theory supports the methods used to deliver? These are all questions relating to the actual implementation of a youth programme that uses sport as a method of delivery and how it generates positive developmental outcomes. Within this section, research that demonstrates how youth sport programmes are implemented within a conceptual framework is discussed.

Petitpas and colleagues (2005) have presented a framework for planning youth sport programmes that encompasses elements of the Search Institute 40-item (20 internal, 20 external) Developmental Framework (Benson, 2003), as well as components of primary features of a youth programme shown to foster positive development recommended by NRCIM (2002, 2004). The framework, presented in Table 2, provides an initial outline of potential programme content and methods of evaluation but lacks components relating to the structure of a programme (i.e., delivered over the course of several one-hour sessions, similar to SUPER). Instead, it relies heavily upon the contextual components that are seen to enable the successful development of assets.
Table 2

A Framework for Planning Youth Sport Programmes that Promote Psychosocial Development in Participants (Petitpas et al., 2005).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Intrinsically motivating activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Valued role within an important group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Activity that is voluntary; has clear rules, goals, and incentives; and happens over time</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External Assets</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Close relationships with caring adult mentors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parental monitoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Community service opportunities</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Assets</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Goal-setting, social, and problem-solving skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A sense of identity and purpose (hope and planning for the future)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Confidence in abilities to use skills in contexts other than sport</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research and Evaluation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Multidimensional evaluation of changes in positive and negative behaviours with standardised methodologies and measures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Long-term longitudinal evaluation of programme outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assessment of outcomes, processes, and programme implementation variables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar to Lerner and colleagues’ (2005) developmental contextualism view of PYD (see Figure 2), building relationships with significant others through context specific interactions provides a foundation for asset and skills building (Petitpas, Cornelius & Van Raaalte, 2008). Petitpas et al. (2008) provide examples of two sport-based youth development programmes (Table 3) that have utilised the framework above.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program elements</th>
<th>Play It Smart</th>
<th>The First Tee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td>Intrinsically motivating, requires commitment</td>
<td>Youth golf programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High school football teams and year-long involvement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valued place in a constructive group</td>
<td>Mentoring younger participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guided in finding a special role within a valued group (Play It Smart)</td>
<td>Rules and etiquette associated to golf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voluntary, rules, constraint, goals, rewards and requires concerted effort over time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linked to class attendance and academic achievement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>External assets</strong></td>
<td>Close relationship with adult mentors</td>
<td>Coaches and trained facility volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Coach and Head Coach training and evaluation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involvement of parents and parental monitoring</td>
<td>Parent handbooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent Booster Clubs, Parent Night programs, Parent Handbooks and Newsletters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Structured activities that provide opportunities for participants to become external assets for others</td>
<td>Mentoring younger age groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community service activities and leadership conferences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal assets</strong></td>
<td>Development of planning, social, and problem solving skills</td>
<td>Curriculum that addresses interpersonal, self-management, decision making,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus on future planning, decision-making, and problem-solving.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of identity and purpose (hope and plan for the future)</td>
<td>Creating learning teams (positive gangs) that fosters expectations for higher education</td>
<td>Career and academic planning in older age groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of Life Skills to different domains</td>
<td>Community service activities and leadership roles outside of sport. Transferable skills workshops.</td>
<td>“Bridge to life” segment that addresses transfer of skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Research and evaluation

| Evaluation of changes in positive and negative behaviours | Link to academic achievement and grade improvements | Evaluation of knowledge development and skill transfer |
| Evaluation of program effectiveness | Longitudinal tracking beyond programme | Follow up evaluation of college attendees |
| Assessment of which program components lead to positive developmental changes | Assesses which program components have the largest impact (e.g., quality of academic coach/participants relationship or various program activities) | Currently assessing longitudinal impact of several outcomes |
Table 3 outlines the ‘Play It Smart’ and ‘First Tee’, both mapped to Petitpas et al. (2005) framework for planning youth sport programmes. The Play It Smart programme incorporates external assets (e.g., parents and community) within a school-based high school football team. On the other hand, the First Tee is a golf-based programme delivered at approved sites (golf clubs). Both programmes utilise coaches that are specifically trained in the skills to deliver the content, as well as develop supporting and caring relationships with participants. In addition, both programmes demonstrate a commitment to develop the internal assets of participants, with a focus on specific skills (e.g., decision making, self-management, problem-solving).

The programmes show a commitment to involving the participant’s wider contexts, including their parents, additional adult mentors and coaches as well as community integration; all crucial within the developmental contextual framework and facilitating the person-context interaction (Petitpas et al., 2008). Although the person-context interaction is highlighted, within the closed setting of the programme the deliverer (e.g., coach, youth leader) has significant control over the environment that is created, which relies on the ability to support autonomy.

The notion of creating an autonomy supportive environment to promote intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2007) and foster the process of youth development, where each member of the group is able to make a valuable contribution towards their learning, is well supported within the literature (Côté, Strachan, & Fraser-Thomas, 2008; Gould & Carson, 2008; McCallister, Blinde, & Weiss, 2000; NRCIM, 2002). Petitpas et al. (2008) have selected a number of assets (internal and external) from the Developmental Framework (Benson, 2003) and highlighted the relevant components within two youth programmes, Play It Smart and The First Tee. Furthermore, they have made particular reference to the importance of developing successful relationships between programme
leaders and participants. To ensure a supportive, inclusive learning environment, coaches must be educated and instructed on the developmental processes that facilitate youth well-being:

Individuals who are not able to build trusting relationships with young people are less likely to create an environment where participants are willing to take risks and where they know that making mistakes is a normative part of the learning process. (Petitpas et al., 2008, p. 62)

In creating the optimal context for learning and development, evaluative measures are essential in understanding the effectiveness in establishing rapport and relationships and, ultimately, the entire programme. The creators of both youth programmes have recognised the importance of evaluating person-context interactions and have a clear strategy on who is driving the vehicle (i.e., who delivers the programmes).

**Who drives the vehicle?**

Who delivers youth development programmes? This is a question that has received little attention within the PYD literature. A coach or physical education teacher would be the logical instigator and catalyst for youth development due to their skills in educating athletes. Youth development programmes born from academic research (e.g., SUPER), are rarely implemented by researchers but instead by peer mentors, coaches or youth workers. As such, this creates an interesting dilemma as to who should be driving the vehicle and who should be delivering sport-based youth development programmes.

Research has traditionally adopted a coach or youth mentor focus in fostering youth development and according to Camire, Forneris, Trudel, and Bernard (2011), “Coaches are arguably the most important actors in the youth sport context and play an influential role in facilitating or hindering the development of youth” (p. 43). PYD and
life skills research incorporating coaching science has provided the vast majority of the research in answering the question. In reference to PYD, there are two complementary strands of research:

- Understanding coaching methods and behaviours in order to facilitate PYD within an existing sport and/or physical activity context;
- Understanding delivery methods and leadership style when creating a youth development programme.

The former focuses on sport and/or physical education as the defining characteristic (e.g., academy football team, physical education lesson in secondary school) and youth development is seen as a by-product. Whereas the latter is specifically designed to promote positive outcomes for youth where sport and/or physical activity is seen as a tool to enable the delivery of this ethos.

Dan Gould has provided a series of papers exploring coaching methods and behaviours within a number of settings, including: high-school football coaches (Gould, Collins, Lauer, & Chung, 2007), varsity high-school coaches (Gould, Chung, Smith, & White, 2006), leadership in sport team captains (Gould & Voelker, 2010), and high school coaches (Gould & Carson, 2010). In order to improve understanding of coach behaviour within PYD settings, Gould and colleagues explored specific strategies and personality traits that both facilitate PYD and life skills development. A key factor in supporting the ability of coaches to build relationships with their athletes/players centres around creating positive role models and a feeling of trust and respect between adolescent and adult (Vella, Oades, & Crowe, 2011). Research focusing on the role of the coach in the lives of athlete has also supported the importance of a strong coach-athlete relationship (Davis & Jowett, 2014; Trottier & Robitaille, 2014).
In a survey of 154 high-school varsity coaches (spanning 7 sports), Gould et al. (2006) found that coaches ‘often’ reported acting the role of a counsellor, emphasising that the coach serves as a significant other adult within youths’ development. The findings of Gould et al. (2007) and Gould et al. (2010) support the conclusions highlighted above whereby the coach becomes an integral support mechanism within the athletes’ contextual network. Designed for coaches and sport leaders, Camire and colleagues (2011) further highlighted the importance of the coach-athlete relationship as well as four additional strategies used by coaches to facilitate PYD:

1. Develop your coaching philosophy;
2. Intentionally plan developmental strategies in your coaching practice;
3. Do not just talk about life skills, make your athletes practice life skills;
4. Teach your athletes how life skills transfer to non-sport settings.

The final two points may seem logical and somewhat ‘given’ as a part of being a coach, however, the actual process involved in the delivery of life skills can be far more complex. The coach needs to have an understanding of the athletes’ world beyond sport to enable potential transfer to take place. Specific examples of where and how to use and practice certain skills in life beyond sport have to be clearly articulated to the athlete.

Although the research supporting coach education, as a means of developing youth, has been fruitful in the last decade, the potential role of Sport Psychologists as drivers of PYD has been less forthcoming.

Danish and Nellen (1997) suggested that the roles of Sport Psychologists and Physical Educators in teaching and developing life skills in youth complements their education and training. The skills associated to their profession, specifically relating to educating and supporting youth athletes, is particularly pertinent to being an ideal catalyst in developing youth personal, social and behavioural skills:
Key to their [sport psychologists] work in teaching life skills is the ability to assist adolescents in setting and attaining goals; a proficiency in identifying and transferring acquired physical and mental skills from one domain to another domain; an understanding of adolescence and physical, cognitive, affective, and social/interpersonal changes taking place during this period; designing and redesigning the life skill(s) to be learned; the ability to supervise and train peer leaders; and some training in counselling skills. (Danish & Nellen, 1997, pp 110-111).

However, very little research has supported such statements. It is clear that the communication skills of a Sport Psychologist, specifically listening and counselling skills, would allow rapport to be established with the adolescent. Building rapport, trust and mutual respect between the adult and youth is a key factor to enable the youth to feel safe and comfortable within the given environment, promoting engagement within the learning process (Gould et al., 2007; Rhind, Jowett, & Yang, 2012). However, despite this insight from Danish and Nellen (2007) into the roles of Sport Psychologists in promoting life skills development of athletes, major youth development programmes do not incorporate such personnel.

The First Tee, a multinational, non-profit organisation, uses a combination of youth mentors and Life Skills Coaches, rather than Sport Psychologists, who undergo training through the First Tee Coach Programme (see Weiss et al., 2013). The process of utilising programme graduates to mentor younger age groups allows a cyclical model of implementation. Youth who are closer (in age) to leaders of the programme will often react more positively as their lived experiences are closely aligned (AED Centre for Gender Equity, 2009). Youth programme staff, volunteers and youth mentors all play a significant role in facilitating PYD, although PYD research often overlooks the potential
for an applied academic researcher to be at the forefront of programme delivery. It could be argued that Sport Psychologists and applied researchers do not possess the coaching skills to deliver sport-based programmes. All too often, the academic researcher is left to explore how the vehicle arrives at its destination. The purpose of this thesis is to explore the issues surrounding who is suited to deliver life skills programmes and under what contexts they are effective in fostering transfer of skills. Central to this exploration involves gaining a greater understanding of how life skills are transferred and how programme facilitators implement the transfer process.

**How does the vehicle arrive at its destination?**

Although youth development programmes (see Table 3 for examples) make reference to the lifelong benefit and use outside of sport, it is important to discuss the complex system of transferability of assets and skills beyond the context of sport. How do skills transfer from the locker room to the boardroom? How do we evaluate the effectiveness of PYD programmes in developing specific attitudes and behaviours? How do we know that we are developing youth, rather than hindering them?

Life skills transfer beyond sport is not automatic (Brunelle et al., 2007; Camire, Trudel, & Forneris, 2012; Vella et al., 2011). However, skills that are learnt through sport are transferable. That is, they have use outside the context of sport (Gould & Carson, 2008; Papacharisis et al., 2005; Martinek, Schilling, & Johnson, 2001). Camire et al. (2012) utilised Gould and Carson’s (2008) model of coaching life skills in order to explore the practices of coaches in facilitating transfer of skills to contexts outside of sport. Results suggested that in addition to the coach’s philosophy and working ethos, the skills and experiences of the coach have a significant impact on their ability to support the transferability of life skills. Through content analysis of the coach and student-athlete interviews, a number of strategies used by coaches to support transfer were highlighted.
The strategies presented below are direct themes taken from the content analysis (Camire et al., 2012).

- Keywords - use of words/phrases to group associated behaviours that aligned to a generic skill;
- Providing opportunity to display skills;
- Modelling – demonstrating appropriate behaviours through the coach’s working practices;
- Taking advantage of teachable moments.

The education range of the coaches used in the sample ranged, with an average of 13 years of experience. However, the authors highlighted that some coaches reported the level of intellect and maturity of student-athletes had an effect on the capability of skill transfer. They concluded that coaches should have a clearly defined coaching philosophy that incorporates life skills development as well as sound strategies to support the transfer of skills beyond sport. This article provides a significant contribution and initial insight into the complex system of life skills transfer.

The research presented within this section of the literature review has been aligned to four key questions related to the utility of sport as a vehicle for youth development:

1. What does the vehicle look like?
2. How is the vehicle fuelled?
3. Who drives the vehicle?
4. How does the vehicle arrive at its destination?

In doing so, several gaps within the current literature have been highlighted informing the rationale and purpose of this thesis, which will be presented at the end of this chapter.

Programmes traditionally based within a sporting context have utilised sport as a
means to initiate life skill learning and the development of pro-social values (Danish et al., 2004). Whilst there are recommendations and criteria pertinent to the implementation of a youth sport development programme including the setting (NRCIM, 2002), evaluation (Petitpas et al., 2005), and sustainability (Berlin et al., 2007), there is a significant gap within the literature relating to programme design. Specifically, the actions required by the programme facilitator in order to develop and deliver a sport-based life skills programme.

Given the lack of research in discussing programme design and delivery, the ability to replicate existing interventions, and ultimately advance the field, becomes challenging. The programme of research presented in this thesis will aim to address such gaps in the literature. In doing so, it is important to recognise the ‘who’ and ‘what’ before addressing the ‘how’ of sport-based youth development programmes. Therefore, the remainder of the chapter will focus on research relating to specific skills required by today’s adolescents (i.e., ‘who’), supporting their capacity to deal with everyday challenges they face (i.e., ‘what’).

**Equipping Youth with the Skills Required in Adolescence**

The necessary skills and strategies that are associated with effective coping have received significant attention within research on adolescence and developmental transitions during the 1990s (e.g. Kavsek & Seiffge-Krenke, 1996; Plancherel, Bolognini, & Halfon, 1998; Williams & Lisi, 1999). As a result, the notion of resilient behaviours to support effective coping in challenging situations has started to emerge within youth development literature and, more specifically, youth sport participation. Due to the association between resiliency and effective coping, it is important to explore the theoretical underpinnings of resilience to understand its role in youth development (Lee, Cheung, & Kwong, 2012).
Equipping youth with the skills and assets to be able to succeed in life is particularly important within the adolescent years when they are exploring the world around them (Coleman, 2011). The specific range of years or definition of adolescence is particularly cloudy, however, Dumont and Provost (1999) described it as “a transitional period in which individuals experience major physical, cognitive and socio-affective changes” (p. 344). This transitional period into adulthood becomes engulfed in the formation of self-identity. As youth experiment and explore, changes within their environment or social structure can lead to the adoption of high-risk behaviours, such as drug and alcohol abuse, unprotected sex, and anti-social behaviour (Michaud, 2006). However, such risk-taking behaviours have been proposed to be important in the development of identity, where numerous identities are sampled and narrowed down to form the basis for self-identity (Erikson, 1968). At a time when the importance of making potentially life-changing decisions is inflated, the crisis of identity formation can be a challenging period. Supporting youth through the transition of adolescence relies on an understanding of ‘their’ world and how to navigate the challenges they are likely to face. As such, the following section will address the research related to reducing the prevalence of risk-taking behaviours, enabling youth to become resilient towards the challenges and difficult decisions they currently face and also in the future.

**Resilience and positive youth development.**

Psychological resilience research spans multiple disciplines, with a common interest in understanding adversity and positive adaptation of individuals. Following the movement of positive psychology, initial resiliency inquiry adopted a “paradigm shift from looking at risk factors that led to psychosocial problems to the identification of strengths of an individual” (Richardson, 2002, p. 309). More recently, the connection between resilience and adolescent development has been explored in relation to life-long
wellbeing, mental health, and effective transitioning into adulthood (Khanlou & Wray, 2014). As a result, research investigating resilient behaviours and coping strategies with regards to life skill development is starting to emerge (e.g., Gould, Griffes, & Carson, 2011; Lee et al., 2012; Sanders, Munford, Thimasarn-Anwar, Liebenberg, & Ungar, 2015). However, due to the infancy of such inter-disciplinary research, there are several gaps in the literature that offer potential avenues to explore. For example, within the PYD research, very few have considered resilience as a theme in developing coping strategies and behaviours of adolescents within sport-based life skills. In addition, there is also a lack of knowledge transfer from theory to practice allowing coaches and youth programme leaders to implement evidence-based training programmes that incorporate resilience to inform programme design and as a developmental outcome.

**Defining resilience.**

With reference to resilience, early research was aimed at understanding how certain young people were able to effectively cope within situations of extreme adversity (Rutter, 1987). Exploring the interactional processes between systems (e.g. youth and community) as well as significant others (e.g. youth and family) of such individuals has led researchers to develop a theoretical understanding of resiliency in youth. In doing so, the incorporation of developmental systems theory (Lerner et al., 2005) and wider PYD research has begun to emerge. Promoting and developing strengths of such individuals to a wider network of adolescents has become a significant component of PYD research. Therefore, it is important to consider how resilience situates itself within PYD research. This section will review key definitions surrounding the concept of resilience in order to inform the thesis and help position it within the wider context of developmental science and life skills research.
Due to the vast extant literature on resilience, it is impossible to provide a thorough review of the defining characteristics and theoretical underpinnings of resilience within the constraints of this thesis. However, a brief review of key definitions within developmental science and sport psychology research will be outlined.

**Resilience as a process.**

An important starting point is the work of Michel Rutter within the field of psychiatry. Rutter (1987) made the distinction of vulnerability and protective processes or mechanisms that determine the outcome of a given adverse, stressful situation. Individuals will deal with these situations in different ways depending on the protective mechanisms that are undertaken. Therefore, the alteration from failing to overcoming adversity is underpinned by the processes that protect an individual and ultimately reduce risk and increase the potential for adaptation (Rutter, 1987). The majority of work in this ‘first wave’ of resilience research was based within psychopathology and developmental science. Subsequent waves of research around the concept of resilience have formed the foundations for this elusive concept and how it is represented within youth development research and the wider society of today (Masten, 2007). However, due to the breadth of disciplines in which resilience permeates, there have been significant challenges faced in defining resilience.

Controversies surrounding a unified definition of resilience span from conceptualising it as a process, personality trait, and an outcome of positive adaptation (Masten, 2014). However, there is general acceptance that resilience is viewed as a dynamic process or even an interaction across multiple processes (Henley, 2010). Indeed, Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker (2000) defined resilience as a “dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity” (p. 543). Within this definition, the two concepts of positive adaptation and adversity are included;
representing the common concepts within resilience definitions (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). These terms have emerged within resilience research over the past 15 years and created a multi-system view of resilience.

The original conceptions of vulnerability and protective factors were primarily based on individual circumstance and characteristics. In the case of youth development, taking an individual view of resilience not only negates the impact of social contexts and environments but also the interactive capacity of an adolescent (Coakley, 2011). Henley (2010) made the distinction between ‘individual resilience’ and ‘multi-layered social resilience’ and considered the former to be an integral component of the latter. In a multi-layered view of resilience, Obrist, Pfeiffer, and Henley (2010) defined social resilience as:

The capacity of actors to access capitals in order to – not only cope with and adjust to adverse conditions (that is, reactive capacity) – but also search for and create options (that is, proactive capacity), and thus develop increased competence (that is, positive outcomes) in dealing with a threat (p. 289).

The proactive capacity of resilience, with the ability to explore beneficial options and subsequent outcomes, requires a cognitive component in active decision making (Henley, 2010). However, the skills and competencies involved in problem solving, decision making, and reflection that inform overall initiative and proactivity are rarely considered within resilience-based intervention research. Although this could potentially revert the progress of resilience research by focusing on the individual within context, it is a crucial element in promoting positive development within youth.

*Multidimensional view of resilience.*

Within a multidimensional view of resilience, an individual may react in a resilient manner differently towards a given circumstance. Interactions between multiple
systems (e.g., community, family, social) could vary dependent on the environmental demand. Subsequently, the way in which systems interact and ‘communicate’ (i.e., interactive dynamics) will have an impact on an individuals’ ability to demonstrate resilience. Due to the interactive dynamics, they may respond differently within an alternative context or time (Davydov, Stewart, Ritchie, & Chaudieu, 2010; Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). Therefore, as the interactive dynamics alter across different contexts, an individual is reliant upon existing strategies and skills when presented with adversity in a new environment. As such, the transferability of coping skills and strategies becomes paramount in order to ensure sufficient reactive capacity (Obrist et al., 2010). Consequently, resilience as a process is not linear; it is not automatically assumed that one becomes more resilient over time or exposure to adversity. This is particularly pertinent with youth development due to the rapid growth in exposure to interactional systems within adolescence; systems that contribute to self-identity (Lerner et al., 2006).

In the context of competency building, an individual may demonstrate resilience in the context in which the skill is taught and initially developed. Yet, it is the responsibility of the educator to demonstrate how the skills can be transferred to other systems or environments (Petitpas et al., 2008).

In recognising that resilience incorporates multiple systems, Ungar (2006), provided the following definition, “Resilience is both an individual’s capacity to navigate to health resources and a condition of the individual’s family, community and culture to provide these resources in culturally meaningful ways” (p.55). Therefore, the contexts surrounding an individual (i.e. family, community, culture) must provide sufficient resources in enabling healthy development. Ungar et al. (2008) refer to this interaction between youth and adults as a negotiation in providing quality support to those in need. Ultimately, Ungar et al. (2008) viewed resilience as a mechanism that incorporates the
interactive processes of navigation and negotiation. In relation to developmental systems theory, the process of navigating multiple contexts whilst negotiating with significant adults (beyond the family environment) becomes the daily life of an adolescent.

**Resilience as a PYD construct.**

Referring back to the work of Lerner and colleagues with regards to their developmental contextual view of PYD (Lerner, 1991; Lerner et al., 2005), the process of thriving is instigated through mutual alignment of individual (internal) assets and context-specific resources or external assets (Roth, Brookes-Gunn, Murray & Foster, 1998). Similarly, Ungar et al.’s (2008) view of beneficial person-context negotiations and dyadic relationships within resilience, reflects an individual who has the potential to thrive and develop positively. This connection between resilience and PYD is starting to emerge through the exploration of the person-context interaction. However, the developmental systems model is just one way in which PYD and resilience conceptually intertwine.

In viewing resilience as a PYD construct, Lee, Cheung, and Kwong (2011) highlighted eight relationships that explore and position the constructs’ theoretical proximity. Four of which view resilience as an outcome of PYD, whereas, four see resilience as a precursor to PYD. In relation to developmental systems theories (Lerner et al., 2005), Lee et al. (2011) outlined resilience as a *contributor* to PYD, whereby resilience acts as a supporting factor within multiple systems. In the case of a youth development programme, specifically designed to develop resilience-based skills and competencies, “resilience would become a determinant of positive youth development” (Lee et al., 2000, p. 4). However, according to the developmental systems model, PYD will only follow when “mutually beneficial relations” (Phelps et al., 2009) between person and context occur, suggesting the absence of adversity or significant risk factors. Yet, according to Luthar, Cichetti, and Becker (2000), developmental outcomes
associated with resilience (i.e. positive adaptation) will only occur when an individual is presented with adversity. Therefore, resilience will only act as a “contributor” to PYD when conditions are met and adversity is present (Lee et al., 2011). Conceptual differences between PYD and resilience highlight the importance of specific criterion in understanding the potential overlap between the two constructs.

In a conditional contributor relationship model between resilience and PYD, being resilient and having control over stress can only be practiced and developed under the presence of stress (Lee et al., 2011). However, resilience is considered specific to the context in which it occurs (Luther et al., 2000). A stress response to one adversity may not transfer to other domains. As such, the ‘practising’ of coping strategies and managing stress responses should be carefully considered in order to promote developmental outcomes that are transferable across contexts. Therefore, it is important to consider the models of resilience in supporting skill development and positive outcomes within specific contexts.

**Challenge model of resilience.**

The challenge model depicts a curvilinear relationship between risk and negative outcomes (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). Where the risk is too great and insufficient coping mechanisms are in place, a negative outcome is likely to occur. Similarly, if the risk level is too low, an adolescent is not experiencing enough stress to require coping strategies, which results in a negative outcome. Under a moderate level of risk, adolescents are able to “learn how to overcome it but are not exposed to so much of it that overcoming it is impossible” (Fergus & Zimmerman, p. 403). Therefore, the skills and competencies required in coping can be practised and developed under moderate levels of risk, in line with a conditional contributor relationship between PYD and resilience (Lee et al., 2011). In addition, individuals who view adversity as a positive opportunity for
development can be considered as demonstrating resilience (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). However, the difficulties lie in how to operationalise models of resilience, translate theory to practise, and develop adolescents’ life skills in supporting a system of thriving and resiliency (Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014). Creating moderate levels of risk within a safe environment, however, is challenging within applied practice (Sarkar, Fletcher, & Brown, 2015). The individual has to appraise the risk as ‘moderate’ rather than low or high, which will inevitably alter across individuals, dependent on existing resiliency and coping skills (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). Therefore, the process of trialling levels of risk and selecting an appropriate ‘moderate’ level, based upon reflections and participant input, would be most appropriate.

In summary, we know that resilience is widely accepted as a culmination of interacting processes, rather than a trait (Henley, 2010). The inclusion of resources in a multi-layered view of social resilience suggests that it extends beyond that of individual competencies (Obrist et al., 2010). Due to the interactive nature of multiple systems, individuals who demonstrate resilience in one context may not necessarily have the competence and/or resources to show resilience within an alternative context (Davydov et al., 2010). In line with developmental systems theory, the person-context interactions must serve a beneficial purpose if positive development is to occur. However, such interactions require navigating and negotiating in order for thriving to occur (Ungar et al., 2008), a process that requires resiliency related skills and competencies.

**Developing resilience-based skills.**

Interventions aimed at youth populations have targeted resilience through numerous avenues such as developing lifelong skills (Shochet & Ham, 2004), mental health (Gillham et al., 2007), coping strategies (Bailey & Challen, 2012), and parental support (Borden, Schultz, Herman, & Brooks, 2010). Although resilience-based
Interventions have been common practice within general psychology research, there is a considerable lack of programmes utilising sport as a means of developing resilience in youth. This is despite the recent wealth of research exploring resilience within sport and elite athletes (see Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Morgan, Fletcher, & Sarkar, 2015; Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014). However, numerous sport-based youth development programmes have targeted skills that are associated with specific components of resilience, such as: effective coping, positive adaptation, and critical thinking.

Peacock-Villada, DeCelles, and Banda (2007) utilised sport as a means of educating adolescents on the prevention of HIV infection through the Grassroots Soccer programme (GRS). Targeting resilience-based skills such as decision-making and problem-solving, the programme was implemented through a strengths-based approach utilising the existing strengths of participants to build their resiliency. The programme is delivered through four components, termed the “Four Ways to Stay Strong”:

1. Use your strengths;
2. Plan your next move;
3. Build your support team;
4. Take action in the community.

In the delivery of the programme, peer mentors educate participants on the risks of HIV infection. In doing so, the mentors act as a caring adult, beyond the context of the family, who participants can turn to for support. In evaluating the programme, the authors made reference to the skills and experiences of the ‘trainers’, listing “their strengths as facilitators: good listener, enthusiastic, engaging, explains effectively, inclusivity, well organised, determination, problem solver, team player, and confidence” (Peacock-Villada et al., 2007, p. 149).
Although results from the study demonstrate that the GRS programme was effective in educating participants in making healthy decisions and seeking support in solving problems, there is little evidence to suggest the skills have been transferred to contexts beyond sport. However, the premise of the programme was based on education towards HIV infection; forming a major part of the teaching within the programme. Therefore, the skills associated with resiliency are already being developed with alternative contexts in mind. Nevertheless, there is little mention of how soccer was integrated within the programme; making it challenging to classify it as a sport-based life skills intervention. Nonetheless, Peacock-Villada and colleagues outlined the significance of providing social support within a resilience-based intervention.

Social support is considered one of the most important protective factors in promoting resilience (Borden, et al., 2010; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Griffin, Holliday, Frazier, & Braithwaite, 2009; Landau, 2007; Peacock-Villada et al., 2007). Few studies have shown no relationship between social support and those who demonstrate resilience (Aronowitz & Morrison-Beedy, 2004; Dumont & Provost, 1999). Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that those individuals with effective support networks and those who actively seek social support from friends and family are better equipped to deal and cope with adversity (Brown, 2008; Freeman & Rees, 2010). Furthermore, adolescents who have supportive, caring relationships with non-family adults, such as, school staff, coaches or neighbours, are able to utilise such resources in times of need (Henley, Schweizer, de Gara, & Vetter, 2007). In recognising the importance of social support and its role within youth development, interventions have adopted a peer-education model.

Utilising peer mentors as the primary programme facilitators provides opportunity for participants to relate to young adults as they are often based within the same communities. The First Tee utilises peer mentors in supporting participants of the golf
programme in creating supportive relationships (Weiss, Stuntz, Bhalla, Bolter & Price, 2013). In addition, the philosophy instilled within their coach education emphasises the importance of caring adults, “Kids don’t care what you know until they know you care” (Weiss et al., 2013, p. 240). Utilising older adolescents or young adults as programme facilitators not only benefits participants but also the mentors themselves. Having the opportunity to support youth in the local community could potentially build the resilient attitudes of peer mentors whilst providing the chance to develop their interpersonal and coaching skills. Indeed, Peacock-Villada and colleagues (2007) noted that the development and education of peer mentors was an “unintended consequence” (p. 146) of the programme. Furthermore, its inclusion within Hart and Heaver’s (2013) systematic review suggests that GRS provides an innovative educational approach when working with youth.

Hart and Heaver (2013) expressed their frustrations with the relevance and practical application of previous academic literature surrounding resilience-based interventions. In doing so, they conducted a ‘consultative’ systematic review on resilience-based programmes for schools, whereby, parents and practitioners were consulted with securing meaningful results for the “people on the ground” (Hart & Heaver, 2013, p. 28). Highlighting the significant chasm between academic research, and the key questions posed by applied practitioners and parents, the review approaches the inclusion criteria through a realist synthesis method of intervention evaluation (Pawson, Greenhalgh, Harvey, & Walshe, 2005). Therefore, the aim of reviewing intervention research is based on “theoretical understanding and empirical evidence to identify what works for whom and in what circumstances, in what respects and how” (Hart & Heaver, 2013, p. 28). In summarising the resilience capacities that were targeted within
interventions, as part of the review, Hart and Heaver (2013) provided four categories: individual, interpersonal, friends & family, and community.

Based on the individual competencies, six themes were identified: self-esteem, autonomy, problem solving, goals and aspirations, sense of purpose, and skills, interests and competencies (see Hart & Heaver, 2013 for corresponding literature). The range of individual competencies identified in the review highlight the breadth of resilience related research and permeation into PYD life skills programmes. Therefore, it is important to consider how specific skills are associated with resilience in order to inform the remainder of the chapter and provide theoretical context for the pilot intervention and subsequent chapters.

**Skills associated with resilience.**

In order to initially deal with adversity, understanding one’s current situation and potential outcomes, requires decision-making and understanding, therefore, problem solving becomes a crucial skill when demonstrating resilience (Forneris, Danish, & Scott, 2007; Grunstein & Nutbeam, 2006; Peacock-Villada et al., 2007). The ability to think critically about adversity, assessing consequences and identifying a solution, whilst appraising it as a developmental opportunity (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013), results in the use of problem solving skills. Over time, as problem solving skills are practiced and developed, the potential to overcome challenges faced in later life is enhanced (Henley et al., 2007; Vetter et al., 2010). However, the ability to think critically in a potentially stressful situation means having control over emotions and behaviour in order to cope effectively; key characteristics of self-regulation (Buckner, Mezzcappa, & Beardslee, 2003).

An individual’s ability to regulate emotions and maintain self-control is a key protective factor in overcoming adversity and demonstrating resilience (Alvord &
Grados, 2005; Borden et al., 2010). Recognising one’s emotional state and ensuring that it is having a positive impact can potentially negate the process of coping. However, appraising a potential challenge as a developmental opportunity characterises the distinction between coping and resilience. As such, “resilience is characterized by its influence on one’s appraisal prior to emotional and coping responses and by its positive, protective impact, whereas coping is characterized by its response to a stressful encounter and by its varying effectiveness in resolving outstanding issues” (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013, p. 16). Therefore, the ability to self-regulate is part of the resiliency process. Furthermore, a lack of self-regulation could lead to emotion-focused coping where priority is placed upon managing the associated negative emotions as a result of appraising challenge as a threat (Cash & Gardner, 2011). Although not necessarily a negative strategy, the reliance on emotion-focused coping is associated to managing negative emotions in reference to stressful situations (Cash & Gardner, 2011). The potential for a positive appraisal of adversity relies on well-developed self-regulatory skills alongside an outlook towards future goals and aspirations (Buckner, et al., 2003), which supports the appraisal as a developmental opportunity.

Goal setting has been widely considered as an important life skill within PYD research and has been a key component of numerous sport-based life skills interventions (Brunelle, Danish, & Forneris, 2007; Danish, 2002; Papacharisis, Goudas, Danish, & Theodorakis, 2005). However, its use within resilience-based programmes is less forthcoming. In the case of supporting vulnerable youths towards increasing resilience, supporting a positive attitude, and instilling hope towards their future is seen as a crucial protective factor (Place, Reynolds, Cousins, & O’Neill, 2002; Save the Children, 2004). Securing a positive outlook on future career and personal aspirations requires identifying
realistic and achievable goals (Henley, 2010). However, the ability to set goals in supporting positive aspirations requires motivation to achieve goals.

Motivational Systems Theory (MST; Ford, 1992) positions the individual within a social and environmental context in assessing motivation (Campbell, 2007). Within MST, the three factors of goals, self-concept, and emotions interact towards identifying and achieving an end result. Therefore, purely focusing on goal setting as a cognitive ability is not enough to ensure complete engagement and motivation towards achieving a desired outcome (Rouse, 2001). Incorporating goal setting within a resilience-based intervention could have the potential to instil a sense of purpose given the developmental transition of adolescence (Khanlou & Wray, 2014; Vetter et al., 2010). In doing so, it is important to consider interacting social and environmental factors, such as parental support, when developing personal competence (Alvord & Grados, 2005).

In resilience-based programmes that incorporate a social support component, the skills based around interpersonal interactions with peers and significant others become a key driver for success. Being able to teach communication skills for the benefit of fostering healthy adult-child relationships represents a key skill of any programme facilitator (Henley et al., 2007). Developing adolescents’ interpersonal skills aids the ability in actively seeking social support (Freeman & Rees, 2010). If youth feel more comfortable in communicating with non-family adults as a result of developing competence around interpersonal skills, they are more likely to identify and seek support with increased proactive resilience (Obrist et al., 2010).

In summary, the skills and competencies highlighted above (problem solving, self-regulation, goal setting, and ability to seek social support) demonstrate the depth and breadth in the conceptual anatomy of resilience. There are clear links between resilience and PYD, with many sport-based life skills interventions tapping into numerous
developmental assets associated with resiliency. However, the process of implementing a youth development programme utilising resilience as an outcome is indeed complex (Hart & Heaver, 2013). Targeting skills that are associated with resilient actions is a potential avenue in fostering adolescents’ resilient attitudes (Alvord & Grados, 2005; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). As such, the following chapter section will introduce the emerging literature surrounding life skills research in order to contextualise the rationale in piloting a resilience-based life skills intervention.

**Rationale and Purpose of the Thesis**

The review presented above has provided an initial overview of current research within PYD and its inception within sport based youth development programmes. The breadth and reach of PYD research spans far beyond the realms of this thesis. Therefore, a representative review has been captured in order to provide context for the specific aims of this programme of research. Key gaps and limitations within the literature have been highlighted to present a clear rationale for the current thesis. Within the current strength-based paradigm, sport-based youth programmes have predominantly focused on promoting positive developmental outcomes for youth. However, the process to achieve this outcome is blurred for several key reasons:

1. Causality is rarely inferred due to a lack of longitudinal research;
2. The development and day-to-day implementation of youth programmes is not reported, preventing replication;
3. Limited research has explored the skills and strategies of programme facilitators to enable successful transfer of skills;
4. There is a lack of evidence demonstrating the practical application of programme design and associated theoretical groundings.
Previous literature surrounding sport-based youth development programmes fails to provide a concrete rationale for the choice of skills targeted within such programmes. The relevance of resilience-based skills has been discussed in relation to the challenges and potentially stressful situations youth are faced with. Therefore, the concept of resilience has been selected as a means to explore the skills relevant to the everyday lives of adolescents, as well as their lifelong utility. This significant gap in the literature will be explored throughout the programme of research, whilst contributing to the existing knowledge surrounding youth development programmes.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the process involved in designing, implementing and evaluating a life skills programme through 4 stages:

1. Design and pilot a sport-based life skills intervention targeting skills associated to resilience;
2. Brand, market and advertise the intervention to understand the process involved in creating a programme that is scalable;
3. Deliver life skills intervention to explore the process of transferrable life skills;
4. Conduct an intervention evaluation to determine the intervention’s effectiveness.
CHAPTER 3

Pilot phase: ‘Sink or Swim’
Introduction

Over the past 25 years, there have been numerous programmes and interventions implemented within a sporting or physical education context to help develop the health and wellbeing of youth. Within this programme of work there has been a move towards a strength-based approach, an avenue that enables programme leaders and facilitators to focus on the positive developmental outcomes of young people, such as self-esteem (Smoll, 1993), interpersonal skills, and emotional regulation (Benson, 2007). Outcomes within a positive youth development (PYD) setting are often associated with life skills. At this stage, it is important to define life skills to inform the remainder of this chapter and to provide a theoretical context for their importance in PYD.

The World Health Organisation (WHO, 1994) defined life skills as “abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour, that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life” (p. 1). Within this definition, the emphasis is placed upon the ability to navigate the potential stressors of life; what they term as psychosocial competence (WHO, 1994). On the other hand, Danish, Forneris, Hodge, and Heke (2004) provide a more contextual definition that categorises various types of life skills:

We define life skills as those skills that enable individuals to succeed in the different environments in which they live, such as school, home and in their neighbourhoods. Life skills can be behavioural (communicating effectively with peers and adults) or cognitive (making effective decisions); interpersonal (being assertive) or intrapersonal (setting goals) (p.40).

Although there are similarities in both definitions in respect to the necessity to succeed or the effective management of life, Danish et al. (2004) provided an inclusive definition that incorporates the typical environments in which adolescents spend the majority of their time,
whilst categorising key life skills. In an effort to refrain from devising another definition, Holland (2012) provided a summary of common characteristics across definitions, including:

- The promotion of coping, engagement, well-being, and healthy development;
- Personal skills or abilities that can be practiced;
- The application to multiple life domains;
- The transfer between life domains.

When comparing the previous two definitions with Holland’s (2012) summary, Danish et al. (2004) provided a more rounded definition that incorporates transferability as well as providing examples of specific skills. Whereas, the WHO (1994) have less emphasis on transferability; focusing more on positive adaptation. In addition, the WHO (1994) classified life skills as abilities, suggesting they are personal skills that can be drawn on in a given situation. However, more recent definitions include the term characteristics, suggesting that life skills include certain features that could define a person (Gould & Carson, 2008).

In the context of sport, Gould and Carson (2008) defined life skills as “those internal personal assets, characteristics and skills such as goal setting, emotional control, self-esteem, and hard work ethic that can be facilitated or developed in sport and are transferred for use in non-sport settings” (p.60). In essence, across all three definitions, the concept of transferability and applicability is pertinent in defining a life skill. Its utility across multiple domains may characterise it, however, demonstrating skill learning and application within youth programmes are two key challenges faced by youth programme leaders and researchers. In all three definitions, it is clear that life skills serve the purpose for individuals to be able to deal with everyday challenges and situations. However, effective life skills oriented around coping mechanisms and strategies that may help young people manage challenges in everyday life are rarely considered.
Life Skills Research

There is an ever-increasing demand placed on the youth in society to be able to react and cope with the current and future challenges placed upon them (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Living in a world of constant change and flux, unstable job markets and financial recession, presents significant stressors for adolescents at a time when they are forming their self-identity and understanding the world they live in (Coleman, 2011). In an effort to support youth through this challenging period, numerous organisations have established sport-based life skills programmes, under the recognition that sport has a developmental impact on youth beyond physical fitness (Danish, 2002). Researchers, youth development organisations, schools, coaches and social entrepreneurs have all recognised the benefits of sport on the psychosocial development of adolescents. As a result, there are numerous contexts in which sport-based life skills programmes are developed and implemented.

The following section will discuss a number of programmes with the aim to provide a synthesis of interventions based across different contexts. Interventions will be discussed in relation to their design and process of implementation. Details relating to the inclusion of a theoretical framework, specific skills taught and the process of design will also be included.

Life skills interventions.

The work of Steve Danish and colleagues at the Life Skills Centre, Virginia Commonwealth University, has provided a plethora of life skills intervention programmes implemented within sport. Their work, originally stemming from the Life Development Intervention (LDI) athlete approach (Danish, Petitpas & Hale, 1992), focuses on using sport as a developmental environment when working with disadvantaged youth. Commonly cited is the Sports United to Promote Education and Recreation (SUPER) programme (Danish, 2002b). Based on the non-sport Going for the Goal (GOAL) programme (Danish, 2002a), the SUPER intervention incorporates goal setting elements of GOAL whilst introducing
emotional intelligence and performance enhancement within a sporting context. However, the overarching emphasis of goal setting is used to assist adolescents in understanding themselves and their future.

Adolescence is a time of crisis, where numerous critical life events are encountered (Danish et al., 1995). The origins of the word *crisis* come from the Greek meaning: to be faced with a decision or turning point. The number of decisions that an adolescent is required to make, that can potentially affect the rest of their life, is staggering. In establishing identity, the process of setting and achieving goals enables youth to consider their past experiences, current standing, and future aspirations; ultimately conceptualising their place in life (Lerner, 2005b). Therefore, the cognitive and behavioural skills involved in setting goals becomes paramount to forming identity and ensuring positive outcomes are associated with that identity (Noack & Kracke, 1997). With reference to the SUPER programme, Danish and colleagues have explored sport as a context for PYD and tried to understand how it can provide an ideal catalyst in developing such important skills.

The SUPER programme is typically spread over eighteen sport-clinic sessions (20-30 minutes per session) led by peer mentors (Danish & Nellen, 1997). However, its utility within a sporting context has led researchers and practitioners to alter its implementation dependent on time and organisational constraints. As a result, a number of evaluative studies have emerged that examine the effectiveness of the SUPER programme as a means of developing adolescents’ life skills through sport.

Papacharisis et al. (2005) evaluated the effectiveness of an eight-session abbreviated version (15 minutes per session) of SUPER. In comparison to the normal implementation of SUPER, Papacharisis and colleagues (2005) incorporated the content within the regular sport practice time, rather than stand-alone ‘sport-clinic’ sessions. A total of 72 Greek participants (10-12 years old) were spread across two sport and gender specific studies of Volleyball (40
females) and Soccer (32 males) and randomly assigned to a control and experimental group. The intervention implementation took the form of discussions, group-based learning and written tasks (Papacharisis et al., 2005). Participants completed a Knowledge Test to ascertain their current understanding of goal setting, problem solving, and positive thinking. A 15-item measurement of self-beliefs towards the respective themes was administered as well as a sport specific skills test pre and post intervention. Results suggested that integrated sport and life skill education enhanced sport-specific skills test performance when comparing the experimental group to the control group. Participants’ self-belief in their ability to set goals, solve problems, and think positively was increased following the life skills intervention. The study provides further evidence for the use of a sport-based life skills programme in developing life skill knowledge. More importantly, Papacharisis et al. (2005) were able to demonstrate increased performance across sport-specific skills.

Despite these promising findings, there are a number of limitations that restrain Papacharisis et al.’s (2005) contribution to knowledge. For example, the 15-item survey measured participants’ self-assessment in their ability to effectively use the life skills taught (goal setting, problem solving, and positive thinking). However, the opportunity to transfer the skills learnt to other contexts is limited as the post-intervention measure was administered immediately after the completion of the intervention. Although the aim of the study was not to evaluate the transfer of skills form the sporting context, there is limited scope to classify them as life skills based on the definitions reported by Danish et al. (2004). With the absence of longitudinal evaluation, the results merely suggest that the intervention demonstrates learning, rather than transferability. With respect to Holland’s (2012) characteristics of a life skill, only two out of four can be applied to this study due to the lack of longitudinal measurements; further limiting their classification as life skills.
An additional limitation of the study is the involvement of the researcher within the intervention procedures. There is no mention of the researcher’s educational qualifications, skills, and competencies to deliver effectively an educational life skills intervention to the age group. According to Hodge, Danish, and Martin (2012), counselling psychologists should not implement life skills interventions but instead support the design and evaluation. Although the researcher was involved in the intervention process, which could have biased the reported effects, it presents an important consideration when carrying out applied research. Who should deliver the intervention? The question could be asked as to why the coach was not utilised to deliver the intervention. With an existing relationship and established rapport with the athletes, the coach’s skills in educating could have been capitalised to the benefit of the intervention.

A further limitation is the use of self-report measures in assessing participants’ life skill learning and transfer. Although this method of assessment is commonly used within youth development research (e.g., Goudas & Giannoudis, 2008; Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003; Jones, Lavallee, & Tod, 2011), adopting a data triangulation approach could have increased the validity of the results. Multiple data outputs (e.g., focus groups and observations) would enhance the rigour of the research and reduce threats to validity, such as researcher bias (Robson, 2002). Nonetheless, the study does demonstrate evidence to support previous claims of the effectiveness of the SUPER programme.

Brunelle, Danish and Forneris (2007) used an abbreviated version (five 45-min workshops) of SUPER within a golf academy context (i.e., the First Tee) and reported similar findings to those provided by Papacharisis et al. (2005). Unlike Papacharisis et al. (2005), Brunelle and colleagues incorporated a community service element to the intervention whereby participants agreed to support staff at their local golf club in delivering life skills workshops to younger children for one year. Their aim in doing so was to establish the
effectiveness of a one-week training camp, in addition to the community service, in developing their prosocial values. Brunelle et al. (2007) followed the methods of Papacharisis et al. (2005) in not teaching the content to peer mentors, for them to subsequently deliver it. To produce a “seamless transition of transferable learning” (Brunelle et al., 2007, p. 44) First Tee Life Skills Centre staff taught the life skills components of the intervention as part of their regular coaching sessions. However, there is no description or detail on the skills, competencies, coaching style, or philosophy of the Life Skills Centre staff. This raises questions as to the ability and competency of staff to deliver the programme. Furthermore, a rigorous intervention design that demonstrates validity and reliability should be transparent in every aspect of the implementation (Patton, 2002).

Results from Brunelle et al. (2007) provide supporting evidence to the effectiveness of the SUPER programme in developing youth values and life skills. However, there is limited detail on the implementation of the programme. The description is limited to reference to the ‘naturalistic’ process of the research, relating to difficulties involved in carrying out research in collaboration with an organisation. Due to the changes within the organisation, not all participants were able to engage in the full community service component. Nevertheless, results from those who had the opportunity to complete a community service term demonstrated that the intervention supported their ability to transfer the life skills learnt (i.e., goal setting knowledge and goal self-efficacy) to an alternative context.

Although the SUPER component of the intervention was brief (five 45-min sessions), the knowledge gained from delivering the content to the Life Skills Centre staff could have been integrated to all activities. There is no detail on the content of the week’s activity other than the SUPER workshops. Therefore, staff members implementing the intervention could have been teaching elements of the SUPER programme, either consciously or subconsciously, throughout all activities, prompting greater knowledge and continued learning.
Incorporating a community service component potentially provides youth with the opportunity to apply and transfer the skills they have developed and presents a further opportunity for life skill learning. The inclusion of a community service component is becoming common practice within life skills research and allows an individual to take responsibility for their own development as well as developing the world they live in (Perkins & Noam, 2007). Referring back to Lerner et al.’s (2005) model of developmental contextualism within PYD, the initial process that instigates thriving requires continual interaction between the person and context (e.g., community). Although life skills interventions derived from academic research often include a community service component, sports development organisations (SDOs) are often prime places to provide a seamless integration between youth programmes and the community (Coalter, Allison, & Taylor, 2000).

**Sports Development Organisations.**

Organisations such as the First Tee and Box Up Crime (youth organisation utilising boxing to reduce criminal activity and gang violence) pride themselves on developing the skills and competencies of youth in order to help them lead a more prosperous life and become contributing members of society. Within such organisations, the fundamental ethos of development is central to creating character and positive assets of young people. As a result, their philosophy is based upon using sport as a means of engaging youth, developing their life skills and changing behaviour. However, the majority of such programmes are not initiated by empirical research that is scrutinised by the world of academia but instead via SDOs through public and social enterprise funding. As a result, reports on programme design, implementation, and evaluation is limited. Given the applied nature of this thesis, it is important to consider the value of such programmes when informing an approach based in academia.
SDOs operate under an alternative agenda; therefore, their focus is on delivering the programme rather than publishing its results in peer-reviewed journals. As academics, an understanding the process of youth development within such organisations can be challenging. Journals with an applied readership that are specifically targeted towards teachers, coaches and practitioners are particularly useful within this context, such as ‘New Directions for Youth Development’. Berlin et al. (2007) provided an outline of four sport-based youth development programmes. All four programmes reported (Harlem RBI, Tenacity, Snowsports Outreach Society, and, Hoops & Leaders Basketball Camp) are non-profit organisations based outside the realms of academia. They provide a supportive environment allowing young people to develop skills and competencies, which are transferrable and beneficial beyond the context of sport. However, similar to life skills interventions born from academia, the evaluation of transferability is equally complex. Nonetheless, SDOs provide an important bridge in supporting the application of theory to practice.

Referring back to Chapter two, the question that has received little attention is ‘Who should be driving the vehicle of PYD’? SDOs offer a wealth of experience in coaching, pedagogy, social work, and supporting adolescents with complex needs. In addition, SDOs are typically based within the communities they serve; having a keen understanding of the community’s strengths and needs. As such, they are an internal facet of the community system. Allowing development officers to collaborate with community members to design and implement programmes provides a self-sustaining model. Therefore, their involvement is crucial as “the community must feel that the planning of the intervention is being done with them, not to or for them” (Hodge et al., 2012).

In summary, numerous sport-based life skills interventions have been developed in academia and community organisations. The challenges surrounding life skill development in adolescents include the transferability of skills to contexts beyond sport, and the translation of
academic theory to applied practice – with consideration towards the role of the programme facilitators. In an attempt to connect life skill learning with sport skill learning, interventions have been designed as short integral sessions within existing coaching programmes (see Papacharisis et al., 2005). Alternatively, ‘stand-alone’ sessions have been utilised to form an intervention structure that is separate from an existing coaching programme (see Danish 2002a; 2002b). Furthermore, the importance of context (Hardcastle et al., 2015), supportive relationships with programme facilitators (Petitpas et al., 2008), trained coaching staff (Petitpas et al., 2005), as well as a commitment to internal asset and skill developing (Berlin et al., 2007) inform the structure and content of the intervention.

The following section will introduce the purpose of pilot interventions as well as outline the design process and content of the initial pilot intervention within this programme of research. To inform the action research methodology employed within the pilot process, the role of reflective practice will then be discussed before outlining the role of the intervention facilitator.

**Pilot Interventions**

The development of a sport-based youth development programme requires an informed, systematic approach. Specific criteria relating to the intervention setting, such as participant safety, creating an un-school-like environment and providing opportunity for meaningful connections with programme staff should inform the programme design and implementation (Lauver & Little, 2005). Alongside the programme setting, the structure of the session is crucial for promoting positive outcomes (Mahoney, 2000) and to allow sufficient youth engagement. A structured programme with clear, identifiable and measurable outcomes will likely produce more positive results in comparison to an un-structured learning environment (Mahoney & Statin, 2000).
As discussed in the introduction of this chapter, there is a gap in the research literature to outline specific details regarding initial programme design and formation. A lack of exploratory research detailing the experiences of programme facilitators hinders the advancement of life skills research due to the disconnection between the world of research and applied practice. In order to replicate previous research and develop youth in our society, a comprehensive understanding of intervention design and implementation is required. The following section will attempt to fill such a void within the literature. Four pilot interventions will be described individually with the aim to evaluate the process involved in designing and delivering a life skills intervention within a golf context.

The purpose of a pilot intervention can vary dependent on the research objectives and hypothesis. Often they are utilised as a “dry run to identify problems that may hinder or even prevent successful completion of the subsequent larger trial” (Conn, Algase, Rawl, Zerwic, & Wyman, 2010). Conn and colleagues (2010) have outlined a number of findings from pilot interventions supporting their use in applied research and subsequent merit for publication. An extensive list of 43 study findings are categorised into five sub-themes: sampling information ($n = 12$), intervention delivery ($n = 8$), measures in pilot studies ($n = 5$), study implementation ($n = 7$), and pilot study outcomes ($n = 11$). With reference to the current research project, the primary aim in conducting several pilot interventions was associated to the delivery of the intervention.

**Design of Pilot Intervention One**

Following an extensive literature review based on the theoretical underpinnings of sport-based youth development alongside existing life skills interventions, an initial structure skeleton was formed for P1. The structure was considering in line with the skills associated with resilience (see Chapter 2, page 48) to devise session plans. Therefore, four key skills were selected to form the majority of intervention content:
Problem solving
Self-regulation
Ability to identify and seek social support
Goal setting

Discussions with the PGA coach, who was assisting with the delivery of technical performance aspects of golf, led to the formulation of five session plans for P1. Through discussions on how to teach each individual skill, a decision was made to include a further two skills, communication and reflection.

The rationale for including communication as a core skill within the intervention content was based on potential difficulties with ‘teaching’ the ability to seek social support without discussing aspects of communicating effectively. Furthermore, the planned structure for the intervention to be delivered as a collection of group workshops prompted discussions around learning styles and teaching strategies. Gould and Carson’s (2008) model of coaching life skills through sport was considered as a benchmark for informing the delivery of the intervention and how to ‘teach’ the individual skills. As a result, direct teaching strategies such as team building and leadership opportunities, provided suitable methods to incorporate the development of communication skills.

The skill of reflection was selected as the sixth and final skill to aid the transfer of potential life skills to additional contexts beyond the remit of the intervention. Therefore, in order for individuals to understand how to incorporate specific skills and strategies such as problem solving and goal setting, into their everyday lives, reflection was highlighted as a necessary skill (Jones et al., 2011). As a result, reflection was initially introduced within session one (see Table 4), typically at the end of a task to ensure participant understanding. Anticipating a one-week gap between sessions, following session one, each consecutive session was initiated as a ‘re-cap’ and group reflection task to serve two purposes: (a) to
reflect on the activities from the previous session, and (b) to discuss how their experiences in transferring the skills to other contexts over the previous week. Once a clear understanding of content was discussed, the structure of P1 was restricted to five sessions (total of 12.5hrs) based on reviewing previous life skills interventions (Brunelle et al., 2007; Danish, 2002b)

Table 4
Pilot 1 Session 1 session plan

Pilot 1
Session 1 – 13.00-15.30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity Style</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.5hrs</td>
<td>Resilience and Problem Solving, Goal Setting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30mins</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Take ARQ measure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Values of the project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Group rules</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is expected in the programme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Group task/wake-up game</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40mins</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How can you improve and develop resilience - Powerpoint</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Resilience as a life skill</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What do they understand by life skills?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How does it link to Resilience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduce STAR - Stand back, Think, Action, Reflect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflection task</td>
<td>Two groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What have you learnt from task?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10mins</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40mins</td>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Two groups</td>
<td>Golf course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Play two holes on course – reflection after each one</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What problems do they typically come across?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How do they tackle these problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use STAR in performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20mins</td>
<td>Transfer of life skills</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
<td>Driving range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reflection from whole session</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How can we use it outside of golf?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Using STAR outside of golf</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• School/university/job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Transfer discussion in pairs on driving range</td>
<td>In pairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10mins</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What have they liked/not liked</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What works best for them – how do they learn?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• More practical element? Do ‘classroom’ section out on the course or the range?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The total session length was divided into five sessions to allow all six skills to be taught. Initially, the concept of resilience was introduced to provide context for the remainder of the intervention and to ensure participants had a full understanding of the aims and objectives. In addition, it allowed the group rules and values to be introduced alongside the aims of the intervention. Following an initial outline of the programme, tasks were then separated into an initial ‘teaching’ section, which was typically in the form of a group discussion indoors (golf clubhouse) before translating the newly learnt knowledge into a practical task, either on the driving range or on the golf course. Following skills were then taught in a similar fashion for the remainder of the intervention, with a core skill forming the topic of each session. A full breakdown of P1 session plans can be found in Appendix 1.

**Role of Reflective Practice in Developing a Life Skills Intervention**

The process of developing and delivering a youth development intervention results in an intense learning experience through practice, situating the researcher and programme facilitator (if roles are separated) within a subjective experience (Holt, McHugh, Coppola, & Neely, 2014). When learning from our experiences, we critique our actions and their meaning within the given social context (Thompson & Pascal, 2012). Therefore, the role of self-analysis becomes an integral component of the research process, connecting the researcher with the world they are exploring through reflexivity (i.e., the influence of the researcher’s social and cultural background, personality, and knowledge, on the research environment). However, positioning reflective accounts as a scientific method of qualitative inquiry comes with its own difficulties as Anderson, Knowles and Gilbourne (2004) explain, “Searching for ways in which qualitative inquiry might adequately capture the reflective experience is far from straightforward and is, inevitably, going to be controversial and challenging” (p. 197). The following section will explore the fundamentals of reflective practice in order to provide context for the author’s experience in developing a life skills intervention.
Knowles, Gilbourne, Cropley, and Dugdill (2014) highlighted the difficulties in defining reflective practice, partly due to the numerous fields of inquiry in which it spans. In defining reflective practice they summarise key commonalities within previous definitions and arrive at:

A purposeful and complex process that facilitates the examination of experience by questioning the whole self and our agency within the context of practice. This examination transforms experience into learning, which helps us to access, make sense of and develop our knowledge-in-action in order to better understand and/or improve practice and the situation in which it occurs. (Knowles et al., 2014, p. 10).

In their understanding, there is a clear, conscious, decisive action to take part in reflective practice, allowing an element of criticality towards our self through questioning actions and behaviour. As a result, the action of engaging in reflective practice is represented as a process that incorporates numerous skills and “entails a synthesis of self-awareness, reflection, and critical thinking” (Brechin, Brown & Eby, 2000, p. 52). Given the need for self-awareness to reflect, it is important to distinguish between reflecting within a given situation and reflecting after a lapsed time.

The seminal work of Schön (1983; 1987) provided a foundation for current research and understanding of reflective practices. Schön made an important distinction between how we reflect during a given context (reflection-in-action) and that of reviewing an event afterwards in order to learn from the experience (reflection-on-action). Central to this distinction is the position of self and the observed when ‘reflective’ is often used interchangeably with ‘reflexive’. In the case of reflection-in-action, self-awareness is required in relation to one’s influence within the context incorporating our socio-cultural background. However, Thompson and Thompson (2008) argued that “reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action need to be both thoughtful and self-aware” (p. 20). Therefore, the level of self-
awareness required in both situations shouldn’t be separated but instead reflexive practice is viewed as a ‘dimension’ of reflective practice (Thompson & Thompson, 2008). Furthermore, Thompson and Pascal (2012) attributed a “well-developed approach to reflective practice” (p. 320) to incorporate a thought process and criticality towards self. Returning to Brechin et al.’s (2000) notion that reflective practice requires a number of skills - all of which require practice and time to develop – the neophyte practitioner-researcher may not possess certain skills to adopt a well-developed approach. As a result, the action of reflective practice often takes precedence in comparison to understanding its process.

Due to its subjectivity and reliance on personal experience, many have explored the ‘how’ before appreciating the ‘what’ when undertaking reflective practice as a form of inquiry (Johansson & Kroksmark, 2004). In both cases, the notion of criticality has been scrutinised. When defining reflective practice, according to Thompson and Thompson (2008) “an approach to reflective practice that does not adopt a critical perspective would produce poor-quality practice and, in some respects, dangerous practice – for example, by unwittingly reinforcing patterns of discrimination” (p. 26). In this respect, simply providing a descriptive account of an experience with little or no critical analysis does not constitute as evidence for learning or generating new knowledge (Thompson & Pascal, 2012). Furthermore, the inclusion of critical within reflective practice adds the notion of wider and deeper thought processes that incorporate the relationship between self and society (Fook & Gardener, 2007). In representing the skill of criticality, it is important to appreciate how the researcher situates self within the reflective process. In relation to reflexivity, a level of self-awareness is required to understand the impact of personal values and professional philosophy. Therefore an understanding of one’s epistemological and ontological assumptions is crucial within qualitative inquiry.
Positioning the researcher within the research environment gives them a unique front-row seat to experience the social phenomenon that unfolds before them. The ability to experience, whilst undertaking research, and understand the social world we live in, is the beauty of qualitative research (Liampputtong & Ezzy, 2005). Reinharz (1997) aptly summarises this experience in relation to reflexivity whereby:

Understanding the self in fieldwork releases us from the epistemological tension between un-reflexive positivism, on the one hand, and navel gazing, on the other. It will help us document how and why the self is the key fieldwork tool (p. 18).

In the context of reflective practice, being able to draw upon professional knowledge without relying on a science of ‘correct answers’ gives the researcher the ability to craft their reality within an interpretivist paradigm (Thompson & Pascal, 2012). In this respect, the ‘doing’ of reflective practice is seen as an art likened to the craft of a tailor, “using the knowledge base of his or her profession as the cloth from which to cut appropriate solutions to fit the requirements of the specific situation” (Thompson & Thompson, 2008, p. 15). When we consider the utility of reflective practice in developing an educational intervention, the skill of being able to reflect during the experience, as well as making sense of sessions that have been delivered, is a complex technique that requires practice.

In the context of sport-based youth development programmes, utilising reflexive practice to support the development of a programme is rarely cited within the intervention literature. Due to inter-individual differences no two interventions delivered with independent groups will be identical. Therefore, the role of reflective practice in understanding how we can make sense of lived experiences (i.e. delivering interventions) is fundamental to the success of youth development programmes and the advancement of our field (Holt et al., 2013). Inherent within intervention delivery is the notion of trial and error and learning through action (Patton, 2002). As such, it is important to consider how to implement changes within an intervention to
improve efficacy and effectiveness. One such approach is through the process of action research.

**Action Research**

‘Action research’ is an approach to knowledge generation that focuses on solving a specific problem through purposeful action (Greenwood & Levin, 1998). Therefore, the aim in conducting action research is to learn from the process of implementing change and/or development via action (Koshy, 2010). The process typically involves four stages: (1) a period of planning, (2) taking action or implementing, (3) observing, and (4) reflecting (O’Leary, 2004). The process is then repeated, whereby the reflections inform the planning of the following actions. However, in practise the process of implementing action research is often not as structured or simplistic and presents a far more adaptive and fluid motion, with often overlapping stages (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). Before delving into the process of action research, it is important to define its unique characteristics to provide a transparent understanding of the author’s engagement in this methodology.

The difficulties in defining action research have been well documented (Gilbourne, 2000; McNiff & Whitehead, 2011; Sparkes, 1991). Indeed, McNiff and Whitehead (2011) highlighted the ambiguous nature of this methodology, “It would be difficult for any novice to enter this world and immediately make sense of who is doing what and why, because there is no clearly delineated route map” (p.13). The addition of numerous forms of actions research, such as participatory action research, action science, and educational action research, provide further confusion as to what is and is not considered action research. Aside from semantics, a common approach to define action research is to describe its core components.

Somekh (2006) offered eight components that describe action research as a methodology, rather than a method:
• It integrates research and action;
• It is conducted by a collaborative partnership of participants and researchers;
• It involves the development of knowledge and understanding of a unique kind;
• It starts from a vision of social transformation and aspirations for a greater social justice for all;
• It involves a high level of reflexivity;
• It involves exploratory engagement with a wide range of existing knowledge;
• It engenders powerful learning for participants;
• It locates the inquiry in an understanding of broader historical, political and ideological contexts.

The eight components shown above demonstrate a set of guiding methodological principles to ensure action research follows a rigorous process that is open to critique. Similar to Somekh (2006), Evans, Fleming and Hardy (2000b) outlined a series of components that form minimal criteria to perform action research: (a) an intention and commitment to improvement and/or solving practical problems, (b) an intervention, (c) a cycle of critical reflection and action, (d) praxis (committed action giving rise to knowledge), (e) employ recognisable research methods, (f) demonstrate ‘conscious partiality’ (i.e., an explicit awareness of the researcher’s own perspective[s]), (g) communicate findings to practitioners/researchers, and (h) conducted within a mutually accepted ethical framework. Furthermore it should be systematic, strategic, collaborative and empowering for participants. However, this was only disclosed when Gilbourne (2000) critiqued the original article (see Evans, Fleming & Hardy, 2000a) to highlight the need for greater clarity of methodology and associated epistemological and ontological assumptions, whilst debating the process and definition of action research. At the time (and even now) action research was relatively under-represented as a methodology with sport psychology research in comparison to other psychology sub-disciplines.
The minimal criteria (Evans et al., 2000b) and methodological principles (Somekh, 2006) provide a guiding framework to conduct a rigorous action research project. In guiding the process and communicating results, it is important to consider how the action researcher understands, interprets and lives by their values and research philosophy (Gilbourne, 2000), particularly when adopting a less traditional, person-centred form of action research (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011). Therefore, the following section will outline the epistemological, ontological, and methodological assumptions of action research before introducing the author’s philosophy.

**Epistemological and ontological assumptions within action research.**

The inclusive nature of action research allows interpretation to manifest and potentially cloud judgement towards the quality of action research (Koshy, 2005). Therefore, a clear understanding and appreciation for the epistemological and ontological commitments of action research should be expressed. McNiff and Whitehead (2009) discussed the agent of enquiry within action research is ‘I’, rather than ‘they’. An importance is placed upon what the action researcher is doing and how they can improve and adapt it. When considering how knowledge is created and formed, the participants involved within the action research methodology incorporate a collaborative process. Therefore, trial and error becomes an essential component throughout the entire process, as knowledge is created via action rather than ‘found’ via a linear process (McNiff and Whitehead, 2011). As such, there is less emphasis on achieving a pre-determined outcome that is applicable and generalisable but instead in relation to how the process can be judged on value-laden standards.

From an objective positivist paradigm, controllability and limited input from the researcher in relation to their values ensures high reliability and external validity (Patton, 2002). However, action research involves examines one’s practice in relation to the values
they aim to live by. In doing so, an agent of enquiry is required to negotiate their current reality and values in relation to how others perceive and interpret the behaviours associated with their values (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011). Ultimately, the values of the action researcher may be under threat when adapting to the situation and context, linking back to the process of sampling strategies and reflecting on the effectiveness of them. Taking a naturalistic research paradigm, the action researcher invites multiple realities, as there is an appreciation for the collaborative rather than spectator process (McIntosh, 2010). Therefore, in order to ensure the findings can be judged in respect of their quality and trustworthiness, specific criteria and standards of judgement must be discussed.

**Standards of judgement and criteria.**

In order to make a claim to knowledge contribution in relation to theory and practice within action research, both criteria and standards of judgement should be highlighted (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011). The purpose in doing so is to establish a method of judging quality, something that is less established within action research in comparison to experimental designs. Although the methodological principles (Somekh, 2006) and minimal criteria (Evans et al., 2000b) have been discussed, it is important that the standards of judgement are introduced in relation to the context of this programme of research, and in relation to the author’s values. Therefore, in designing and delivering a life skills intervention, the following criteria and standards of judgement (Table 5) have been devised and should be considered in line with the action research methodology described in the remainder of this chapter.

Table 5  
*Action research standards of judgement adapted from McNiff and Whitehead (2011)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Standards of judgement</th>
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Participant learning
To what extent is participant learning taken into consideration: learning styles, ability levels, technical ability (golf)?

Is there a clear progression structure for participants’ learning?

How is participants’ learning structured to allow sufficient understanding and potential for mastery?

Participant development
How is participants’ social development structured: group tasks, cooperative learning.

How can participants track and monitor their development throughout the intervention?

Participant safety
To what extent have ethical principles been considered for the intervention delivery?

What is the process of managing potential ethical dilemmas?

How is participant safety managed during the intervention sessions?

Supportive staff members
What strategies are in place to allow participants to form meaningful connections with staff?

Engagement and enjoyment
How is participant engagement managed?

What is the process of engagement identification and adaptation?

To what extent is the intervention structured to provide an un-school-like environment?

Action research in sport-based life skills interventions.

In the context of sport-based youth development interventions, Holt et al. (2013) adopted a participatory action research approach to develop an intervention involving community engagement. The ‘participation’ element engages community organisations and stakeholders who have a vested interest in the research to bring about social change (Kemiss & McTaggart, 2005). The approach consisted of two key action phases that involved the delivery of the school-based intervention, bridged by an evaluation process.
Holt and colleagues (2013) engaged in a reflective process as a form of process evaluation to understand how the intervention was being delivered, challenges encountered, and what changes were required to improve delivery. Critical incidents were recorded by the intervention facilitators in order to identify problems encountered and inform the changes required for the following intervention implementation (see Holt et al., 2014). The reflections were supported by interviews with participants, teachers, and stakeholders (e.g., school board members, coaches etc.) in order to identify the outcomes and effectiveness of the intervention. Adopting a dual approach (i.e. process and outcome evaluation) Holt et al. (2013) were able to utilise action research in order to evolve and refine the intervention in order to ensure it was delivered as intended, supporting a rigorous design. Although the first action phase was not considered a pilot intervention, there were changes made to the structure, content, and name of the programme.

In the context of the present thesis, the action research approach adopted by Holt and colleagues (2013) provides an example of an effective method in order to evaluate and develop a sport-based life skills intervention. Incorporating reflective practice within a method that allows changes and improvements to be made provides a novel approach to life skills intervention research. The research presented by Holt et al. (2013) provides the only example (to the author’s knowledge) of utilising action research to develop and implement a sport-based life skills intervention. As a result, the methods used in this thesis have been adapted from Holt et al. (2013) to suit the context and aims of the programme of research. The addition of a pilot process, described in the following section, will hopefully complement Holt and colleagues’ approach, whilst improving the rigour via numerous action and reflection phases.

**Action research methodology.**

From an action research perspective, the reflexive spiral process involved three key stages: planning, implementing, and reflecting (Error! Reference source not found.). The process
then re-commences with the planning stage of the following intervention. In the context of the pilot interventions, the programme facilitator viewed this process as an upwards spiral to represent the growth of knowledge and experience during the pilot process. The lower half of the spiral (shaded in grey) outlines the pilot phase described in the current chapter.

A typical action research approach presents a cyclical reflective process involving a within-subjects design, where action is taken based upon the outcome of previous stages or phases (McIntosh, 2010). Unlike traditional approaches, the action research approach adopted within this programme of research describes a between and within-subjects design, demonstrated by the three-dimensional illustration. The between-subjects design is demonstrated by separate coils within the complete spiral (Error! Reference source not found.), as changes and refinement was made to the intervention after each pilot delivery. The within-subjects approach is demonstrated by the small cycles within each pilot intervention, representing changes made between sessions\(^1\).

In addition to the process undertaken between pilot interventions, continual engagement in a reflective process allowed new knowledge to be formed after each session delivered. Subsequently, applying knowledge based on prior delivery experiences formed the basis for the reflexive spiral. Due to this knowledge and experience, subsequent sessions were adapted to accommodate certain scenarios or alternate session structures. Similarly, after each pilot intervention was delivered, new knowledge was created from the experience in delivery, participant recruitment (to be discussed in Chapter 6), and student engagement. As a result, the growth of a spiral process, rather than a cyclical process, provides a sufficient metaphor in understanding the author’s developing experiences throughout the 18-month pilot study. In the context of the pilot interventions he will be referred to as the applied researcher (AR).

\(^1\) The number of cycles within each pilot is not represented to scale but merely provides a visual aid.
Figure 3. Reflexive spiral illustrating the action research approach.

Given the substantial time frame and opportunity for critical reflection during this period, each intervention was approached, designed, and implemented via an informed lens of personal experience from the cyclical action research approach. In addition, all interventions were influenced by the personal values and professional coaching philosophy of the programme facilitator. The level of engagement of the researcher and the environment is substantial within action research due to the opportunity and importance of critical reflection (Baumfield, Hall, & Wall, 2008). It is, therefore, important to ensure the action research is a
transparent process to limit researcher bias and allow the research design to be replicated
(Kelly, 2004). The transparency within this programme of research is supported by two
methods. Firstly, clear progression between pilot interventions and the rational for specific
changes will be provided within the methods section of the current chapter, whilst providing
session plans within the appendices. The second is to outline the educational and professional
experience of the AR in order to recognise his skills and competence to deliver a sport-based
life skills intervention.

Situating the researcher within the field of inquiry (in this case, as the programme
facilitator) results in him/her relying on previous experience, skills, and competencies
(Holstein & Gubrium, 2005). As such, the notion of reflexivity becomes paramount and relies
on the social and cultural background of the individual in order to make sense of their
experiences (DeVault, 1997). Therefore, to provide context for the reflective process that the
programme facilitator engaged in, as well as ensuring transparency, it is worth exploring his
personal, educational, and professional background, as well as adopted coaching philosophy.
In line with Peel, Cropley, Hanton, and Fleming (2013), the following narrative will be written
in the first person.

**Educational Background of the Author**

Currently in my ninth year of university education, I have always tried to engage in
‘life’ education as well as ‘academic’ education, having had many part time jobs alongside my
studies. In terms of an ‘academic’ education, I completed an undergraduate degree in sport
and exercise science before taking an interest in sport psychology. Following my first degree,
I completed a Postgraduate Diploma (conversion course) in psychology which directed me to
a largely positivist view of reality. This was primarily due to the quantitative specialism in the
course and a ‘deeper understanding’ of numbers, having to complete statistical analysis by
hand rather than via computer software packages. I then went on to complete a Masters degree
in sport and exercise psychology. Up until this point, I had been exposed to very little qualitative research methods and naively assumed quantitative methods were the ‘best’ way of doing ‘proper science’.

Throughout my Masters degree, I discovered the world of interpretivism and constructivism, widening my understanding of multiple realities and the process involved in acquiring knowledge. Although I struggled to align my hard-wired brain to an alternative system of viewing the world, I eventually changed my epistemological and ontological philosophy over the duration of approximately two years. During this time, I began to appreciate the nature of constructivist thinking and recognised this epistemological view aligned with my humanistic professional philosophy. Viewing each person as a construction of their social realities, allowed me to incorporate a holistic approach when working as a trainee sport psychology consultant, considering a clients’ interaction with their contexts (e.g., community, family). Having started my doctoral studies immediately after completing the taught Masters, I began to align my professional philosophy towards my perception of the world.

Having been exposed to an independent solitary learning environment throughout my Ph.D., I’ve come to appreciate the process of learning and gaining knowledge from experience. Like many graduates, I had experienced an educational system that is based on taught learning, rather than experiential learning. Having to ‘survive’ on my own during my Ph.D. has forced me to understand and craft my professional philosophy. Although my supervisor, fellow students, and colleagues have guided me through my doctoral journey, it is still a lonely walk down the path of introspection and discovery. Through experiencing independent learning, I was keen to ensure this was transferred across to my professional philosophy and become an integral component of my working practice with athletes and young people. As a result, it has informed my approach in designing the life skills intervention
discussed within this thesis. Reference to independent learning will be made throughout in the Method section of this chapter and also in Chapter 6.

**Professional Experience**

Although I have never left full-time education since the age of five, my working life has always progressed alongside my studies. In the regular university-student fashion, I had several part-time jobs ranging from barman to kitchen and bathroom salesman to lifeguard. Aside from the breadwinning jobs, I also undertook several coaching qualifications and worked as a county development officer for the Rugby Football Union. My interest in sport development grew from coaching rugby, badminton, and swimming. Although I would say my experience as a coach is limited, I have always been involved within the coaching context, either as a development officer or trainee sport psychology consultant.

Throughout my Masters degree and Ph.D., I have worked with a number of athletes as a trainee sport psychology consultant. The majority of these athletes have been between the ages of 15-22 years old and primarily involved in golf, rugby, or athletics. My route towards chartered status as a sport psychologist was paused when starting my doctoral studies. However, I have continued to work with athletes (under supervision) to ensure my experience and knowledge is maintained before recommencing the route to chartered status post-Ph.D.

**Coaching Philosophy**

During my time as a coach across various sports, I had given little thought to my coaching philosophy. In contrast, as my interest in sport psychology developed, I was exposed to the importance of reflective practice and developing my professional philosophy. Throughout the pilot process, I struggled to understand my role in order to categorise it as a teacher, coach, researcher, or trainee sport psychology consultant. I will refer to this challenge later in the chapter. However, for the purpose of the pilot interventions, I initially saw myself as an educator and an applied researcher.
In the role as an educator, my philosophy of teaching/coaching is based on enjoyment first and foremost. Happy students learn. From personal experience, in order to make learning fun and enjoyable, interactivity becomes an essential component. My practice has always been informed through a well-versed Chinese proverb ‘I listen and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand’. Although I played many sports as a youth, I was never formally coached within an elite structure. Therefore, my personal experience in understanding what it is like to be coached is limited. When starting to reflect on how my personal values influence the way in which I work with clients and young people, I recalled my experience of physical education (PE) at secondary school.

An influential PE teacher, Mr. Johnston (known as Jimmy-J) served as a role-model during my time at secondary school. He was what some might class as an ‘old-school’ teacher with traditional teaching methods, a largely autocratic teaching style and a shouting voice that reverberated through your entire body. However, I respected his teaching style and ability to motivate. He made no judgement on ability, only effort, with a common catchphrase “Just do your best”. Jimmy-J sparked my interest in sport, which subsequently led me to pursue a sport science degree. Although I had no understanding of coaching philosophy at that age, I could recognise that he taught in a specific way that valued each pupils’ contribution, regardless of ability. In my role as an educator, rather than a teacher or coach, I see my primary responsibility to facilitate experiential learning. This coaching philosophy originates from my personal values and experiences, and spreads to all professional environments.

When working with clients in an elite sport environment (as a trainee sport psychology consultant), I would consider my professional philosophy as humanistic. A focus on the health and well-being of an individual and priority towards a person-centred approach rather than athlete-centred or performance oriented, characterises a humanistic approach (Weinberg & Gould, 2007). Alongside the person-centred emphasis, a strong focus is placed on personal
growth and continual development, facilitating an incremental mindset within clients (Dweck, 2006).

**Intervention Context and Outline**

For the purposes of this thesis, the research project is linked with a community golf club situated in West Wales, U.K. The club has a strong commitment to its junior members and making the sport accessible to all. The club is situated within one of the 15 convergence areas of Wales outlined by the Welsh European Funding Office.

Based on previous research and the skills and competencies of the author, the programme was delivered by him with the assistance of a qualified golf coach (Professional Golfer’s Association). The majority of previous sport-based youth development programmes have either been delivered by sports coaches, peer mentors or youth leaders. In some cases, the researcher has participated in the intervention procedures. However, there have been very few reported programmes delivered by researchers or trainee/qualified sport psychologists.

**Role of a sport psychologist in developing life skills.**

Danish and Nellen (1997) highlighted that sport psychology goes beyond preparing athletes for competition and should involve the development of people as much as it should athletes. Taking a developmental perspective would allow sport psychologists and coaches to support youth athletes in fostering the skills required in everyday life through sport participation. In the context of youth sport, Smith and Smoll (2002) viewed the sport environment “as a microcosm of society in which children can learn to cope with realities they will face in later life” (p. 356). Furthermore, they made the distinction between developmental and professional models of sport, distinguishing the educational concept vs. profit-making business. Youth sports are designed to foster an educational environment that develops “physical and psychosocial characteristics” (Smith & Smoll, 2002, p. 356). In relation to a developmental model, the role of a sport psychologist becomes integral due to their
understanding of developmental psychology and human interaction. Based on the skills and competencies of an applied sport psychologist, for example reflective practice (Holt, McHugh, Coppola & Neely, 2014), they have the potential to make suitable candidates in delivering sport-based youth development programmes (Visek, Harris & Blom, 2009).

Incorporating a trainee sport psychology consultant into implementing the intervention presents a unique opportunity in amalgamating the knowledge of reflective practice with qualitative inquiry. The ability to reflect-on-action as well as reflect-in-action allows qualitative researchers involved in action research to understand and appreciate their involvement within the research process (Finlay, 2002b). A researcher appreciating their involvement in the process of inquiry allows a greater understanding towards potential influence (Reinharz, 1997).

Although the author is a doctoral student, as well as a trainee sport psychology consultant who regularly consults with athletes and teams within performance environments, he possesses numerous coaching qualifications providing knowledge in delivery methods and pedagogical experience. The rationale in the intervention delivery being carried out by the author, rather than teaching the content to a coach or peer mentor, is based on his existing skills and competencies as well as knowledge of the research background.

**Intervention outline.**

Three pilot interventions were delivered with participants from different populations (Table 6). In this respect, the term ‘population’ is used loosely to reflect engagement with numerous un-related stakeholders: secondary schools, golf club, youth organisations and local council. Related to the aims of the piloting process, participants were recruited from four different sites in order to gain a breadth of experience in delivering to alternate populations. Although this was very time consuming when engaging with multiple stakeholders, it allowed sufficient opportunity to build a working relationship with organisations that would potentially
be involved in the full intervention; supporting a sustainable model for further inquiry. It was necessary to explore the design and implementation for future intervention delivery beyond the pilot process.

Table 6. *Pilot interventions outline*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Context of participants</th>
<th>No. and time of sessions</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
<th>Age of participants ($M \pm SD$ yrs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pilot 1</strong></td>
<td>Golf Club Junior Squad Member</td>
<td>5 x 2hrs, 30 mins (6 weeks)</td>
<td>7 (3 female, 4 male)</td>
<td>14.43 + 0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pilot 2</strong></td>
<td>Secondary School BTEC course pupils</td>
<td>5 x 2hrs, 15mins (6 weeks)</td>
<td>11 (2 female, 9 male)</td>
<td>16.6 + 0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pilot 3</strong></td>
<td>Secondary school ASDAN CoPE course pupils</td>
<td>3 x 4hrs, 15mins (3 days)</td>
<td>9 (3 female, 6 male)</td>
<td>14.2 + 0.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Leading a healthy lifestyle.**

In addition to targeting life skills development and resilience, physical fitness and health measurements were administered with Pilot 2 (P2) and Pilot 3 (P3). Initial evidence linking adolescents’ physical activity levels with mental toughness suggests that the process of resilience could play an important role in supporting mental health (Gerber et al., 2012). Indeed, Burton et al. (2010) emphasised such a link between resilience and physical health: “When faced with adversity, people with low resilience are at risk of depression, stress, anxiety and interpersonal difficulties, and may adopt health compromising behaviours and experience somatic complaints and poor physical health” (p. 266). Therefore, content on nutrition, physical fitness, and leading a healthy lifestyle was introduced. The rationale in doing so was to engage participants in adopting a healthy lifestyle with the aim to foster resilience towards health-compromising behaviours.
The exploratory nature of this thesis in understanding the role of resilience-based life skills, lends itself to build on existing literature surrounding the interdisciplinary link towards physical health. A battery of fitness tests was administered to measure: body composition (Body Mass Index, waist circumference), musculoskeletal strength (hand-grip dynamometer test), and aerobic capacity (1-mile run/walk). However, due to the short duration of the intervention, the purpose was not to change or improve physiological health (e.g., cardiopulmonary fitness) but to merely provide a cross-sectional descriptive marker of health (Ortega, Ruiz, Castillo, & Sjöström, 2008). Therefore, the results should not be interpreted as a comparative data set but instead as a description of the participants involved in this programme of research. A comprehensive rationale for each test is provided in the Methods section of Chapter 4, which outlines their validity and practical suitability.

Fitness tests were not included within Pilot 1 (P1) to ensure the focus remained on the life skills activities, as this would form the basis for the following interventions. Once a basic understanding of the intervention delivery and structure was taken from P1, the tests were introduced within Pilot 2 (P2). The AR carried out the testing of participants. The purpose was to pilot the administering of the tests, suitability towards the age groups, and practicality in administering the field-based tests within the golf club environment. In addition, the tests were included alongside educational content surrounding leading a healthy lifestyle, such as nutrition and physical activity levels. As such, the results of the tests are not included within the pilot phase and will be discussed in Chapter 4 as part of the main intervention.

**Aims of the Pilot Interventions**

The following section will provide a reflective account of the experience in delivering each pilot intervention based on the aims below. Each pilot intervention will be discussed in succession to provide a narrative that reflects the journey of the AR in designing the intervention. The methods of P2 and Pilot 3 (P3) follow a similar design and procedure as P1.
Therefore, to prevent repetition, the details (design, procedure, participants, measures) of the latter two interventions is only included if it alters from the previous pilot interventions and the reader should assume that the majority of the methodology follows that of P1.

The aims of all pilot interventions were to:

1. Understand how to teach and integrate resilience-based life skills learning to golf practice;
2. Gain experience, skills, and competence in delivering and leading a life skills intervention;
3. Understand what skills participants react positively towards when learning and understanding resilient behaviours and attitudes;
4. Explore potential strategies to assist in transfer of life skills;
5. Understand utility of and participant difficulties with measures administered, including fitness tests.

**Method**

Following a brief outline of the overall environmental context, each pilot intervention will be discussed individually due to their uniqueness. In order to sample the delivery of the intervention with participants from varying backgrounds, ability levels, learning styles and technical ability, the three pilot interventions presented below describe a unique story. The aim is to provide a distinct and separate reflexive account for each pilot intervention. The following section will provide an outline of the methods used as well as a reflexive account in delivering each intervention, from the perspective of the programme facilitator (author). The methods reported for each pilot intervention will be written in the third person; however, the personal reflective account will be provided in the first person.

Providing a description of the methods employed followed by a reflective account will provide the reader with an understanding of the action research approach adopted (Holt et al.,
2013). The variability in populations and group dynamics, and consequently the delivery method, presented a unique challenge within each pilot intervention. Therefore, the action research methodology will be complemented by outlining each pilot intervention separately.

The following section will outline the methods employed across three pilot interventions. Initially, the design of each intervention is outlined to provide the reader with an understanding of the different populations involved, as well as the changes made resulting from the action research methodology. Following the intervention design, the participants and measures will be outlined before describing the data analysis procedures. To provide a narrative that compliments the changes made as part of the action research, alongside the AR’s reflections from the pilot process, the methods are combined with the results. Therefore, the results for each pilot intervention are included alongside the methods for the corresponding intervention. Pseudonyms are used throughout the AR’s reflections.

Pilot 1: Method

**Intervention design.**

A five-session intervention was delivered over the course of six weeks during September to October, 2012. Four sessions took place at the golf club and one session took place within a pedestrian precinct of the local town; all sessions lasted two and a half hours. In line with previous research (Weiss et al., 2013), golf performance was integrated within the sessions. Aligned with the aims of the pilot intervention, no control group was used. The AR evaluated his delivery, via reflective practice, rather than an experimental comparison to determine the efficacy of the programme (Clarke, 1999).

**Intervention delivery.**

The intervention was delivered with the aim to develop participants’ life skills and resilient behaviours, whilst understanding how to incorporate life skill teaching into golf
performance coaching. A total of six skills were targeted to achieve this: goal setting, problem solving, communication, managing emotions, social support, and reflection. An example session plan (session 1) is included on page 69 and a full breakdown is provided in Appendix 1.

The intervention was delivered in a group setting whereby individuals were set a variety of group tasks and challenges, alongside peer-led coaching. Although participants were required to reflect on their personal skills and competencies, the application of the core skills relied on group-based learning or coaching between themselves, often in pairs. To aid the delivery of the intervention, a particular focus was placed upon Gould and Carson’s (2008) model of coaching life skills. All six skills were explicitly taught to support skill learning and development via direct teaching strategies, specifically, team building, leadership opportunities, and decision making through risk and reward strategies (Gould & Carson, 2008).

Based on the limited technical golf knowledge and ability of the AR, a PGA coach delivered the golf performance elements of the intervention with assistance from the AR. However, the life skills content was delivered solely by the AR. A mixture of workshop-style teaching and coaching on the driving range was delivered for sessions one, two, three, and five (see Appendix 1).

*Assisting the transfer of skills beyond golf.*

The fourth session took place within a busy precinct of the local town. The aim of this session was to provide participants the opportunity to apply some of the newly developed skills, specifically, communication and problem solving within a community context. The premise of the session was to advertise and promote the programme as a means of recruiting new participants for the next pilot intervention. This approach created an opportunity for participants to engage with their community to potentially support PYD, as well as resilience.
Engagement with the wider community has been considered as an important support network and protective factor of resilience (Luthar & Cichetti, 2000), whilst fostering PYD by contributing to society (Brunelle et al., 2007). Numerous golf activity stations were set up within the precinct to allow passing families and teenagers to sample putting, chipping, and driving golf games. Participants were tasked with speaking to members of the public (adults and adolescents) about the programme and managing the various activity stations. This was presented as a challenging experience designed to put participants out of their comfort zone, whilst incorporating some of the skills they had developed in previous sessions.

**Participants.**

Seven adolescents (three female, four male) with a mean age of 14.43 years (range 13-15yrs) took part in the intervention. All participants were junior members of the golf club and participated in golf on a regular basis (at least twice per week). Participants were recruited on a purposive sampling basis due to their knowledge and experience of golf. The PGA coach contacted members of the club junior squad (n = 10), whom he had previously coached, for their interest in the project. An age range criteria was set to 13-16 years old. The rationale in limiting the range was to ensure tasks were appropriate to the level of maturity and maintain a consistent level of learning across the whole group (Lauver & Little, 2005). Based on the criteria, a 70% participation rate was achieved from the limited target population.

**Participant recruitment.**

An information event was held at the golf club to explain the programme in more detail to prospective participants and parents, and to provide the opportunity to sample the programme in a one-hour taster session. The session involved aspects of performance profiling and identifying their current strengths in golf and life (Peacock-Villada et al., 2007). The event provided an ideal opportunity to present the aims of the programme to the participants’ parents and to increase the potential for consistent messages to filter to the home environment to
support life skill transfer (Perkins & Noam, 2007). There was no obligation to take part in the programme following the information event. However, there was a 100% success rate from the information event attendance to programme recruitment. All participants attended a minimum of four sessions.

Parental consent and participant assent forms (Appendix 2) were distributed alongside an information sheet (Appendix 3) to parents and potential participants at the information event. Parental consent and participant assent was provided prior to the first session of the intervention.

**Reflective methodology.**

Based on the aims of the pilot intervention, the AR kept a reflective journal throughout the pilot process. The reflective process was formed by two often-overlapping phases, the first being an immediate ‘notes’ reflection of the session either on the same day or within 48 hours which was then revisited after several days with a richer, more detailed critical review that included an action plan.

A five-stage reflective model (adapted from Anderson et al., 2004) was used as a guide to structure the reflective process (see Figure ). The first phase included two stages (description and reflexivity) and was seen as ‘unstructured’ and ‘informal’ where emphasis was placed upon recalling events and associated thoughts and feelings, rather than any level of criticality. Similar to Holt et al. (2014), the purpose of this stage was to capture the events and activities of the day as an immediate reflection-on-action, incorporating some of the associated feelings and emotions experienced (cf. Cropley, Miles, Hanton, & Niven, 2007). Notes were hand-written in the AR’s journal. In the first instance, the session plan was used as a guide in describing the events of a session. The second phase that incorporated three stages (i.e., evaluation, adaptability, and action plan) had a greater level of criticality towards the actions of the AR and the associated consequences.
The second phase (stages three-five) involved a more in-depth critical reflection incorporating the notes alongside questioning the AR’s delivery in association with his values and previous experiences, fostering reflexivity (Hertz, 1997). As part of the evaluation stage, the reflexivity stage was revisited in order to provide greater detail as to how the AR had influenced the environment based on personal and social background (Finlay, 2002a). The detailed critical reflection was often carried out several days after a session to allow time for consideration and the events of the session to ‘sink in’. Whilst completing the (second stage) reflections via a laptop, additional points were added to the journal when referring to the original notes. These typically added to the wider reflections that are incorporated within the Reflective Epilogue (Chapter Six).

*Figure 4. Five-stage model of reflection (adapted from Anderson, Knowles, & Gilbourne, 2004).*
Measures

Resiliency.

The Adolescent Resilience Questionnaire (ARQ; Gartland, Bond, Olsson, Buzwell & Sawyer, 2011) was administered prior to the intervention commencing to primarily test its utility within the pilot population (see Appendix 4). The rationale for using the ARQ was based on its multidimensional measurement across five domains (e.g., individual, family, peers, school, community), as well as its appropriateness to the sample age group. Resilience being viewed as a multi-layered interactional process suggests that the ability of an individual who utilises support and resources in one life domain may not be transferrable to all domains (Henley, 2010). Therefore, in the context of the multidimensional ARQ, the ability to assess numerous domains provides a holistic measurement of participant resilience.

The purpose of administering the questionnaire was to understand its utility within the pilot intervention, rather than assess the effect of the intervention on resilience as a pre and post measurement. To assess utility, participants were asked if there had any queries regarding the questionnaire, they should ask the AR whilst completing it. Due to the age range of participants and the potential significant disparity in intellectual ability, the questionnaire was administered to verify that all participants were able to complete it and understood the language used. Although the questionnaire is designed for use with 11-19 year olds, its utility in the pilot intervention would enable further confirmation that the measure is suitable for the prospective participants following the pilot process. In addition to understanding the appropriateness of the language, consideration was also given to the amount of time participants took to complete it.

Data analysis.

An inductive thematic analysis was carried out on the reflections via NVivo software programme. Initial codes were created based on their semantic content. Although each pilot
intervention will be presented separately, due to the different populations, the analysis was carried out using reflections from all three pilot interventions. The rationale in doing so was to ensure the author was fully immersed in the entire data and codes were generated to allow overall themes to emerge from the pilot process (Patton, 2002). Therefore, the themes presented below were generated from the entire data set.

Pilot 1 Reflections

Five themes are presented below: delivery, building relationships, life skills learning, identity as a researcher, and life skill transfer. Direct quotes from the AR’s reflective journal are included alongside the narrative.

Delivery.

I was nervous and excited but also relaxed. I had everything planned for the session. [PGA Coach] was there, so anything that I might struggle with, he was there to help. Although the nerves came from never doing this stuff before, I felt confident that I can do a good session with them. Pilot 1 Session 1 (P1S1).

My previous experience in delivering a workshop-style session to adolescents was limited to an introductory classroom-based workshop to a team of under-16s rugby players. During the drive to the golf club (1h15mins) on the morning of the first session, I recalled the difficulties experienced in keeping 20 boisterous adolescents engaged with the importance of sport psychology. Naively, at the time I thought it would be a great opportunity and an easy workshop to deliver, having a reasonable grasp on rugby. Recalling this experience during the drive somehow filled me with confidence as I knew how prepared I was for the upcoming session. I spent the majority of the journey convincing myself that the nerves were justified and positively interpreted; replaying the importance of the first step.
Within the first few sessions I often questioned what I was delivering and how I was delivering it. Having spent the best part of a year reading around the subject of life skills interventions, I felt reasonably confident in the way I was delivering the information to the participants. I had based the structure of the initial few sessions on Gould and Carson’s (2008) Model of Coaching Life Skills, with a particular focus on ‘direct teaching strategies’, such as team building, reinforcement of positive behaviour and leadership opportunities. On the other hand, I felt less confident in the content of the sessions due to the novel approach of trying to ‘teach’ resilience through golf.

The design of the pilot intervention was based on targeting specific skills that are associated to resilience and effective coping strategies. Knowing that the participants were not specifically selected due to their troubled upbringing or having experienced significant adversity, I acknowledged that they might struggle with relating resilience to their everyday lives. Alongside the difficulties in transferring the concept to everyday life, I often questioned my capacity and worthiness to teach adolescents about resilience. I hadn’t experienced a significant adversity within my life up to that point which made me question my ability to express the influence of potential adversities:

Usually when I mention resilience to someone outside of academia and they are genuinely interested in the project or look as if they actually give a shit, then they usually end up saying that surely someone develops resilience having gone through a difficult period in their life. Am I teaching them something that is superficial? I haven’t gone through anything like that… so who am I to teach them about the tough times? P1S3.

Reflecting on it at the time, I had little appreciation for the small changes that could potentially have a significant impact on a person’s life. I was trying to instil a resilient attitude when I had little experience in overcoming significant adversity. Coming from what would be
considered as a middle-class background, with both parents working, my upbringing was supported financially and I experienced no significant adversities. Nevertheless, it could be argued that knowledge gained in researching ‘resilience’ would sufficiently support the knowledge capacity and potential use of coping behaviours and strategies. As the sessions continued, I began to build rapport with participants and became more comfortable in sharing my background and experiences as a teenager.

Building relationships.

The PGA Coach had a well-established rapport with the group as they were all junior members of the club and received coaching outside of the intervention. In this respect, I had underestimated the significance of being a part of their ‘golf world’. Hodge et al. (2012) highlighted the importance of involving local personnel in designing and delivering youth development interventions; supporting its initiation from within. As a result, having never played golf before commencing my doctoral studies, I made a conscious effort to research the game before delivering the intervention. However, it seemed there was no match for experience. This basic level of knowledge did support my level of credibility and helped to gain their respect (Tonn & Harrison, 2004). Yet, this was no substitute for being a member of their ‘micro-culture’:

It’s clear that [PGA Coach] has a good rapport with them as they were laughing and joking with him about what school he used to go to. They have a connection to him both in relation to the golf, the local town and the 'West-Walian way’... something I'm quickly realising is a separate sub-culture of Wales! P1S1.

I hadn’t considered the potential impact of being a non-Welsh speaker in rural Wales. I felt like an outsider. After the first few sessions, I came to understand the importance of the
language to the participants and the culture that surrounds it, particularly with the younger junior members of the golf club during a coaching session.

As part of the third session, I had arranged for the group to organise a short coaching session with a group of junior golfers, approximately aged six to nine years old. The session was designed to put them under a challenging situation that tested their communication and problem solving skills:

WOW! Could not believe the girls group – [Participant F1] came to life, she was great with the juniors. She had a warmth about her that made the younger girls feel at ease. Is this because she is a female? Would it be different if a female was delivering the programme? Most of the time she was speaking Welsh to them but what she was saying seemed encouraging and motivating towards the young golfers. Consider trying to get a female helper if there are girls in the group. **P1S3.**

Witnessing the engagement and enthusiasm from this participant during the coaching session demonstrated the importance of individual differences and personal skills. Participant F1 was normally quite quiet and rarely spoke out within the group. However, she clearly felt confident coaching younger children and possessed the skills to capture their attention and easily control a group of five six-nine year olds.

Youth are able to relate to their peers based on their interests, socio-cultural background, and often, but not always, age (Weiss et al., 2013). Many youth development programmes have demonstrated the positive effects of adopting a mentoring system whereby older adolescents deliver programme content to younger children (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak & Hawkins, 2004; DuBois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper, 2002; Peacock-Villada et al., 2007; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer & Notaro, 2002):
Me as a mentor... I know very little about golf... and actually I’m 10 years older than them so there isn’t really a closeness to age or experience. However, them as mentors to the younger kids last week and the members of the public this week, they have been great. **P1S4.**

Witnessing this first hand within the coaching sessions confirmed my rationale for including the task to develop their communication skills. Following the coaching sessions, their reflections on the process were very detailed; being able to identify how they communicate in golf (either playing or coaching) and how the skills are transferred to everyday life.

**Life skill learning.**

In the weeks leading up to delivering the intervention, I had designed each of the five sessions to broadly align with the six core skills: goal setting, problem solving, communication, managing emotions, social support, and reflection. Teaching the basic process of the skills through golf performance was straightforward. The group had a good level of ability and understanding in relation to learning the skills. However, after reflecting on the first two sessions, I had realised that the process of teaching them the skills was too structured and ‘school-like’:

[I] Really need to think about bringing everything to life with a task – so don’t just do a spider diagram for it – incorporate things into real life situations or a task on the range. **P1S2.**

In an attempt to integrate the Challenge model of resilience, I first had to gauge their level of technical ability in order to determine the difficulty of the challenges set. To ensure their engagement levels were maintained, I focused on utilising their existing knowledge of golf in order to ‘teach’ resilience. Therefore, I quickly learnt to adapt the session plan and move to a different task if participants’ level of engagement was decreasing.
With my researcher hat on, I was conscious that the literature shows the process of learning life skills is based on the foundations of teaching, rather than simply participating in sport (Gould & Carson, 2008). In an attempt to adhere to this process, my coaching philosophy was tested. I wanted to ensure the sessions were enjoyable and fun:

I could feel that after about 15 mins doing the spider diagram tasks that they were getting a bit bored. Something I really need to consider for the sessions is how long I can keep their attention for during the stuff in the clubhouse. P1S2.

Alternatively, with my teaching/coaching hat on, I had given little thought to the process of teaching adolescents; taking into account their attention span, intellectual ability, and individual learning styles. As a result, I experienced a constant battle between multiple selves.

**Identity as a researcher.**

Earlier in this chapter I referred to myself as an ‘applied researcher’. By the end of the five sessions, I had come to terms with the reality that delivering this type of educational intervention meant that the previous identities I had formed would be somewhat amalgamated. The identity as an ‘applied researcher’ became a self-constructed label that denotes the applied sport psychologist self and the researcher self. Following the delivery of the five sessions I reflected on the separate selves in the hope that there was somehow a name for what I was doing. Similarly, Reinharz (1997) reflected on the various selves whilst conducting ethnographic fieldwork, “I referred to myself in different ways throughout the year because different aspects of myself became salient over time and across contexts” (p. 5). Although immersing oneself within a culture presents an alternative context as the one described above, the way in which we perceive ourselves has an effect on the research being conducted and ultimately the conclusions drawn (Finlay, 2002a). I often questioned my role at different stages of the intervention, whether in the design process, delivery, or evaluation stages.
My identities as a coach, researcher, trainee sport psychology consultant and teacher all provided me with advantages and disadvantages in delivering the intervention. As a coach and teacher, I considered the importance of learning styles and leaned on my experiences of pedagogy. Whereas, my researcher identity and trainee sport psychology consultant fought to maintain some degree of objectivity in supporting the rigorous design. However, at times such objectivity caused a burden to the flexibility required when working within social research. Reflecting on the process of implementing the first pilot intervention, I considered the questions raised in Chapter Two as to who should be driving the vehicle of PYD. Should it be one person with one identity? Is that too simplistic? Identifying multiple selves based on the way I have approached the delivery of the intervention has been influenced by my pre-existing skills, competencies, education and socio-cultural background.

**Life skill transfer.**

In designing the intervention I recalled my experiences as a teenager to try and understand their world and how the skills will assist them in everyday life. Interviewing youth sport coaches, Camire and colleagues (2011) highlighted that “many coaches believed their athletes had difficulty understanding how the skills learned in sport can be used in other areas of life and mentioned how it was sometimes a challenge to continuously have to identify specific situations to transfer” (p. 98). They also concluded that coaches had identified that the level of maturity of athletes was an issue in understanding the association between sport skills and life skills. In my case, transfer of coping strategies and associated skills from golf to other contexts was challenging but not impossible. I was aware that this is a common challenge faced within previous life skills programmes and often rarely considered. However, I was keen to explore numerous tasks to engage the participants with potential life skill transfer.

I explored the use of pre-shot routines, incorporating emotional management and self-regulation to support the transfer of such skills. The group were competent golfers and were
able to easily identify the purpose of a pre-shot routine in golf; to prepare the player for the shot physically, tactically, technically, and psychologically. I had planned to introduce the emotional regulation skills to them using putting tasks at the start of the fifth and final session. However, the weather was not ideal for outdoor tasks, again something I had given little thought towards. Before the group arrived, I quickly considered alternative ways of delivering the session. As with the other skills, I had planned to practice the skill within golf initially before developing strategies to transfer it to other contexts. Due to the weather, I had to adapt and decided to show them a short video clip first. The video showed a number of well-known professional golfers who had experienced performance ‘break-downs’ in competitions. The following quote is taken from my reflective journal and focuses on a discussion between two male participants (M1 and M2):

I tried something different this time. Instead of going out on to the golf course, I went straight to the transfer side. I’ve struggled to get through to them with the transfer aspects… they seem to find it difficult picking out real-life situations that they have faced where the skills would have been useful. So, this time I thought with the video, they have been given the golf context and surely they will able to pick out a time when they have lost their temper. When I asked them to pick out a time, Participant M1 said slightly under his breadth and with a fake cough, “Participant M2 yesterday on the 13th”. Participant M2 looked over and smirked and started to laugh. I said “go on” looking at both of them in case one of them wasn’t comfortable in telling the story. Participant M1 started to tell the story and as soon as he started Participant M2 jumped in and said, “Now here’s what happened, right”. P1S5.

Participant M2 then continued to tell the story of him losing his temper on the golf course and throwing his golf club in frustration. The power of a short video clip was more than
I could have achieved in an entire session with them and quickly captured their engagement in the session:

They were so engaged with the video… eyes wide open, straining to hear it properly from the speakers on my laptop (something to sort out when using the videos in the future). I glanced around a few times when they were all watching the video… you can tell they are seriously keen on golf. It felt good to see them enjoying the video and chatting quietly at some points when they recognised the golfers and the challenges they faced. P1S5.

In this instance, discussing scenarios where they lost their temper or experienced high stress levels (e.g., due to an exam), the participants were able to relate the process to golf after watching the video. This is supported by previous research by Trottier and Robitaille (2014) highlighting the potential transfer of managing emotions towards the commonly reported stressful situation in adolescence of taking exams. We then progressed and started working on their pre-shot routines on the driving range:

I then went on to talk about using a pre-shot routine in everyday life. When I asked them how you can use a routine for the scenarios they talked about upstairs I didn’t get a response. After about 5 seconds I was going to rephrase the question but then Participant F1 spoke up and said, “So I guess in my scenario… being nervous and anxious about exams… I could sort out a routine that I go through every time before I sit an exam.”

‘Bingo!’ I thought to myself.

“Absolutely, you’re right, that’s a great example” P1S5.

In relation to transferring the life skills beyond golf, at the start of the programme they initially found it difficult identifying personal experiences or were perhaps not comfortable sharing them with me and/or their peers. Although I recognised the need to establish rapport prior to participants discussing personal information, I had underestimated the lack of detail
participants provided when articulating challenges they faced outside of golf. By the final session the group had understood the process of skill learning and transferring. However, the limitations on time prevented exploring this further. I had naively assumed they would be able to discuss many scenarios and contexts where the skills developed would be beneficial outside of golf. In reality, I myself struggled to identify experiences in my teenage years that I could share with them:

In some of the situations, I was really having to think hard about what they could write and coming up with solutions. I should have thought about it beforehand. I was trying to think back to when I argued with my sister and what actually happened and try to talk around their scenario with that in the back of my head. P1S5.

At the time I had questioned whether I should involve such personal experiences within the intervention delivery. Recalling and discussing experiences from my adolescent years made the tasks personable and also allowed the opportunity for them to perceive me as a regular person who has experienced similar challenges. It also presented me as someone who is on their level, rather than an authority figure. As a result, I felt that the rapport between me and the participants was developing.

**Conclusion.**

Delivering the five sessions over a period of six weeks provided the opportunity for a greater understanding of reflexivity and the influence I exerted on the design of the intervention. When reflecting-on-action, my awareness of whom and what I should be reflecting on altered after each session, as I crafted my preferred process of reflection (Johns, 2013). Initially, I took a very descriptive approach. As critical events unfolded, I began to understand and appreciate the ways in which my personality, experience, and knowledge had an influence on the intervention delivery (Thompson & Pascal, 2012). Over the weeks of
implementation, I moulded the reflective process to suit my preference whilst using the five-stage model as a guide (*Figure*). Often, the two phases would overlap and the initial phase (description and reflexivity) became less descriptive and more critical; producing depth to the reflections (Thompson & Thompson, 2008).

Cropley and Hanton (2012) referred to a micro and macro perspective in understanding what we should be reflecting on. The former refers to specific aspects of applied practice and the latter associated to certain situations encountered. Although I utilised the session plan as a guide to inform the ‘what’ of reflection, the level of criticality did not provide detailed action plans from the first or second phase of the reflective process. The skill and process of reflexivity will ultimately take time to develop as I craft my skill of reflective practice.

Being the first pilot intervention, my expectations were low in terms of efficacious delivery and my skills in teaching life skills due to the environment of golf. However, I was surprised by the positive responses from the participants, and their engagement in the process. Following the five sessions, I reflected on the process of delivery (i.e., teaching the skill), learning it in golf, and then transferring it to life situations. Due to changing circumstances (e.g., weather), I had the flexibility to alter this process where appropriate but in general the participants understood what I was trying to achieve by the end of the programme. In addition to the session reflections, I considered what components I would change for the second pilot intervention. Before doing so, I summarised the key themes identified from the reflections:

- Less traditional ‘teaching’ from me and more practical tasks to engage participants;
- More interactive challenges to avoid ‘teaching’ life skills and increase pressure to apply Challenge model of resilience;
- Always need to come back to the purpose of the intervention and ensure they understand each task and why it is important;
• Trying to fit too much content into sessions – instead simplify the content to support participants learning of the skills.

Once I had summarised the key themes identified from the reflections, I sat down with the PGA coach and we discussed potential changes to make to the following pilot intervention. Based on the discussion and my personal experience of delivering the intervention, six key changes were identified and presented below.

**Changes made for Pilot 2.**

1. *Formal, structured reflection task at the end of each session*

Partly due to time constraints and unpredictable timings of tasks, there was no time to engage in a formal reflection at the end of every session. As a result, some learning was ‘lost’ or forgotten by the time it was reviewed in the following session.

2. *Five minutes maximum talking time*

At times, I had provided too much information on one skill. Limiting the ‘teaching’ time to five minutes will ensure the programme remains as practical as possible, ensuring participants are engaged in the learning process.

3. *‘Deep-end’ throwing*

Try to incorporate more activities that test their initiative and problem solving skills. By ‘throwing them in the deep-end’ and only giving them basic instructions to tasks will hopefully incorporate more reflection and encourage them to think proactively, rather than being ‘spoon-fed’ instructions.

4. *Provide a purpose for every task*

Although I knew the rationale for including each task within the intervention, at times, I had not made this clear to the participants. Once we had completed a task, they understood its relevance to resilience. However, clearly stating the purpose of a task prior to implementing it should support engagement.
5. **Toolbox of tasks**

I need to ensure all participants are engaged in the intervention. Differences in participants’ learning styles led to some finishing quicker than others. Create additional tasks that can be used if, and when, participants are at different stages to ensure all participants are learning.

6. **Cooperative learning**

Move away from ‘teaching’ life skills but instead engage participants in cooperative learning where they are responsible for their own development. Engage them in an environment that supports implicit learning rather than classroom-based teaching.

**Pilot 2: Method**

**Intervention design.**

A total of five sessions were delivered at the golf club, lasting approximately two hours and 15 minutes. Similar to pilot one, all sessions were delivered by the AR with some assistance from the PGA coach during technical coaching on the driving range. Unlike pilot one, participants were recruited from a local secondary school and were all completing a Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) course in Sport. All sessions took place during school hours and, as a result, the academic lead requested that some elements of their BTEC course were integrated into the programme. Specifically, aspects relating to performance profiling in sport psychology. To enable sufficient participant recruitment, this request was granted, which required some amendments to the content and delivery of the programme in comparison to pilot one. However, the structures of the sessions were similar to pilot one and were all based on group tasks, peer-led coaching and challenges.

**Participants.**

Eleven Year 13 pupils from a local secondary school, completing a Sport BTEC course, took part in the pilot intervention. Unlike pilot one, the range of ages was more
concentrated as all pupils were aged 16-17 years old ($M = 16.64$ years, $SD = 0.5$ years). All participants provided written consent for their involvement and attended a minimum of six sessions.

**Measures.**

In addition to the ARQ, participants also completed a battery of fitness tests to assess the utility and practical suitability of the chosen tests:

- **Body composition** – Body Mass Index (BMI; height and weight), waist circumference;
- **Aerobic capacity** – 1-mile run/walk;
- **Musculoskeletal strength** – Hand-grip dynamometer test.

**Data analysis.**

The analysis of the AR’s reflections followed an identical procedure to that identified in pilot one (P1).

**Pilot 2: Reflections**

Four themes will be covered as part of the P2 reflections: delivery, building relationship, life skill learning, and life skill transfer.

**Delivery.**

Unlike the first pilot programme, a significant recruitment process was undertaken to secure participants for the second pilot intervention (further details in Chapter 6). Working with a secondary school provided a unique set of challenges that resulted in a very different experience in comparison to P1. A slight delay on the intervention delivery, due to personal circumstances, left me feeling conscious to please the teacher and ensure a good relationship was established with the school. As a result, I decided to meet the teacher and the group at the
school (approximately 30 minute drive to golf club) on the morning of the first session to ensure the minibus transport arrived on time:

I drove to the school in the morning and followed the bus up to the club to make sure everything went smoothly. Huge mistake. It then took me about 10 minutes to get set up everything even though it felt like an hour! They didn’t seem too bothered and [Teacher] was happy to keep them quietly chatting. Once I had everything set up, I looked at the time and it was 9.30… I only had them until 11.30. P2S1.

With the late start I was feeling nervous and apprehensive to start working with the new group. I felt well prepared and took confidence in what I had learnt from the previous pilot which gave me a brief wave of excitement as I turned around to see the group glaring at me, waiting patiently for instruction.

The sessions took place as part of their BTEC course, so the dynamic of the group felt different from P1 and the learning environment was more ‘school-based’, with the teacher supervising. Although the teacher had advised me that I had virtually free reign on how and what I taught, he had requested some of their course content to be somehow intertwined with the intervention. I did not mind obliging, as it was based on sport psychology and included content that I was planning to cover anyway (performance profiling and psychological skills). Although, the request wasn’t unexpected, as we had spoken over the phone when arranging session dates, it did make me question my role and what I was trying to achieve. Was I a ‘teacher’ educating them as part of their BTEC course?

As the group was older and more mature than those in P1, I was conscious of my approach in teaching the skills. After the first session, I quickly gauged that the majority of the group were keen rugby players and highly competitive so I saw that as my way of relating to them. As a result, I altered the tasks for the following session to incorporate more rugby-
specific language and competitive tasks in order to engage them and adapt to their interests and hobbies.

In addition, I separated the group into two teams for the remainder of the intervention. Noting their competitive spirit, I had devised a points system that was centred on rewarding points within tasks, based on effort and team cohesion; with the aim to promote a developmental growth mindset (Dweck, 2006). Following the session on goal setting, points were then awarded for achieving goals that were realistic and challenging. Points were also awarded for winning tasks, although a very minimal amount. This provided an ideal opportunity to introduce the ‘skill’ of social support, as I used the team-based tasks to emphasise that the challenges could not be completed individually and they had to utilise each members’ strengths. Unlike P1, the group had limited knowledge of golf; therefore, there was less opportunity to discuss the use of a caddy in supporting the player when on the golf course. With that in mind, the group quickly identified each team members’ strengths and capabilities in order to utilise them during the tasks.

I wasn’t surprised by their enthusiasm and level of engagement in the initial few sessions; they were free from the constraints of the classroom. Their level of engagement was also surprising within the skill teaching sections, predominantly delivered indoors. Based on my conclusions from P1, I aimed to incorporate a cooperative learning environment where an emphasis was placed on experiential learning (Jones, 2012). However, the basic concepts of individual skills still required teaching to initiate this level of cooperative learning. By this stage I had a reasonable understanding of their attention span. With this in mind, I started session two with a problem solving competition which was met with an immediate question from one of the participants, “What do we win?”

Then went out on to the driving range and started on goal setting. We had a short competition and they loved it. Competition is definitely the way to go…
based on this session and last session. I decided not to go back inside after the competition to do the ‘teaching’ of the goal setting stuff but instead just to carry on outside on the range which worked really well. There needs to be a smoother transition for this though. P2S2.

At the time I paused for a moment to reflect whether I should be rewarding them for effort (growth mindset) or performance (fixed mindset) and questioned my coaching philosophy (Dweck, 2006). Knowing they would be used to competition and probably being rewarded for winning, I made it clear at the start that effort is rewarded rather than ‘success’. At the start of session two I had explained the points system and alluded to a potential prize at the end of the intervention. Although their competitiveness was provoked by extrinsic motivation (points leading to a prize), I was happy to use their competitive drive to my advantage within the tasks to promote a growth mindset and reward effort throughout. In addition to adapting individual tasks, the cooperative learning environment in which they were delivered seemed to have a positive impact on their engagement. Participants were supporting each other and engaging in discussions whilst questioning what they had learnt as part of the reflective process.

A group reflection at the end of the first session led them to understand that the programme was about their learning and they could have an active input in the way in which the programme was delivered. Some had requested that we spent more time outside for the teaching components, rather than working in the clubhouse. I was happy to oblige, so I purchased a gazebo and a few picnic blankets to use in future sessions.

The following week we worked outside around the gazebo as the weather was fantastic. Having struggled with elements of the transferability of life skills with P1, this group were easily able to articulate scenarios where the skills could be used. I questioned whether this was due to their level of maturity or the fact they knew each other well, being in the same
class. In small groups of two or three, they were happy to work sitting on the grass and discuss alternative contexts and scenarios where they could use the newly learnt life skills. At one point I glanced over at the teacher who gave me an approving, albeit surprising, nod to suggest the group were quietly focused on the task, in a comfortable setting, whilst enjoying the sun. Simply moving the ‘classroom’ outdoors presented an ideal learning environment.

**Building relationships.**

In preparing for the intervention, I considered the potential dynamics of the group in relation to their course (BTEC Sport). Coming from an education system that did not offer BTEC courses, I knew very little of the course structure, other than a few phone calls and brief meeting with the class teacher. Based on the information I had, assuming the course was largely based on physical education, I recalled my experiences as an adolescent at secondary school. Referring back to Jimmy-J, my Secondary school PE teacher, I remembered his advice when I assisted in his classes with younger students. At the start of each academic year, he placed a particular emphasis on remembering each student’s name. During the first PE lesson with each class/year group, he used the lesson as an opportunity to learn the names of each student. Every task from the warm-up to the cool down was designed so that participants were engaged in name recall; for example, shouting a peer’s name before making a pass in basketball. Considering the significance of building rapport with participants early in the intervention, I adopted the same approach. Initial group tasks and ‘ice-breakers’ were created in order for participants to become comfortable in the new environment, whilst providing me with the opportunity to learn their names. As such, I memorised all participant names within the first hour. Although this was great for building rapport, it demonstrated that I was taking a keen interest in them as people, rather than students or participants.

The lessons learnt from P1 in relation to making learning personable supported my ability in establishing relationships and building rapport with a new group of adolescents. By
sharing personal experiences, I had abandoned any reservations that my role was to simply complete a task, deliver the intervention and remain impartial:

I gave them a 30 second ‘spiel’ about what I had done over the ‘half-term’ and they seemed to find it funny that my car broke down and that [Friend] and I went to the cinema twice. I think bringing anything personal to the session works really well, as they can hopefully see me as a person rather than a teacher, P2S1.

Seeing the amazement in their eyes and expression on their faces as if they were so shocked that a ‘teacher’ actually goes to the cinema, made me question their perception of me. Approximately ten years older than the participants, I perceived myself adopting a teaching role, rather than a mentoring role. Following this particular session, I reflected on how their engagement was influenced by my sharing of personal characteristics and experiences. Adopting a person-centred approach in my delivery allowed the participants to engage with me on a personal level rather than being influenced by my (perceived) role or identity.

Based on my humanistic consulting philosophy as a trainee sport psychology consultant, I try to engage with clients as human beings, rather than athletes (Poczwardowski, et al., 2004). Reflecting on the scenario above, I had experienced a reversed person-centred approach; providing the opportunity for participants to engage with me on a personal level as opposed to a figure of authority. From my experience, providing an element of personability has always assisted in the early stages of building rapport with a client. In this scenario, the process was identical.

With the understanding that my rapport was becoming well established with the group, I felt as if it was instantly drained when the teacher phoned me on the morning of the third session to say only four had turned up. Initially the feelings of anger and frustration stunned my speech as I listened to the teacher explaining the options. I decided to continue with the
session, as the four who had turned up were willing to learn and engaged in the process. Fortunately, I had a colleague (probationary sport scientist specialising in psychology) with me that day whom I was able to vent my frustration to, whilst waiting for the group to arrive. He had agreed to assist with the session to gain experience working with youth athletes. Gathering my thoughts after discussing the issue with my colleague, I reassured myself this was the reality of working with adolescents and schools. As much as I tried to control each aspect of the intervention, I put it down to experience and tried to focus on the session ahead. The session worked well with a small group as we were able to spend more time one-to-one working on their golf and life skills.

Life skill learning.

As the group were all keen athletes, they were competent in recognising the importance of the skills in reference to a ‘resilient performer’. They were able to grasp the concept of resilience and understood its relevance in sports performance. Following a brief introduction to the programme at the start of the first session, we began by playing disc golf; a team game played on the golf course with frisbees. The game started well as I introduced the problem solving acronym S.T.A.R. (stop, think, act, review) alongside numerous difficult challenges. For example, trying to pass the frisbee blindfolded, relying on the instructions of team-mates. They were tasked with tackling the challenges using the problem solving process:

They had to try and use STAR to work through the challenges. Is that actually teaching them resilience? How is it? They have a challenge to overcome but how is STAR teaching them to overcome that challenge? Is that enough to teach them resilience? What is resilience? P2S1.

During the games, I questioned myself for choosing this particular task. Although it was meant as an ice-breaker and a warm-up game to introduce problem solving, I found myself questioning its relevance in promoting resilient behaviours. I reflected on the
importance of problem solving in effectively managing the process of overcoming adversity (Peacock-Villada et al., 2007). By using the challenges as a means of adversity, the task allowed them to incorporate analytical skills associated with problem solving (e.g., analysing options and consequences, decision-making) whilst introducing the concept of resilience (Petersen, Leffert, Graham, Alwin, & Ding, 1997). Following the task we completed a short group reflection and discussed the strategies used to overcome the challenges. To my amazement, one of the participants said:

“Yeh, that was really good because it made us think about how to cope with completing the task even with the challenges you set” P2S1.

At the end of the day, I reflected on my concerns about the relevance of every task and its association to resilience. I had a desire to test out new activities to gauge their appetite for learning the life skills. As a result, I reassured myself of the purposes of the pilot testing and took confidence from the fact that participants were able to articulate the link to resilience easily. In addition to problem solving, the participants quickly understood the process of skill development and the concept of transferability.

**Life skill transfer.**

In contrast to P1, I approached the elements of transferability in relation to elite athletes, particularly rugby players, rather than golfers. They were able to relate to how the skills based around resilience are transferable to other sports, in the first instance, and then to other contexts. However, I encountered difficulties when delivering the newly added health and wellbeing elements to the programme.

Following P1, the content on healthy eating, physical activity as well as fitness testing, was introduced. The rationale in doing so was to educate adolescents in leading a healthy lifestyle that promoted wellbeing and fostered a resilient attitude towards health-compromising behaviours (Burton, Pakenham, & Brown, 2009, 2010; De Robert, Barontini,
During the fourth session, I delivered a nutrition workshop focusing on how to identify healthy and unhealthy foods in the supermarket. This was the first nutrition workshop I had delivered, so naturally I felt slightly nervous. In the days before the session I found myself rummaging through coursework from my sport science degree to brush up on the finer details of performance nutrition. I felt confident in my knowledge to deliver a basic workshop, but still felt out of my comfort zone slightly. Having bought several bags of food and drink from the supermarket the day before the session, I separated everything in to two piles that contained roughly the same food/drink types:

I set everything up on the big table and I remember thinking to myself that this looks really good! They arrived and walked upstairs. As soon as they walked in, they were excited and asking questions “are we just eating today?” “what’s the food for?” “oh wow, do we get to drink vodka?”

It felt good to see them excited about the task ahead… although they had no idea what it was. Once they were all sat down, we went through their food diaries. Some were good and quite detailed whilst others were just on scraps of paper that vaguely resembled paper when they dug it out of their bag. P2S4.

The main task involved identifying food labels and discussing healthy vs. unhealthy food and drink. Once both groups had two distinct piles each, they had the opportunity to inspect the other groups’ and question them on their choices. It actually ended up being an ideal opportunity for them to engage in a debate and practice some of the communication skills learnt earlier in the programme. Very little input was required by me as they were very knowledgeable on diet and performance nutrition. On the other hand, reviewing their 1-week food diaries suggested a disparity between their knowledge and healthy eating behaviours. Yet, their understanding in the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle progressed well from...
the previous session, where they completed a one mile run/walk.

Warming up on the edge of the short course, they seemed excited and in high competitive spirit as they discussing who they think will win. The one-mile run/walk is an appropriate field test to measure aerobic capacity in adolescents (Castro-Piñero et al., 2010). Although, there are limitations associated with participants understanding of pacing in relation to the entire length of the test. In order to overcome this limitation the outer perimeter of the five-hole ‘short course’ was measured and calculated as 3.5 laps to one mile. Therefore, the total distance is separated to smaller sections to aid participants’ pacing.

Seven out of nine participants completed the test with two dropping out at approximately half-way. From their view, it seemed as though dropping out from the test was a more appropriate option, rather than slowing down to a walk to regain their composure to continue. Although I had clearly instructed the test was not a race, the competitive nature of the group had over-ruled my instructions.

When returning to the clubhouse, I sensed that we had covered enough of the health and wellbeing transfer in earlier discussions during the session. Therefore, I had decided to move on to a separate task on career planning:

We then went back inside… with them slowly walking back upstairs. We went over 'planning for the future' and it wasn’t great – perhaps shouldn’t have done anything after the run as their minds clearly weren’t on task. I need to have a think about what to do if a task isn’t going down well… a plan B. There needs to be a smoother transition between the physiology sections and the life skill of leading a healthy lifestyle. P2S4.

I had underestimated their potential tiredness from the fitness test and tried to deliver too much content within the session. Therefore, the structure of future sessions needs to incorporate the run at the end of the day/session. In such circumstances, I recognised the need
to have additional tasks as a ‘plan-B’ if something was not going according to plan. The unpredictability of teaching was a novelty in my limited experience. I was going to have to learn to be flexible in my delivery when working with adolescents; something that initially conflicted with my researcher identity.

**Conclusion.**

Working with an older age group, in comparison to P1, has been challenging but also very rewarding. A greater level of maturity allowed my rapport with the participants to develop naturally as I felt more comfortable teaching an older age group. Based on my prior experience working with older adolescents (predominantly over 16) in sport psychology consulting, I felt at ease discussing my personal experiences and engaging with the participants.

My experience in teaching, gained from P1, boosted my confidence to explore new strategies in teaching, such as competitive tasks, outdoor learning and incorporating other sports to aid their understanding of transferability. At times my flexibility in delivery was hindered, in part due, to the content that was requested from the teacher and also the shorter session length. However, as the intervention progressed, I recognised that participants were more attuned to experiential learning, rather than ‘teaching’. Due to their involvement in sport outside of the intervention, they were competent in the ability to recognise adaptations in technique in order to influence performance. As a result, learning became more experiential as they became more skilled in specific golf technique. Consequently, less time was required in the coaching of golf and more emphasis was placed upon ‘teaching’ and development of life skills. However, the short session structure still disrupted the momentum of learning from week-to-week.

The individual sessions were limited in time (2 hrs, 15 mins) due to the constraints of their curriculum timetable. As a consequence, the content delivery time was less than two
hours per session, incorporating a short break. Although I was able to experiment with new content (e.g., health and well-being, nutrition) and delivery methods, a direct comparison between P1 and P2 (e.g., age and golf technical ability of participants) would have provided a clearer representation of how to integrate life skill learning within golf performance coaching. Indeed, I recognised that delivering to an older age group would require adapting delivery towards their maturity and intellectual ability. However, it transpired that a more personable approach was required in order to ensure participants were engaged in the learning environment. In reality, the process of delivering a life skills intervention is far more complex than originally anticipated and a greater emphasis is required on tailoring the programme to the ability level and needs of the participants.

The ARQ was completed with ease by the participants. The length of the questionnaire (88 items) seemed to be the limit to capture their engagement, as participants were beginning to become distracted after approximately 15 minutes. On the other hand, participants were very engaged with the physical fitness and health measurements. Coming from a sports background, all participants were competitive during the 1-mile run/walk and hand-grip strength test. Practically, both were completed with ease within the confines of the golf club and are suitable to use in future interventions. Other than the batteries expiring in the digital weighing scales, both height and weight measurements were also carried out with ease. However, consideration needs to be given to when these tests are completed in order to minimise the momentum of learning within the other tasks. Based on the summary provided and the reflections from the intervention, the following amendments will be made to Pilot 3 intervention.

**Changes made for Pilot 3.**

1. *Greater emphasis on experiential learning*
There needs to be less time spent on school-like teaching tasks completed indoors and greater emphasis on tasks where participants experience the skills and challenges, rather than simply being taught about them.

2. *Less theory teaching on life skills*

Reliance on the ‘passport’ booklet was too great and led to very structured theory-based lessons. The booklets should be used as a general guide, rather than a strict intervention curriculum.

3. *Personable approach to teaching*

The personable approach provided an opportunity for rapport to be established quickly, as participants could relate to me as a person, rather than a teacher or coach. Greater rapport led to a more integrated approach towards teaching the transfer components of life skills.

4. *Social support incorporated throughout rather than separate skill*

In contrast to P1, the social support elements were linked to the participants’ knowledge of team sports as opposed to golf per se.

**Pilot 3: Method**

**Intervention design.**

Unlike P1 and P2, the third pilot intervention took place over three consecutive days from 9.45am to 2.30pm, which included a 30 minute lunch-break. Participants were recruited from a secondary school and were completing a Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE) course via ASDAN\(^2\). The course is based on experiential learning with a combination of life skills and vocational teaching. The school was based approximately one-hour drive from the golf

\(^2\) ASDAN is a UK-based awarding organisation that offers qualifications within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).
club. As such, the intervention took place on three complete regular school days. Several aspects of their CoPE course were requested to be integrated into the life skills intervention. All three requests were integrated into the intervention curriculum:

- Complete week-long food diary as part of healthy eating plan;
- Identify current health and fitness strengths and improvements to make;
- Interview an athlete or sportsperson

Due to the ability level of the group, priority was placed on practical tasks rather than workshop-style discussion based tasks. As an example, part of the general introduction during the first session of P1 and P2, participants discussed their understanding of resilience in small groups using ‘spider diagrams’. Whereas in pilot three (P3), the introductory task, used as an ‘ice-breaker’ involved building team mascots.

As a result of reflections from P1 and P2, an intervention course booklet was created for P3 (Appendix 8). The booklet provided a curriculum guide based on the previous two pilot interventions. It was used as a tool for guiding participant reflections as well as creating a space where skills could be ‘taught’ and referred back to during the intervention. The booklet was designed to aid the ‘teaching’ components of the intervention whilst recording a food-diary, record of life skills covered, golf performance tests as well as results from fitness testing.

Based on the developing knowledge and technical golf expertise of the AR, the programme was delivered solely by him. However, contributions to the design were sought from the PGA coach prior to the intervention.

**Participants.**

A total of 9 participants (three female, six male) completing a CoPE ASDAN course took part in the intervention. Although participants were similar in age ($M = 14.2$ years, $SD = 0.67$ years), the class comprised of two year groups; two male participants were in year ten
whilst the remaining were in year nine. Participant assent and parental consent was arranged via school tutors and was provided prior to the intervention.

**Measures.**

The ARQ was completed before the intervention commenced. Also, the battery of fitness test used in P2 was also administered.

**Pilot 3: Reflections**

Four themes will be covered as part of the P2 reflections: delivery, building relationship, life skill learning, and life skill transfer. A conclusion to P3 will then be provided before an overall summary to the pilot phase (Chapter 3).

**Delivery.**

I had approximately six months of preparation for a three day intervention. Although I spent the vast majority of this time on other aspects of the project (e.g., marketing the intervention, see Chapter 6), I was constantly thinking about my delivery skills and how to alter the structure of the intervention. In a similar fashion to pilot two (P2), the structure of the intervention was dictated by the school’s timetable. Having said that, I was keen to explore the effectiveness of the intervention as an intensive programme delivered over three consecutive days. Given the popularity of school-holiday sport camps, the short, intensive structure would provide pilot data on the efficacy of the intervention in this format for potential future involvement with schools.

Having established a relationship with the new stakeholder school, I had met the teacher in charge of the group. We discussed the potential participants and their additional needs. Unlike P2 participants, the new group were completing a Certificate of Personal Effectiveness; a practical skills-based course designed to develop students’ competencies in preparation for further education or employment. The teacher commented that the potential
group was a lower ability level than previous intervention participants. In the lead up to the intervention, I tried to understand what this meant and how it could have an effect on my delivery. I had little experience working with adolescents of this ability level; fuelling my anxiety and apprehension. Whilst waiting for the group to arrive on the morning of the first session, I tried to anticipate the worst and consider my ‘plan-B’s’. Learning from my first session of P2 where participants were waiting for me to start, I ensured that everything was organised with military precision:

Having arrived 45 minutes early, I quickly set up the room to give me time to run through the schedule for the day before they arrived. The newly printed booklets were laid out on the table with a pen positioned neatly beside each one. Feeling excited to use the booklets; I was slightly concerned we wouldn’t have time to complete everything in it. I also felt nervous about their ability level, having never worked with such individuals in the past. P3S1.

Looking up at the sky, I pondered over the weather and the looming grey clouds rolling over the hills in the distance. Reflecting back on P2, I recalled sitting in the sun with the participants and considering whether I should have arranged water bottles and sun-cream. This time I considered whether it was safe for the participants to actually play golf in the cold weather. With weather-dependant contingency plans in place, I felt confident that I would still be able to cover the content indoors.

Prior to the first session, I hadn’t met the group, so I was slightly anxious about the ability level in relation to how I had designed the sessions. In the previous two pilot interventions, I hadn’t encountered anyone that struggled with the content or tasks within the programme. Also, prior to P1, I had the opportunity to deliver a ‘taster session’ which enabled me to design and tailor certain tasks to their intellectual ability, level of maturity, and
appropriate learning style. Unfortunately, I did not have this opportunity with P2 or P3, which, in hindsight, should be a necessity when working with a new group of adolescents.

Since P2, I had created a course booklet to accompany the content and provide a place for participants to reflect on their learning. Experience from P1 and P2 informed me that single pieces of paper (worksheets) do not survive long in the depths of teenagers’ school bags, something I should have recognised from personal experience as a teenager. As a result, I had designed a course booklet that incorporated the six core skills to accompany the sessions. The booklet provided a designated space for participants to record reflections, goals, and action plans. As such, they were able to look back at the goals and track their progress as we progressed through the course.

Through reflecting on P2 and refining the structure in preparation for the third pilot intervention (P3), we had decided the skill of ‘social support’ required a more integrated approach due to its relevance with resilience. The context of aligning it to a golfing context involved incorporating the skills associated with seeking support from an athlete’s personal network. In a sporting world, this may include a coach, teammate, or member of the sport science support team. In a wider context, the support network of an individual provides an important protective factor to aid coping mechanisms incorporated with resilience (Cash & Gardner, 2011). Therefore, a more integrated approach involved utilising team-members’ strengths within tasks. When participants were presented with a challenge or problem to solve, I asked them to have a short team discussion and highlight individual strengths within the team. Discussing individual strengths and abilities allowed the group to discuss their approach to a challenge given the support that is available. In addition, I involved the other staff members who acted as ‘support networks’ for some of the tasks.

The group had three staff members with them throughout the programme, two learning support assistants and one social worker. The additional support was welcome when assisting
the group with tasks and working on the driving range. Due to the additional needs of the participants, primarily learning difficulties, the learning support assistants often helped with aspects of the group-work and writing. In addition, one male participant suffered from mild autism. At times, he struggled with the coordination of the technical golf tasks. Although all participants were novice golfers, he found hitting the ball particularly challenging during tasks on the driving range. The rest of the group were well aware of his condition and were very supportive when working in small groups with him. However, on several occasions he became very frustrated after missing the ball repeatedly. During a session on the driving range as part of the second day, he suddenly threw his club down on the floor and stormed off. I was with another group two bays down as it happened; I was thankful that two of the assistants followed him showing no signs of shock, as if it had happened on several occasions previously.

Reflecting that evening on the events of the day, I questioned what I would have done differently if no additional support was in place. With no advanced notice on the additional needs of the group prior to the intervention, I had no plan in place if something similar were to happen. Considering my current skill set, I felt uneasy in dealing with potential difficult situations of this nature. This led me to question what skills I should have to be able to comfortably deal with participants requiring additional needs. Barcelona and colleagues (2011) make reference to 10 basic competencies that a youth development leader should possess (see Appendix 6), with an emphasis on delivery methods that are suitable and empowering towards all participants. In addition, they highlight the importance of building relationships whilst interacting with youth in creating an environment that enriches asset development. The novel experience in working with the participant with autism led me to question whether I, as a trainee sport psychology consultant and postgraduate research student, should be delivering the intervention.
Having no prior experience working with individuals with additional needs, I initially struggled to adapt my instructions towards their level of understanding. On several occasions Sarah (pseudonym), the social worker, re-phrased questions that I had asked; sensing that the participants did not understand what I originally asked. Approximately half way through the first day I was beginning to grasp what was required in providing instructions and questioning with this particular group. However, this would have been a much smoother transition if a ‘taster-session’ had been delivered prior to the intervention. Unfortunately, the timetabling of the class’ curriculum meant this was not achievable prior to the intervention.

**Building relationships.**

The skills and experiences I had gained from previous pilots in quickly building relationships with participants certainly benefitted me when engaging with the participants in pilot three. During coaching tasks on the driving range, I intentionally tried to steer away from ‘coaching points’ in an attempt to ensure I had established a good rapport with each individual. Fifer and colleagues (2008) highlighted the significance of building rapport for the benefit of client engagement, within a humanistic professional philosophy, “Once this type of relationship is established, an athlete will be much more willing to commit to the skills taught by the practitioner” (p. 357). Learning from previous interventions, I prioritised getting to know the participants on the first day of the intervention. Therefore, I asked participants about hobbies, interests, and school, when wandering from bay-to-bay on the driving range. Getting to know individuals on a personal level allowed participants to settle in to the new learning environment and my role as ‘teacher’. In doing so, I quickly established the friendship groups and those who grouped together with common interests. Given the intellectual ability of the group, I recognised that tasks had to remain as practical as possible.

When practising on the driving range in previous interventions, I was able to assemble the group every five minutes (approximately) for a short discussion and more instruction or to
demonstrate a particular action. However, with pilot three I only had three days with the group and was keen not to focus on technical coaching. Given the level of technicality within golf, participants would need a much longer intervention to become proficient golfers. Therefore, during the first day, I refrained from ‘teaching’ and, instead, adopted a ‘facilitator’ role. As a result, I prioritised their experience in the intervention and ensured they had as much time to practice as possible.

Adopting this approach allowed me to interact with individuals on a personal level, resulting in the ability to incorporate their personalities into the intervention, for example, one female participant was a keen horse-rider. During a group discussion on ‘preparing for performance’, I incorporated her experiences in preparing the horse to ride to emphasise the routine-based actions in preparation. Consequently, bringing her interests to life within the intervention provided a sense of involvement in becoming a part of the developmental experience. In addition, it created further opportunity for the understanding of transferability of skills alongside involving participants in their own learning.

Creating a cooperative learning environment (Dyson, Griffin, & Hastie, 2004) from the onset, I had very little need to ‘teach’ them. Learning became experiential and difficulties experienced in swing technique were problems to be solved, rather than actions to be coached. As a result, participants would experiment and sample different swing techniques for the desired outcome (e.g., accuracy, distance). Although I initially struggled with the urge not to revert back to direct teaching and instruction strategies from previous pilot interventions, towards the end of the first day I noticed participants were teaching themselves and each other, essentially making me redundant.

Altering my delivery style to create a more cooperative, participant-led environment had a profound effect on building rapport and participants feeling comfortable within the environment. During the morning of the third session, an incident had occurred on the minibus
whilst travelling to the golf club. As the group entered the clubhouse, I sensed the mood was particularly low. Sarah looked at me, raising her eyebrows and quietly informed me there had been an argument between one male participant and two of the girls. Slightly taken aback, I considered how I could change the mood and engage the participants for the final day. Seeing the effect it had on the entire group and knowing no further details at the time, I altered my original plan to start with a review upstairs in the clubhouse and instead decided to begin on the driving range. Recalling my secondary school geography teacher and his technique of taking the classroom outdoors; I remembered the positive affect it had on the class and the feeling of freedom:

Walking down the stairs of the clubhouse… there was such a difference in their mood… as if a switch had just been turned. [M1] and [M2] were asking me questions about my ‘course’ [PhD] and about how long I have played golf for. They were genuinely interested! I was feeling excited and quickly forgot about the situation upstairs by the time we had walked downstairs. I feel like I have actually built up quite a rapport with them, especially these 2 guys [M1 + M2] and also [M3] and [M4]… from only 2 days… well a total of 8 hours really. P3S3.

The decision-making process, in this case, did not rely on prior teaching experience but instead subsumed personal experience and intuition. Johansson and Krosmark (2004) dismissed the concept of reflection-in-action within teaching practice and instead explore the role of intuition-in-action. The impossibility of ‘pausing’ or ‘freezing’ the act of teaching suggests the ability to reflect is negated, as the time to think does not exist (Johnsson & Krosmark, 2004). Therefore, relying on intuition-in-action becomes the ‘bread and butter’ of decision-making within teaching. In this particular circumstance, witnessing their mood change instantly, I knew I had made the correct decision by altering the session activities.
Keen to ensure we still completed a review of the previous day, I incorporated it within the warm-up on the driving range. Previously I had always carried out the reviews as a group discussion whilst sitting down in the clubhouse. Although this was a clear example of adapting delivery methods to suit the needs of the group, at the time I was pleasantly surprised, albeit shocked, at the questioning from the participants towards my work and personal life. I felt I had established an excellent rapport with several members of the group partly due to my emphasis on building relationships during the first day. As a result, I felt more comfortable in challenging them with difficult tasks in order to support the development of resilient behaviours.

**Life skill learning.**

At the start of the intervention, I was cautious when introducing the aims of the 3-day course and the links to resilience and life skills. In the previous two interventions I had spent the first 30 minutes (approximately) on the following activities:

- Introduce myself and the intervention structure (aims and content);
- Create two teams – participants devise team names, values of the course and expectations, group rules;
- Facilitate small group discussion on life skills, resilience, and learning;
  - Introduce ‘challenges’ – bringing Challenge model to life
- Initiate an ice-breaker game

However, with P3 I altered this process to adapt to their level of understanding. Seeing their puzzled faces when I first introduced the aims of the project, I quickly moved on to splitting the group into two teams (four-five per team) and started them on the task of mascot building. Intuition-in-action allowed a degree of flexibility in my delivery within this situation. Following the completion of the task, both groups were asked to discuss what skills they had just used by building mascots. Immediately they were able to identify: teamwork, leadership,
communication, negotiation, listening, patience, and hard work. As such, I used this as a starting point to begin introducing life skills and the concept of resilience. We had a short discussion on where and how such skills are used within their daily lives.

Following this task, I taught the very basics of golf technique on the driving range; grip and stance. Again, they had an opportunity to practice in small groups before being asked to discuss what skills they had just used. Consequently, the first few hours were spent focusing on identifying skills in use during various tasks. Although I had a session plan as a guide - planning to cover problem solving by lunchtime, in reality, everything needed to be simplified, partly due to their level of understanding but also due to my naivety in assuming the intervention ‘language’ should be identical to that in P2 (16-17 years old). Although I had adapted delivery methods from P2 to P3 to suit the needs of participants in early adolescence rather than middle adolescence (Smetana, Campione-Barr, & Metzger, 2006), I had not considered the impact of language in line with adolescent cognitive development. As a result, I spent the morning of the first day (approximately two hours) understanding how to communicate with the group. Although this resulted in modifying the tasks for the afternoon, it complemented the importance of building rapport with the group during the first day of the intervention. However, towards the end of the first day (out of three), I was conscious that the group had spent little time on learning specific skills.

Given the compact nature of the intervention, being spread over three consecutive days, my time to reflect and make sense of the day’s activities was restricted. I spent the drive home and the majority of the evening considering what did and did not work, and how I should alter the plan for the following day. Being aware that we had covered problem solving and began to touch on goal setting, I was concerned that we would not cover the content of the intervention (i.e., all six skills) within the three days. The progression of learning each skill was slower than previous interventions. However, as a result, I considered the additional skills and
competencies that were being developed, not necessarily the prescribed skills. I evaluated my feelings of concern and concluded that I was not aligning my professional philosophy with my delivery methods. Taking a humanistic consulting philosophy into context, I felt a constant battle between my ability in delivering a life skills intervention that was prescriptive versus a person-centred, customised approach focusing on their needs. I struggled to find a happy medium.

**Life skill transfer.**

With the limited knowledge of the group prior to the intervention, I adapted the introduction of life skill learning in comparison to P2. Rather than focusing on sport (i.e. rugby) as a method for explaining how skills can be developed and transferred to other contexts, I focused on post-task reflections. Therefore, after each task, we reflected on what skills they had used and where else they could potentially use the skills. Reflections were completed in small group discussions. As such, the staff members were able to facilitate discussions, reminding students of previous programmes and experiences they had completed recently (e.g., a week-long course at an outdoor centre, a fire fighting training course). Utilising their existing experiences and knowledge deepened their understanding of life skill transfer.

From a developmental contextualism point of view, adolescents play an active role in constructing their own development (Coleman, 2011). As such, I aimed to ensure participants were able to personally relate to the skills identified within post-task reflections. Once each small group had considered the skills used and developed within a task, participants were asked to reflect on how the task affected their own personal development of specific skills. The final stage of the reflective process involved participants selecting one action point they would take forward in to the following task. Incorporating their understanding of personal development relied on a degree of criticality towards their strengths and weaknesses. Initially, some
participants found this challenging. However, once we had completed this process after several tasks, the majority of participants were able to identify how they play an active role in their development.

Completing several post-task reflections during the first day of the intervention, I planned to progress to specific transfer tasks on the second day. Following a slightly disrupted morning given the initial solemn mood of the group, we moved on to peer-led coaching tasks. Three groups were tasked with delivering a 15-minute coaching session, teaching a specific life skill (e.g. goal setting, problem solving) alongside a golf technique (e.g. chipping, driving). Each group had to lead a warm-up activity, teach the basics of the skill and coach the remainder of the group (including myself and other staff members). Following a brief group discussion on what coaching behaviours they would have to consider (i.e., clear voice, demonstrate technique), groups were given 20 minutes to create their session plan. Seeing the nerves and slight embarrassment in leading a coaching session in front of peers, the task served as a perfect opportunity to recognise the challenge they had undertaken:

With regards to them delivering the sessions as coaches, they actually did a fantastic job. I hadn’t really considered it with the previous group as they are quite comfortable in delivering the technical aspects of sport anyway. But actually… having to stand in front of a group of your peers and try to hit the best golf shot you can is quite a daunting task – something that I had overlooked. I recognised this at the time during the 2nd coaching session when the demonstration hadn’t gone that well. So I made sure to make a point of recognising their efforts at the end of the coaching sessions. P3S2.

The coaching sessions ran late which meant we were unable to do a reflection, as their minibus had arrived. At several points during their sessions, I saw that we were running late and considered if I should cut them short in order to leave time for a reflection before they had
to leave. In a similar situation in P2, the teacher had said to me, “If they are having fun, whilst learning and engaging… then let them carry on”. Seeing them coach each other and having fun, following a nervous start, I decided to let them continue.

Subsequently I had planned to complete a review of the coaching session the following morning. Unfortunately, due to the incident with three participants on the minibus, we did not have the opportunity to complete a full reflection. However, completing the reflection during the warm-up was just as effective.

The reflection of the coaching session went well and they seemed to be able to articulate how their session went and also what they thought of the other groups. I had them read out their reflection and then what they thought of the other group. I think this is a real skill that is often overlooked within school… the ability to take criticism and feedback… with the aim to create a growth mindset and try to have them understand that this is the first time they have coached… it won’t be perfect. They also commented on the skills they had used and also other situations where they could use them outside of the project.

P3S3.

Although I had not specifically ‘taught’ the skill of reflection, by going through the process, they were able to identify their strengths, areas for improvement and action points for the future. I was initially surprised by their response in highlighting the transferability of the skill. We had discussed the transfer of skills in previous post-task reflections. However, this was the first time they had not required prompting.

To support a developmental environment that focuses on effort rather than performance, I asked each group to comment on the other coaching sessions (i.e., what they thought of their peers coaching skills). Although previous intervention groups had delivered peer-led coaching sessions, they were not asked to provide feedback for the other groups. One
participant commented on the demonstration carried out by the other group. Unfortunately, the
demonstration of ‘chipping the ball with half swing’ did not go as planned and the participant
who was demonstrating the skill missed the ball twice. Nevertheless, he proceeded to continue
to demonstrate the skill and successfully chipped the ball on the third attempt:

With regards to them delivering the sessions as coaches, they actually did a
fantastic job. I hadn’t really considered it with the previous [pilot] group as
they were quite comfortable in delivering the technical aspects of sport
anyway. But actually… having to stand in front of a group of your peers and
try to hit the best golf shot you can is quite a daunting task – something that I
had overlooked. I recognised this at the time during the 2nd coaching session
when the demonstration hadn’t gone that well. So I made sure to make a point
of recognising their efforts at the end of the coaching sessions. P3S2.

The demonstrator handled the situation very well, seemingly un-phased by the previous
misses. During the reflections, it provided an ideal opportunity to discuss the resilience
demonstrated by the demonstrator and specifically the transfer of emotional control. We
discussed how they handled failure in situations within school and social lives. This scenario
was not planned yet it naturally unfolded to provide experiential learning for the demonstrator
as well as participants delivering the coaching sessions.

Providing feedback to their peers was approached with slight hesitation. Discussing
some of the humorous situations during the sessions (e.g., one participant struggled to provide
a chipping demonstration), allowed the feedback to be presented in a light-hearted, positive
manner. It also provided an ideal opportunity to discuss personal development and the link to
thriving in other environments, such as school and college. Having not planned to introduce
the concept of thriving, the opportunity arose where it complimented the reflective
discussions.
Reflecting that evening, I considered why I introduced thriving as a new concept on the third day of the intervention. It provided a ‘platform’ to discuss the transfer of skills to other environments and participants were able to identify the links between such environments (e.g., school, part-time job). Put simply to the participants – how can these skills (i.e., coaching skills, communication) help me do well in other situations? However, it was again a new concept that required some explaining. Nevertheless, the ability to recognise its relevance in the situation, supporting their understanding of transferable skills, solidified my interpretation of ‘artistry’ or ‘knowledge in action’ within reflective practice (Johns, 2013; Schön, 1983). I couldn’t have planned the failed demonstration but its beneficial use in supporting the transfer of skills makes me question how it can be planned and utilised in future pilots.

**Conclusion.**

After a tiring three days working with the group, I reflected on the journey that I, and the participants, had undertaken in 72 hours. I compared my approaches in delivery during the three days and the associated changes I had made. Taking an action research perspective in such a short space of time left little opportunity for deeper critical analysis to which I had become accustomed to. In effect, the process of reflexivity was accelerated. I questioned whether this had an effect on my delivery and implementation of the intervention. Would a greater period of time between sessions have benefitted the delivery of the intervention? Therefore, did the compact schedule of the intervention have a detrimental effect? Upon deeper reflection, the compact structure of the intervention could have had a detrimental effect to the participants learning of the skills. In addition, the short time frame for me to reflect between sessions resulted in a lack of depth in my reflections. Although I was able to dedicate more time to the fourth and fifth stages of the reflective model (adaptability and action plan; see *Figure*, pg. 92) after completing the intervention, the reflections could not be utilised.
Revisiting the aims of the pilot process (approximately 18 months) and the specific objectives of P3, I recalled the importance of delivering the intervention in alternative formats with different populations. Evaluating pilot three, I aimed to compare and contrast my experiences from P2 and P1. However, in doing so suggested that each intervention was comparable. In reality, each intervention was shaped and delivered based on the experiences of that moment, due to the differences in participants’ age, maturation, intellectual ability, recruitment site (e.g., secondary school), group dynamics, and knowledge of sport.

Reflecting on the events of P3, one of the key factors in delivering a successful intervention, with regard to participant engagement, related to the emphasis placed upon building rapport with the participants. Incorporating participants’ interests and hobbies within the intervention provided a sense of involvement and a further opportunity to build rapport with an individual. Furthermore, in situations where participants struggled to identify contexts where a life skill could be transferred, using their interests as a point of reference supported their understanding of transferability.

Initially, having to adapt to the needs of the group resulted in a delayed start to introducing the core skills. Subsequently, we only briefly covered social support and managing emotions. The total delivery time for the intervention was 12 hours spread over three days. The time required at the beginning of the intervention to allow participants to be comfortable in new surroundings, and ‘ease in’ to the alternative learning environment (in comparison to school), should extend the intervention by several hours. In addition, the format of the intervention as three consecutive days was not conducive to the process of transferability or to reflection. Homework tasks on identifying other situations or contexts to transfer life skills were not possible given the compact format. Although the intervention format presented restrictions, its condensed structure allowed the momentum of learning to
remain in place. A review was required at the beginning of each day to recap on the skills learnt but participants did not require prompting.

In conclusion, the intervention structure should be a minimum of 14 hours spread over a less compact format. In comparison to P1 and P2, delivering the content over a short period of time ultimately allowed less content to be delivered as I was conscious of overloading participants with information. Therefore a suitable mid-point between the two extremes would be to deliver the intervention as one full day per week for four or five consecutive weeks. This structure would allow sufficient time between sessions for participants to reflect on their learning and begin to test the transferability of newly developed skills. Also, to maintain momentum between sessions, this format could potentially allow the ‘passport’ booklets to incorporate homework transfer tasks.

The ‘passport’ booklets enabled reflective learning to be recorded as well as providing the opportunity for goals and action plans to be evaluated and re-visited. The booklets were designed to be used alongside the intervention content. Therefore, each core skill is covered via a series of questions to develop process-oriented knowledge, transferability, and reflective understanding. Participants struggled slightly with writing, spelling, as well as articulating their thoughts. Their literacy was supported by me and other staff members when completing the written tasks. At times, the answer boxes were restrictive when participants wanted to write more than the space allowed. Additional notes pages were included at the end of the booklet where participants could expand on their answers. However, a key observation from P1 was to ensure less content is delivered. Therefore, the booklet was purposefully designed to be brief rather than an exhaustive curriculum of intervention content to support a flexible approach, rather than overly prescribed. Due to the size of the booklet (A5), it was utilised as a space for reflective ‘notes’ rather than a formal curriculum work booklet. Not without its limitations, in summary, the booklet provided a useful tool in ensuring participant reflections
were recorded in one place, whilst enabling an element of flexibility with the delivery of certain skills.

After implementing the third pilot intervention, I began to compile my reflections over the past 18 months in the hope that I could somehow make sense of the journey I had undertaken. Designing and delivering the intervention to numerous and very different participants achieved the five aims associated to implementing the pilot process. A thorough comprehension was subsequently achieved as to how the intervention can be delivered to participants of varying personalities, abilities, learning style, and technical ability. However, it also led to many more questions as I queried how each intervention could be customised to suit the needs of the participants, whilst allowing a degree of adaptability and flexibility. Is this simply part of delivering a life skills intervention? How can a level of consistency be maintained for rigour in implementation? Should it be compared to other life skills interventions? If not, how can it be evaluated?

**Summary**

The aim of the pilot process was to understand how to integrate resilience-based life skills learning using the vehicle of golf performance coaching. The design and delivery of three pilot interventions, utilising an action research approach, unfolded over an 18-month period. During this time, the AR, having adopted several identities throughout the process (e.g., trainee sport psychology consultant, teacher, coach), documented the experiences in order to develop a life skills intervention that was informative, enjoyable, and suited to the individual needs of adolescents. As a result, the reflexive process informed the cyclical stages in the action research approach. Consequently, the following stage of the approach involves delivering the newly developed intervention with adolescents, and evaluating its effectiveness in developing resilient attitudes and life skills. Therefore, the final section of the chapter will
summarise the key findings from the pilot process that led to the development of the intervention in its current form.

The importance in building rapport and establishing effective working relationships has been well documented within sport psychology literature (Fifer, Henschen, Gould, & Ravizza, 2008; Sharp, Hodge, & Danish, in press). Its relevance in delivering an effective sport-based youth development intervention has echoed such findings within this programme of research. Emphasis was placed on ensuring rapport was built with participants in the early stages of the pilot interventions, during ice-breaker tasks and coaching on the driving range. However, delivering the intervention to different populations provided a deeper understanding of its significance in working with adolescents. To some extent, the approach in building meaningful relationships was similar across all three pilot interventions. Ensuring all participants names were memorised within the first hour, focusing on their interests and hobbies, and bringing their knowledge and past experiences to life in providing a sense of involvement, were all strategies used within each intervention. That said, due to the nature of social research, some strategies proved more effective than others across intervention groups. Specifically, in P1 and P2, their experiences and knowledge of sport provided a useful tool in the transfer of knowledge when discussing life skill transferability. Participants were able to relate to skills within their respective sports in order to understand their importance in other contexts. Particularly within P2, for the vast majority of participants, golf was a new concept. Therefore using their experiences in rugby and football allowed greater depth, whilst aiding the speed of transferring life skills.

The variability in participant recruitment sites provided a breadth of experience in working with alternate ages, physical, and intellectual ability levels, and sports knowledge. Adapting to the needs of the group, as well as individuals, required patience in understanding their current situation, and its interaction with a novel learning environment. All participants
attended secondary school (although P1 participants were recruited from the golf club), so were therefore attuned to the teaching styles present within their respective schools. The fusion of learning golf-based skills with life skills provided a novel experience. As such, their engagement in the process was excellent. Comments from teachers during informal discussions highlighted the positive difference in their attitude, engagement, and behaviour in comparison to school. However, their level of engagement decreased when tasks set were too challenging for their skill level.

In order to incorporate the Challenge model of resilience (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005), the concept of resilience first had to be introduced. The majority of participants had heard of the word ‘resilience’. Although they were unable to describe its meaning, most were able to associate it towards mental toughness and “not giving up”. When reflecting on the difficulties experienced with teaching the concept of resilience, the importance of language was a key consideration when introducing the concept to adolescents. With those who were keen sports players, I was able to explain the meaning within a sporting context. However, describing its meaning beyond sport, specifically in P3, became challenging. Therefore, approaching the ‘teaching’ of resilience from an experiential perspective proved more effective.

Exposing participants to adversity in the form of golf-based challenges and tasks provided an opportunity to experience the process involved in appraising a challenge as a developmental outcome. In addition, presenting participants with difficult challenges in which they are unlikely to succeed allowed them to experience adversity in supporting their understanding of resilience. Although the Challenge model states that exposing individuals to high levels of adversity will result in a negative outcome, it provided a beneficial learning opportunity. Once participants had a basic understanding of resilience, adversity, and challenge appraisal, the task difficulty level was decreased to allow them to overcome the
challenge whilst employing newly learnt coping skills. For example, a wider fairway was created on the driving range with cones.

Following reflections from P1, a greater emphasis was placed upon ‘deep-end throwing’ where participants were tasked with completing a challenge with limited resources and instructions. As a result, participants had to rely on the strengths of the group whilst devising creative solutions to the challenge, based on the coping skills taught within the intervention. During reflective exercises following the challenge, participants were able to identify the process involved in developing resilience-based skills as part of the challenge. Ultimately, the Challenge model provided a theoretical model in supporting the application of theory to practice. However, its relevance towards a brief life skills intervention needs to be explored further, given the inter-individual differences faced when working with adolescents.

The challenges faced in delivering a resilience-based life skills intervention will continue beyond the pilot process. Furthermore, the experience and lessons learnt in working with adolescents demonstrate that the design of the intervention requires altering and adapting to align with the needs of certain populations. As such, the learning process involved within an action research approach will extend throughout the entirety of the research programme. Developing as an applied researcher, understanding the craftsmanship involved in educating, will also compliment the learning process. As a neophyte teacher, coach, sport psychology consultant and applied researcher, the difficulties lie in applying knowledge and skills with limited experience. Subsequently, intuition-in-action serves a primary role in supporting youth, as Johansson and Kroksmark (2004) concluded, “To students in teacher-education and to unexperienced teachers the concept of intuition enriches and widens the understanding of pedagogical practice” (p. 378). Adapting within the context of applied practice, whilst adopting a degree of controllability to provide a rigorous, innovative, and effective life skill intervention, will offer a testing environment for the resilient practitioner.
CHAPTER 4

Intervention Evaluation
Introduction

Evaluating the effectiveness of sport-based youth development interventions is essential for translating their worth against government policy at a local and national level for social change, whilst also advancing the field of research. However, measuring effectiveness of complex social interventions is a process that is often undervalued and overlooked (Clarke, 1999). Therefore, in the context of this thesis, it is important to explore the most effective and appropriate process in evaluating a resilience-based life skills intervention.

In referencing the purpose of research in the context of evaluation research, Patton (2002) outlined a continuum that ranges from theory to action:

1. Basic research: To contribute to fundamental knowledge and theory
2. Applied research: To illuminate a societal concern
3. Summative evaluation: To determine program effectiveness
4. Formative evaluation: To improve a programme
5. Action research: To solve a specific problem

The action research approach described in the previous chapter, therefore, solved numerous issues and problems with the design, structure, and delivery of the intervention in an effort to improve its potential effectiveness. A move is now required towards understanding the effect of the intervention in providing a contribution to existing knowledge of life skills intervention research.

The purpose of the present chapter is to justify and implement the post-pilot intervention and then evaluate its effectiveness in developing the resiliency, life skill learning, and transfer of skills within adolescents. The following section will, therefore, outline a brief summary of programme evaluation research before exploring evaluative
methods employed by previous sport-based life skills interventions, therefore providing a theoretical and conceptual context for the methods used in this study.

The Nature of Programme Evaluation

Evaluation research spans numerous contexts in understanding and judging a given phenomenon. Its capacity to be utilised as a formal or informal method of inquiry allows flexibility in its approach, yet, as a result presents difficulties in defining what is and isn’t evaluation research (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). The term *programme evaluation* is used to describe a systematic approach to evaluating the effectiveness of courses and interventions or any programme of work targeting social and/or behavioural change, often through an educational approach (Clarke, 1999). Due to the multiple contexts spanning evaluation research, the reader should assume the word ‘programme’ and ‘intervention’ will be used interchangeably throughout the following section.

The evaluation of complex social interventions is often not suited to randomised controlled trials (RCTs) due to the selection of participants targeted by the intervention (Hart & Heaver, 2013). Although considered to be the gold standard of programme evaluation, RCTs do not account for the need to purposively sample participants based on potential ethical procedures as well as the natural, applied settings commonly involved within programme implementation (Clarke, 1999). Therefore, quasi-experimental designs are more appropriate in evaluating the effectiveness of programmes when targeting specific populations where randomisation or the adoption of a control group is not feasible (cf. Grant & Wall, 2009). External validity can be compromised when adopting a quasi-experimental approach; however, due to the social context in which interventions occur, inter-individual differences will always be present (Howitt & Cramer, 2008). As such, experimental and exploratory research designs are often adopted within sport-based life skills research, due to the relative infancy within sport psychology research. To provide context for the current
research, designs and methods used in previous sport-based life skills interventions will be critiqued.

**Research Designs in Sport-based Life Skills Interventions**

The methods used in assessing programme effectiveness should be unified with the research design (Howitt & Cramer, 2008). In evaluating youth sport programmes, Petitpas et al. (2005) outlined three forms of evaluation: implementation, process, and outcome. Although certain methods (e.g., programme staff reflective diaries) lend themselves to specific forms of evaluation (e.g., implementation), a mixed-methods approach provides depth and breadth to the process and outcomes of a programme (Petitpas et al., 2005). In addition, it also provides verification in the form of triangulating results, rather than relying on one method of inquiry (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Undertaking process and implementation evaluation, although very similar in nature, is a crucial element to understand what part of the programme is working and how it is working within the given context (Danish, Forneris, & Wallace, 2005). Such forms of evaluation assess aspects of the programme, such as delivery methods and staff training, which are associated to outcomes. As such, *implementation fidelity*, the degree to which the programme is implemented as it was intended, plays a key role in process evaluation (Sanchez et al., 2007). Although process evaluation can be carried out using a number of methods (e.g., participants interviews, observations, field notes), it is essential that the outcomes be relayed back into the programme in order to develop and further improve implementation (Petitpas et al., 2005). In addition, a lack of process evaluation can potentially discard the importance of contextual factors within complex programmes, factors that are considered integral to programme outcomes, for example the environment in which the programme is delivered (Nathan et al., 2010). Given the benefits of process evaluation, it
is surprising to see the vast majority of sport-based life skills intervention evaluations solely focusing on outcome evaluation (see Table 7.).

Demonstrating cause and effect with high levels of external validity via quasi-experimental designs is desirable to researchers in the field, especially given the relative infancy of sport-based life skills interventions. However, this is often at the loss of communicating meaningful results to those involved in the delivery of youth development interventions (i.e., physical education teachers, youth workers, coaches) (Petitpas et al., 2005). Generalisation is indeed crucial in understanding what interventions have been effective in changing behaviour and/or knowledge (Catalano et al., 2004). Nevertheless, outcome evaluation methods do not always provide the depth required to understand how such results have occurred, specifically, what processes were in place in order to demonstrate outcome success (Danish et al., 2005; Iachini, Beets, Ball, & Lohman, 2014).
Table 7.
Research designs of sport-based life skills interventions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Research Design</th>
<th>Quantitative Measures</th>
<th>Qualitative Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hardcastle, Tye, Glassey, and Hagger (2015)</td>
<td>Cross-sectional – post-intervention</td>
<td>• Outcome evaluation</td>
<td>• Athlete focus groups (n = 6) and parent focus groups (n = 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• External evaluators</td>
<td>• Semi-structured interviews with programme facilitators (n = 4), coaches (n = 4), and state sporting association representatives (n = 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camiré, Trudel, and Bernard (2013)</td>
<td>Case-study – single private high school</td>
<td>• Outcome evaluation</td>
<td>• Field notes of programme observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• External evaluators</td>
<td>• Player interviews (n = 14), parent interviews (n = 7), school principal interview (n = 1), coach interviews (n = 6), program director interview (n = 1, interviewed at 2 time points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holt et al. (2013)</td>
<td>Participatory action research</td>
<td>• Process and outcome evaluation</td>
<td>• Informal discussions (school board partner, principals and teachers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Internal evaluators</td>
<td>• Researcher/fieldworker reflective journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weiss, Stuntz, Bhalla, Bolter, and Price (2013)</td>
<td>Year 1 (of 4) results in manuscript</td>
<td>• Cross-sectional – post intervention</td>
<td>• Phase 1: Participant interviews (n = 28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Outcome evaluation</td>
<td>• Phase 2: Participant interviews (n = 14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goudas and Giannoudis (2010)</td>
<td>Cross-sectional – post intervention</td>
<td>• External evaluators</td>
<td>• Participant interviews (n = 63) and focus groups (n = 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goudas and Giannoudis (2008)</td>
<td>Experimental pre-test/post-test</td>
<td>• Outcome evaluation</td>
<td>• Coach interviews (n = 15) and focus groups (n = 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunelle, Danish, and Forneris (2007)</td>
<td>Quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test/follow-up</td>
<td>• Internal evaluators</td>
<td>• Parent/guardian focus groups (n = 5) and interview (n = 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forneris, and Scott (2007)</td>
<td>Quasi-experimental post-test</td>
<td>• Outcome evaluation</td>
<td>• Field notes of participant observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• External evaluators</td>
<td>• Participant interviews (n = 27) and teacher interviews (n = 4)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Participant notebooks (n = 65)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For well-established programmes, confirming results across multiple sites or populations requires insight into the contextual differences (Clarke, 1999). Similarly, for newly developed programmes, innovative delivery methods should be evaluated during implementation to support a rigorous, evidence-based programme (Iachini et al., 2014). However, very few process-oriented programme evaluations are carried out, creating a significant gap in the literature (Catalano et al., 2004).

**Programme evaluation: the need for mixed-methods design.**

Table 7 outlines some of the articles that have sought to determine the effectiveness of sport-based life skills interventions via numerous designs and methods. It should be noted that the list of articles included is not exhaustive and is provided to guide the reader, rather than critique the prevalence of specific research designs. All articles describe outcome-based evaluations, whilst one outlines an action research approach to process evaluation. Although the list is not exhaustive, it should be noted that the selection is representative of the methods used within life skills programme evaluations, with the vast majority adopting outcome focused evaluation. The reliance on qualitative methods could suggest the lack of validated quantitative life skill measures and further demonstrates the difficulties associated with assessing life skill transfer (Gould & Carson, 2008). Furthermore, there is a reluctance of evaluators to adopt mixed-methods approaches to programme evaluation. Gould and Carson (2008) highlighted the need for researchers to utilise quantitative and qualitative measures to evaluate programmes:

> Given the complexity of teaching life skills through sport, no one method will be effective in advancing knowledge in the area. In fact, adopting one method of inquiry for pursuing critical questions in the area would be counterproductive to knowledge development. (p. 68)
Mixed-method research seems to be more prevalent within youth development programmes based in a physical activity setting, rather than sport per se (cf. Iachini et al., 2014), presenting a gap in the sport-based literature. However, research by Nathan et al. (2010) provides a promising foundation for future mixed-methods programme evaluations and is discussed in the following section.

A mixed methods approach via process and outcome evaluation.

Given the prevalence of sport-based extra-curricular programmes, there is a need to explore mixed-methods approaches in creating a holistic understanding of how programmes are delivered and their associated outcomes. Nathan and colleagues (2010) proposed a process and outcome evaluation, via a quasi-experimental design, to assess the effectiveness of a multi-site programme aimed at developing social inclusion and cohesion. The research did not target life skill development as such; hence it was not included in Table 7. Although the authors make reference to evaluating the programme to assess whether it is successful in developing life skills within their aims, the article is a design proposal displaying no empirical data. Yet, the proposed quasi-experimental, mixed-methods, multi-site design provides a suitable reference in contextualising the present chapter.

Evaluating a non-standardised programme implementation.

Utilising a multi-site evaluation, Nathan et al. (2010) recognised the importance of contextual changes within programme implementation. They refer to the “plasticity of the intervention” (p. 8) describing the degree of flexibility required in delivering complex programmes across multiple settings. Due to the nature of applied research, the lack of a standardised programme delivery is often reported in order to suit the differing needs and behaviours of participants (Danish et al., 2005). Nathan et al. (2010) proposed a “flexible and emergent study design” (p. 8), which emphasises a theoretical, rather than procedural evaluation, towards implementation fidelity. Leaning on the approach adopted by Hawe,
Shiell, and Riley (2008), Nathan and colleagues (2010), as external evaluators, described the programme implementation whereby the role and purpose of components aim to be standardised, rather than the form they adopt. For example, delivering a task that aims to develop leadership skills would need to be adapted based on the number of participants within the group, taking into account how many individuals will have the opportunity to act as the ‘leader’ when working in large groups. Therefore, appropriate tailoring to the needs of participants and contextual differences became an integral method of their implementation, with the ability to adopt theoretical rather than procedural fidelity (Nathan et al., 2010). Subsequently, altering the form of implementation across sites requires an evaluation that encapsulates such differences. As such, process evaluation is necessary when assessing the effectiveness of programmes at multiple sites or with multiple populations (Nathan et al., 2010).

Nathan and colleagues (2010) proposed a battery of quantitative measures to be administered at various time points, due to the varying ‘dose response’ design reflecting ongoing, continual participant recruitment. Process evaluation was then suggested to be carried out via interviews with key individuals (e.g., school principals, programme staff, community leaders) as well as participants in the form of “friendship pair interviews” (p.6). In addition, participant observation, programme photos (taken by participants), meeting transcripts and minutes were also recommended to be included to provide a holistic picture of the programme implementation. Incorporating participants’ schools and communities into the evaluation, as well as the programme itself, researchers can build an ecological assessment of programme effectiveness. Although the article is solely proposing a research design and includes no empirical data, the authors do provide ideas for a rigorous and holistic evaluation of programme effectiveness. Of particular interest to the current chapter, and overall thesis, is the proposed use of external evaluators (Nathan et al., 2010).
External vs. internal programme evaluators.

The use of internal evaluators (i.e., evaluators who are involved in some aspect of the programme) or external evaluators (i.e., evaluators who are brought in for the sole purpose of evaluating) to assess programme effectiveness is rarely discussed within the literature, often due to the practical, financial and logistical implications of such approaches. As a result, there is little choice as to which is considered the most appropriate (Catalano et al., 2004). Both types of programme evaluators have clear advantages and disadvantages; however, based on the design and context of the programme, a specific type of evaluator may be more appropriate (Bamberger, Rugh, Church, & Fort, 2004). Where programmes have been developed and implemented by individuals based in academia, the process of evaluation is often carried out internally due to available expertise (Clarke, 1999). In contrast, programmes that are delivered via sports development organisations may consider contracting an external evaluator. As a result, the process of evaluating a programme, and to some extent the outcome, is influenced by the evaluator (Dewey, 2004).

Internal evaluator.

An internal evaluator is typically involved with the design and implementation of a programme. As such, they often have a thorough understanding of the organisational structure and potential challenges faced during delivery (Clarke, 1999). A comprehension of programme design and delivery informs a unique insight into the appropriate methods required for evaluating the outcomes, as well as process, of a programme. As a result, internal evaluators could be biased towards adopting certain methods of evaluation to demonstrate desired outcomes to satisfy stakeholders and/or internal management (Torres, Preskill, & Piontek, 1997). Nonetheless, the advantage of understanding context and mechanisms provides internal evaluators with a holistic process-oriented approach (Clarke, 1999).
Holt and colleagues (2013) provided an example of utilising members of the research team (who are involved in implementing the programme) to evaluate the process and outcomes of a sport-based after-school programme. Adopting a participatory action research (PAR) approach, Holt et al. (2013) examined the effectiveness of the programme as it was being delivered via participants’ views and facilitators’ reflections. As a result, internal evaluators were able to make recommended changes to further enhance the programme throughout its delivery. Adopting a longitudinal design (three years) not only complemented the use of internal evaluators but also allowed members of the research team to build relationships with community organisations, further enhancing the evaluative reach of the programme and implementation fidelity (Holt et al., 2013).

*External evaluator.*

Unlike internal evaluators, an external evaluator has no involvement with the programme design and implementation. Therefore, their objectivity and independence from the programme organisation provides an outsider’s perspective (Clarke, 1999). In addition, external evaluators are often more experienced as the role their experience as an evaluator could bring more thorough understanding of evaluation research design and the associated responsibilities of communicating their findings (Torres et al., 1997). However, due to logistical, financial and temporal challenges, external evaluators are often limited to outcome evaluation measures (Clarke, 1999). As a result, a restricted cross-sectional design is often adopted when externals are used to evaluate the effectiveness of a programme.

In evaluating programme effectiveness, a cross-sectional research design significantly limits any causal inferences made (Patton, 2002). Within the context of sport-based life skills programmes, Hardcastle et al. (2015) provided a qualitative evaluation of a high-performance programme targeting life skill development in athletes. Although source triangulation was maximised (i.e., athletes, parents, programme facilitators, coaches etc.), a lack of pre-
programme assessment of athletes’ life skill understanding restricted the outcome evaluation of the programme (Clarke, 1999). In addition, the single-method approach adopted by the external evaluators provides little advancement towards the discipline of sport-based life skills (Gould & Carson, 2008; Shek & Siu, 2006). However, as noted by the authors, they were only one of a few studies that utilised qualitative methods to evaluate the experiences of programme participants.

**Aims of the Intervention Evaluation**

The aim of the current chapter is to outline the procedure, and associated findings, from the outcome and process intervention evaluation. In doing so, the implementation of the post-pilot phase intervention will be outlined alongside the continual action research approach. The evaluation will report the efficacy and effectiveness of the intervention in developing participants’ resilience-based life skills across four interventions.

In line with the action research approach detailed in the previous chapter, the intervention is still developing and adapting to the needs of varying participants. Therefore, an inductive approach will still be utilised in order to refine the delivery as part of the process evaluation. However, the primary objective is aligned with a deductive approach in assessing the effectiveness of the intervention.

**Method**

**Introduction**

The purpose of the following section is to outline the methods employed and provide a rationale for their use in the subsequent evaluation of the resilience-based life skills intervention designed in study one (Chapter 3). In addition, the evaluation paradigm and influence of the researcher will also be discussed due to the use of an internal evaluator (author) and highlighting potential researcher bias in the process. Although the present
chapter is a continuation of the previously outlined action research approach in chapter 3, the current chapter aims to provide an evaluative synergy of four separate interventions delivered over ten months. Therefore, the reader should not disregard the process undertaken by the applied researcher (AR) during the pilot phase described previously in this thesis. Instead, the present chapter should be considered as a stand-alone ‘movie’, much like the evaluations presented in Table 7. However, having watched the ‘prequel’ (i.e., Chapter 3) it would have provided the reader with valuable context for the movie’s plot and main characters.

**Research Design**

The nature of the action research methodology adopted during the pilot phase, described in chapter 3, lends itself to a continual *process-improvement* and *process-assessment* method of evaluation (Chen, 1996). As part of the continual reflective cycles, the AR altered his approach to implementing components based on new experiences and knowledge from delivering the intervention to different populations. The intervention implementation outlined in the current chapter also adopted an action research approach to align with the learning process of the AR. However, in measuring intervention effectiveness, an *outcome-improvement* method of evaluation was also employed (Chen, 1996). Therefore, a greater emphasis is placed upon providing a summative evaluation whilst continuing aspects of a formative evaluation to align with the learning cycles in action research (Clarke, 1999).

Due to the challenges of working within an applied setting, it was not possible to adopt an experimental (or even quasi-experimental) design to test the effectiveness of the intervention with the inclusion of a control group. As a result, the pre-experimental design unfolded and aligned with the action research approach of enabling continual development of the programme (Clarke, 1999). However, due to a lack of control group, the capacity to attribute changes in behaviour as a result of intervention participation is limited (Robson,
In an effort to establish a rigorous design that enables a degree of external validity whilst providing an in-depth understanding of intervention implementation and effectiveness, a data triangulation approach was adopted (Patton, 2002). Therefore, a mixed methods design was employed, incorporating quantitative and qualitative measures.

**Using a mixed methods approach.**

The reliance on using either qualitative or quantitative measures to evaluate programme effectiveness has plagued the life skills literature to date. Due to a number of potential factors, such as paradigm conflict, financial burden, and logistical/time challenges, there has been a reluctance to utilise mixed methods inquiry (Brannen, 2004). This is surprising given its widespread use within wider social sciences research (Maxwell, 2015; Waysman & Savaya, 1997).

The conflict of evaluation paradigms between those adopting a postpositivist approach and those aligned with an interpretivist or constructionist paradigm, can be challenging for a researcher (Patton, 2002). The deductive approach in testing pre-determined hypotheses is particularly demanding within social sciences and to a greater extent life skills research, due to complex contextual interactions and social influences (Brannen, 2004). The lack of validated quantitative measures of life skill learning, and more importantly transfer, presents a challenge in adopting a purely deductive approach (Gould & Carson, 2008). With limited conceptual frameworks to provide a foundation for life skills research, researchers adopt more inductive approaches to explore the phenomenon from a naturalist or constructivist stance (see Hayden et al., 2015; Jones & Lavallee, 2009). The breadth of such qualitative exploratory designs has provided a vital resource for intervention design and implementation (Jones, 2012). However, the challenges in designing an effective individualised intervention that is both flexible and able to be generalised still remain. Therefore, in pairing two distinctly different, yet complimentary methods, the evaluation
paradigm should be carefully considered whilst taking the aims of the programme of research and philosophical assumptions into account (Patton, 2002).

**A critical realist stance to programme evaluation.**

The conflicting philosophical assumptions between those adopting quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry, presents a significant challenge when conducting evaluation research (Kelly, 2004). Providing an evaluation of a lab-based experimental procedure is inherently different to that of evaluating an educational programme for adolescents. The assessment of real-world uncontrollable variables, the associated challenges, and organisational demands requires a unique approach that examines what works within a given context (Clarke, 1999).

Critical realism, according to Maxwell and Pittali (2010), provides a combined approach that includes a realist view of reality whereby “there is a real world that exists independently of our perceptions, theories, and constructions” (p. 145), whilst supporting a constructivist epistemology. Within this view of the world, our knowledge is built or constructed from our individual experiences and social interactions (Christ, 2014). Therefore, in relation to programme evaluation, taking a critical realist stance assumes that experiences and realities will differ between programme staff and participants, neither of which is more ‘true’ (Patton, 2002). It rejects the objectivist view of a single unified truth and instead recognises that there are multiple perspectives, which are influenced by the interaction between our social contexts and beliefs (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010). However, the concoction of mixing methods to evaluate a programme, involving an internal evaluator, whilst incorporating an action research approach, provides a unique proposition towards inductive and deductive reasoning, having never been reported in previous literature. Whilst the intervention is being objectively evaluated, the use of an internal evaluator within action research means alterations and ‘actions’ can be made as a result of the evaluation. In
comparison, if an external evaluator was utilised, limited changes could be made due to the lack of involvement in the intervention implementation (Clarke, 1999), ultimately reducing rigour.

*A naturalistic approach to deduction.*

In the natural sciences it is common practice to form a conclusion or hypothesis based on logic or empirical evidence. A hypothesis is then tested, producing a deductive approach (Robson, 2002). Such a ‘top-down’ approach is difficult to implement within complex social interventions due to the changing landscape of individual-context interactions (Patton, 2002). As a result, an inductive, naturalistic approach is often more suited to exploratory research designs, where theory unfolds as a result of the process (Seale, 2004).

When carrying out process and outcome-oriented programme evaluation, adopting an inductive or deductive approach can be challenging (Robson, 2002). Rather than following a single approach, Patton (2002) suggested that an evaluator may slide along a continuum based on his/her current position within the evaluation procedure. Therefore, in taking an inductive approach, an evaluator could be exploring the natural unfolding of programme implementation, conducting process-improvement evaluation through reflective practice and engaging with participants (Petitpas et al., 2005). Once information has been gathered, changes might be made towards the programme implementation based on evaluator findings. A deductive approach may then be adopted in order to test the programme changes made based on the process evaluation. For example, a specific task may have been unsuccessful with individuals with learning difficulties. As a result of continually alternating between these two approaches, it is the responsibility of the evaluator to ensure they are aware of the potential overlap and interaction, especially when mixing methods of evaluation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This is to ensure the clarity in evaluation method, as potential overlap can occur between improvement forms (i.e., process-improvement, outcome-improvement) and
assessment forms of evaluation (i.e., process-assessment, outcome-assessment; Chen, 1996). This can in turn present issues with interpreting the results from a programme evaluation (Clarke, 1999).

In relation to the programme evaluation outlined in the current chapter, the AR did not view inductive and deductive reasoning as two separate entities but instead as a form of continuum, proposed by Patton (2002). To complement the action research approach within the pilot phase, a primarily inductive approach was adopted due to the exploratory nature. However, following the pilot phase, the aims of the current chapter are to test the intervention in its current post-pilot form, resulting in a deductive approach. Nonetheless, the intervention is constantly developing and changing as it is implemented with different populations. Therefore, the word ‘primarily’ is used loosely in both contexts to reflect the potential sliding along the continuum of inductive and deductive reasoning.

The mixed methods design of the intervention evaluation has been outlined to provide the reader with an understanding of the formative and summative components of assessment. Before continuing onto the procedure adopted for each of the four interventions, details relating to the health and fitness content will be discussed. The intervention incorporates aspects of physiology and psychology; however, the reader should consider it to adopt an inter-disciplinary approach rather than multi-method design, for reasons outlined below. Introducing content on nutrition, healthy lifestyles, and the importance of physical activity within P2, the specific measures used to assess physical fitness levels and body composition will now be discussed alongside the rationale for their use.

Measuring Physical Fitness and Body Composition

Inherent within the ethos of sport, monitoring the health and wellbeing of adolescents is a crucial aspect in developing life skills, supporting a lasting healthy and active lifestyle
In reviewing the physical fitness assessment literature in youth, Ortega et al. (2008) concluded that physical fitness was a critical marker of health. Specifically, they summarised that cardiorespiratory fitness levels, skeletal health, as well as muscular fitness, have been shown to be associated with cardiovascular disease risk factors. In addition, developing cardiorespiratory fitness is associated to positive effects on mental health (DiLorenzo et al., 1999). Whilst Hillman, Castelli, and Buck (2005), demonstrated a link between overall physical fitness and cognitive performance outcomes (when assessed via a battery of fitness tests from Fitnessgram®), including: working memory, attention, and cognitive processing speed. Based on the growing body of evidence that demonstrates an association between physical fitness and health, the additional dimension of including fitness testing within this programme of research provides descriptive information on the participants involved within the life skills intervention.

Indeed, Gould and Carson (2008) highlighted the need to move away from a single-method approach in order to develop our understanding of life skill development to support young people. Therefore, the rationale to include educational content on leading a healthy lifestyle and building resiliency towards un-healthy choices, provided context for the health and fitness measurements. Targeting skill development from a dual psycho-physiological approach also provided flexibility in the programme delivery, further supporting its application (Nathan et al., 2010). For example, to align with school curricula, completing health and fitness measurements supported a dual function, as some teachers requested such content to be delivered as part of their course requirements.

Physical fitness and body composition was measured using a battery of field-based tests outlined in Chapter 3. In selecting the tests, sufficient criterion-related validity was important in order to provide an accurate representation of physical fitness in the absence of ‘gold standard’ laboratory-based testing. Therefore, the tests were selected based on their
capability to be carried out within the context of a golf club, as well as the existing evidence of their validity.

Adopting a cross-sectional approach towards evaluating participants’ physical fitness and body composition does not demonstrate change over time or as a result of intervention participation. Based on the rationale to include health and well-being content within the intervention, adopting an inter-disciplinary approach allows results to be compared to normative data for the field-based tests. All tests administered are characterised as field-based and due to the findings from the pilot interventions, their practicality was confirmed. The validity of the tests is critiqued below.

**Body composition.**

**Body Mass Index.**

In the absence of more accurate measures such as dual energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) to measure body fat percentage, measuring BMI is an appropriate field-based measurement to ascertain an approximate obesity status (Cole, Flegal, Nicholls, & Jackson, 2007; Moreno et al., 2006). Due to physical development during adolescence, adult BMI classifications are not suitable. Therefore, cut-offs to define ‘thinness’ for children and adolescents under the age of 18 has been defined by Cole et al. (2007) and will be used in the analysis of BMI.

Height was measured via a stadiometer with participants’ shoes taken off. Weight was measured using a digital scale and participants were requested to remove heavy clothing (i.e., jackets and shoes). BMI was then subsequently measured using the equation, weight/height².

**Waist circumference.**

Central abdominal fat has been shown to be associated to CVD risk factors, type II diabetes (Kuk et al., 2006), as well as cardiorespiratory fitness (Ortega et al., 2007). Waist
circumference has been identified as a strong predictor of intra-abdominal adipose tissue (Goran, Gower, Treuth, & Nagy, 1998) and can be used as a measure of central adiposity (Fernández, Redden, Petrobelli, & Allison, 2004; Taylor, Jones, & Williams, 2000). The waist-to-hip ratio is also commonly used as an alternative measurement of central adiposity. However, due to its limited evidence as a valid measure of intra-abdominal adipose tissue (Castro-Piñero et al., 2010; Goran et al., 1998), waist circumference was included within the battery of tests. Waist circumference was measured using a tape measure between the iliac crest and the rib cage with participants wearing t-shirts.

**Fitness tests.**

**Hand-grip strength.**

To measure maximal isometric strength (musculoskeletal fitness), the hand-grip strength test shows strong criterion-related validity (España-Romero et al., 2010). In measuring musculoskeletal fitness, others tests include measures of upper body strength, such as the bent-arm hand, pull-up, and push-up, as well as lower body strength, including the standing broad jump and vertical jump. However, the hand-grip strength test shows stronger evidence of measuring musculoskeletal fitness (Castro-Piñero et al., 2010). Furthermore, its simplicity as a field-based test makes it ideal to utilise within the confines of the golf club. Unlike other measures of musculoskeletal fitness (e.g., bent-arm hang), no further equipment other than a dynamometer is required. In this programme of research, a TKK digital dynamometer was used, which has an adjustable hand-span function, crucial for varying hand sizes within adolescents (España-Romero et al., 2010).

**1-mile run/walk.**

The 1-mile run/walk is used as a measure of aerobic capacity and an estimate of VO$_{2\text{MAX}}$. Additional field-based tests include the 20m shuttle run test (SRT) and ½-mile
run/walk test. The 20m SRT shows the strongest predictor of VO\textsubscript{2MAX} in measuring cardiorespiratory fitness (Castro-Piñero et al., 2010). Nonetheless, the criterion-related validity of the 1-mile run/walk test has been well documented (Bianco et al., 2015; Castro-Piñero, Mora, Gonzalez-Montesinos, Sjöström, & Ruiz, 2009; McSwegin, Plowman, Wolff, & Guttenberg, 1998). The rationale for selecting the 1-mile run/walk test within the battery of tests was based on the confines of the golf club and the available space for testing.

The 1-mile distance was measured around the golf club’s short 5-hole beginners’ course and comprised of 3½ laps. Judgement of suitable pacing during the test has been recognised as a weakness (Castro-Piñero et al., 2010). Therefore, separating the 1-mile distance into smaller sections (3½ laps) provided participants with a suitable pacing reference. Following a warm-up that consisted of light jogging and dynamic stretching, all participants within each intervention were instructed that the test was not a race and should they need, they could slow down to a ‘walk’ pace. Times were measured by the AR using a stopwatch.

**Procedure**

Similar to the pilot phase, each intervention adopted a different procedure that aligned with each institution’s timetable (three secondary schools and one further education college). Although an effort was made to standardise the total delivery time for each intervention, ultimately the implementation had to align with availability of the institution. Due to the slight differences in procedures, each intervention is described below. It is important to highlight that changes were only made to the form in which components were delivered across all four interventions (e.g., less detail of skill content with groups of lower ability), rather than the key components (i.e., six key life skills). All intervention session plans are presented in the appendices (see Appendix 9, Appendix 10, Appendix 11, Appendix 12)
**Intervention 1.**

A total of 14 participants (11 male, 3 female) with a mean age of 14.23 yrs ($SD = 0.73$) took part in Intervention 1 (I1). The group were completing an ASDAN\(^3\) Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE). The intervention was delivered over the course of four consecutive days, which amounted to a total delivery time of 14 hours. Based on findings from the pilot phase, a one-hour taster session was delivered at the participants’ school prior to the intervention. Although the taster session provided vital information on the groups’ capabilities and learning style, a proportion of the intervention participants were not present at the session. Nevertheless, discussions with school staff as part of the taster session provided information on the remaining participants’ needs.

**Intervention 2.**

Due to school summer holidays and limited availability at the start of the academic year, Intervention 2 (I2) was delivered in November, five months after I1. The group consisted of 16 participants (13 male, 3 female) with a mean age of 15.25 yrs ($SD = 0.45$). The intervention group were a class of BTEC Sport students. No taster session was delivered. However, the first session with the group was treated as a preliminary session where very little intervention content was delivered. Instead, the focus of the session was on group tasks and games to provide the intervention facilitators (AR and AIF) with an understanding of participants’ needs and group dynamics.

As a result of organisational constraints and limited availability within the school timetable, I2 was delivered at the school as part of a BTEC Sport course curriculum, rather than the golf club. The intervention was implemented over the course of five months, with a

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\(^3\) ASDAN is a UK-based awarding organisation that offers qualifications within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).
maximum of three hours per month and minimum of one hour per month. Therefore, a total of eleven (one-hour) sessions were delivered at the school. The school had agreed to alter the groups’ timetable for one day to allow them to visit the golf club to provide a more realistic experience. Following the eleventh session, the group attended the golf club for four hours to finalise the intervention.

**Intervention 3.**

Intervention 3 (I3) was delivered to eleven participants (4 male, 7 female). The mean age of participants was 14.55 yrs ($SD = 0.55$). I3 was delivered at the golf club over the course of six days. The six days were separated into two sets of three consecutive days, approximately five weeks apart, with a total delivery time of 24 hours. The group of participants was formed from two separate course classes; ASDAN CoPE class and BTEC Sport class. As a result of the two different course timetables, the participants completing the BTEC Sport course ($n = 5$) were unable to attend the second set of three days, resulting in a delivery time of twelve hours. The remaining participants ($n = 6$) attended all sessions.

Due to the five-week gap between the two intervention delivery periods, a one-hour ‘refresher session’ was arranged for one week prior to the second delivery period. The session took place in school and was designed as a practical workshop with content based on the first three days of delivery.

**Intervention 4.**

Intervention 4 (I4) was delivered to nine participants from a further education college, with a mean age of 17.56 yrs ($SD = 1.13$). The intervention was delivered across five weeks. Four sessions were delivered at the golf club, totalling 16 hours. In addition, a one-hour session was delivered at the college, where participants were based, and consisted of undertaking health and fitness measurements. As part of the participants’ Pre Foundation
level course, a number of additional components were requested by course staff to be included. The components aligned with aspects of the health and fitness content, primarily nutrition and healthy lifestyles.

**Participants**

A total of 50 participants were involved over four interventions (35 male, 25 female), ranging in age from 13-19 years old \( (M = 15.24, SD = 1.35) \). Similar to groups involved in the pilot phase, participants were completing a range of different courses including: BTEC Sport, ASDAN CoPE and Pre Foundation (see Table 8).

**Table 8. Participant information and structure of interventions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Context of participants</th>
<th>No. and time of sessions</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
<th>Age of participants ( M (SD) ) yrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Secondary school ASDAN CoPE pupils</td>
<td>4 x 3.5hrs (14hrs)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.23 (0.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Secondary School BTEC course pupils</td>
<td>11 x 1hr + 1 x 4.5hrs (15.5hrs)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.25 (0.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Secondary school ASDAN CoPE + BTEC course pupils</td>
<td>6 x 4hrs (24hrs)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.55 (0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>College Pre Foundation course pupils</td>
<td>4 x 4hrs + 1 x 1hr (15hrs)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17.56 (1.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.24 (1.35)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All participants were recruited via purposive sampling to ensure the aims of the research programme were met (Bryman, 2012). The AR met with institution staff and discussed the aims of the project. As a result, an arrangement was made as to which groups of students...
within the institution would be most appropriate based on the proposed content, personnel capacities, and student availability.

**Measures**

**Quantitative**

*Adolescent Resilience Questionnaire.*

The Adolescent Resilience Questionnaire (ARQ) measures resilience from an ecological perspective, incorporating questions on community, family, and social groups (Gartland, Bond, Olsson, Buzwell, & Sawyer, 2011). The measure provides a quantitative assessment of an individual’s capacity to utilise both internal and external assets. The lack of resiliency measures for adolescents that approach the concept of resilience from a multi-dimensional perspective, led Gartland and colleagues (2011) to develop the ARQ.

In line with the aims of the current research programme, the ARQ was selected based on its inclusion of multiple domains (individual, family, peers, school, and community). The overall objective of the sport-based life skills programme was to enable adolescents to utilise and transfer resilience-based skills to contexts beyond sport, such as school. Therefore, as the only resilience questionnaire that includes domains such as school and community, the ARQ was the most appropriate measure for the current study.

The ARQ was administered to participants prior to the intervention, as well as 2-3 weeks following completion. As a result of pilot testing the measure in order to determine the suitability for the level of understanding of participants, the measure was completed by all participants. However, during the first intervention (I1), the measure was completed by participants in two sittings. The rationale in doing so was related to the level of concentration of several members of the group. Therefore, all participants completed it within the morning.
of the first intervention day. Each of the two sittings was separated by ice-breaker tasks that did not involve content that may otherwise bias responses.

**Youth Life Skills Scale.**

The Youth Life Skills Scale (YLSS) is a self-report measurement of life skill development and transfer (Cauthen, 2012). The measure used was an amended version of the 54-item YLSS. The original scale is designed to evaluate life skill learning and transfer based on participation in sport. In order to assess life skill development and transfer based on participation in the intervention, the questions were therefore altered. As an example, a question aimed at assessing problem solving skills would be changed from: ‘My participation in sport has taught me to look at the entire situation when attempting to solve a problem’ to ‘It has taught me to…’ (see Appendix 13), where ‘It’ refers to the intervention.

The scale has limited evidence of validity due to its lack of peer-review. Factor analysis was conducted on the original 289-item measure, resulting in 54 items that encompass six key life skills (problem solving, leadership, time management, goal setting, and managing emotions). The challenges faced in measuring life skill learning and transfer has been well documented (Danish et al., 2005; Gould & Carson, 2008; Petitpas et al., 2005). Therefore, due to the lack of quantitative sport-based measures of life skill development and transfer, it was the most suitable questionnaire to use in evaluating the current intervention outcomes. In addition, the scale measures six skills (problem solving, leadership, time management, goal setting, coping, and communication), which are closely aligned to the intervention content; further supporting its suitability.

All participants completed the Youth Life Skills Scale following the intervention delivery. Due to logistical and organisational issues, primarily access to participants following the intervention, the measure was completed with varying degrees of time post-
intervention. The timings varied from 1-3 weeks after the delivery of the intervention. The YLSS was not administered pre-intervention as it measures skill development and transfer based on an experience (e.g. intervention participation). The original scale was developed to measure life skill learning and transfer based on sport participation (the experience). It was therefore, adapted to be used for the intervention where participation in the intervention acted as the experience, rather than generic sport participation.

**Qualitative.**

**AR reflections.**

In line with the action research approach adopted within the pilot phase, the AR continued to document reflections after each session and completed intervention. The methods in documenting the reflections can be found in Chapter 3: Pilot 1 method. The purpose in doing so was to ensure a thorough process evaluation was completed (Holt et al., 2013). Documented within the AR’s personal reflections, are informal discussions with assistant intervention facilitators (AIF) and staff members from the intervention groups. Unlike the pilot interventions, AIFs supported the implementation and delivery of certain sessions across the four interventions. Their input and experience has been influential in adapting the intervention, therefore, it was deemed appropriate to include the discussions within the subsequent data analysis.

**Participant feedback forms.**

During the final session of each intervention, participants were asked to complete a feedback form (Appendix 4). The purpose of the forms was to guide the process and outcome evaluation of the intervention. Questions relating to the process evaluation were associated to the participants’ experience, exploring what they did and did not enjoy about the sessions, as well as asking if there is anything they would change in the intervention. Forms were
reviewed by the AR following each intervention to gauge participants’ level of understanding. In addition, the feedback forms provided information relating to their enjoyment, allowing the AR to adapt future interventions to incorporate tasks and activities that participants enjoyed. On the other hand, participants’ were asked to provide a brief summary of the content and skills they had learnt as part of the project, which related to the outcomes of the intervention.

**Participant focus groups.**

Two semi-structured focus groups were conducted with participants from two interventions, with ten and eight participants respectively. The focus groups served two purposes. The primary objective was to assess participants’ level of life skill development and transfer, based on the skills developed within the intervention. Secondly, the focus groups provided a participant-perspective outcome evaluation, whereby their experiences of the intervention were documented.

**Focus group procedure.**

The focus groups were conducted at the participants’ institutions with a semi-structured format (Appendix 14) and lasted between 38-44 minutes. Focus groups were recorded using a Dictaphone and video camera. The purpose in using a video camera was to enable sufficient transcription of the group discussions (Krueger & Casey, 2000). After an initial ice-breaker task, the group was split into three smaller groups and tasked with writing down all the skills/activities they remember learning during the intervention. An A1 piece of flip-chart paper was split into two categories: life skills and golf skills. This task served as an initial talking point to partly remind participants of the intervention but also to provide content for subsequent discussions around life skill transfer.
The recommended size for a focus group is approximately 6-8 participants (Krueger & Casey, 2000). This is seen as a suitable size in order to provide the opportunity for all participants to contribute to discussions (Patton, 2002). However, due to the applied nature of the current research, this target was not possible. As a result of involving entire classes within the intervention, the process of conducting a focus group resulted in all participants being present. Although this was unknown to the AR prior to commencing the focus group, a reactive approach led to all participants in the group participating in the focus group (Robson, 2002).

Data Analysis

Quantitative.

Adolescent Resilience Questionnaire.

The ARQ was analysed via a two-way mixed factor analysis of variance (ANOVA), often referred to as a mixed between-within subjects ANOVA (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). As there is a mixture of between subject independent variables (intervention group), and within subject independent variables (time) due to the pre and post-intervention completed measures, a mixed factor ANOVA is the most appropriate statistical analysis for the data (Brymen, 2012). ARQ scores were only included within the analysis if participants had completed both pre and post questionnaires. Therefore, 43 pre and post ARQ measurements were included. The remaining seven data points were not obtained due to participants not being present at the time of data collection.

Youth Life Skills Scale.

A one-way ANOVA was used to assess the variance in YLSS scores between the four interventions. As the YLSS measures life skill learning based on an experience (e.g., participating in an intervention), the measure was only administered post-intervention.
Therefore, a one-way ANOVA is appropriate to determine whether there are statistical differences between the self-reported YLSS scores across the intervention groups (Bryman, 2012). Based on the alternative methods of implementation between all four interventions, using an ANOVA will determine whether certain groups reported higher (or lower) life skill learning and transfer. This will provide supporting evidence to determine whether specific intervention structures are more effective than others in supporting the development of life skills.

**Qualitative.**

*AR reflections.*

In addition to the reflections providing a necessary component towards the intervention process evaluation, an inductive thematic analysis was carried out after all interventions were completed, using QSR NVivo 10. The thematic analysis provided an additional component to the quantitative analysis in conducting an outcome evaluation of the intervention (Clarke, 1999). Similar to the analysis conducted in the pilot phase, themes were constructed based on semantic coding, rather than any underlying meaning (e.g., implementing the Challenge model of resilience). Therefore, the themes outlined in the results section are coded from the content of the group discussions and the AR’s reflections.

*Participant feedback forms.*

Feedback forms were used to complement the participant focus groups. As such, analysis of the form contents was aligned to the thematic analysis. Questions within the feedback forms were designed to align with the initial discussions from the focus groups (i.e., understanding participants’ experience of the intervention), as a means of data triangulation in providing a rigorous research design (Brannen, 2004). Therefore, a separate analysis was
not conducted on the feedback forms. Instead, they were considered alongside the analysis of the focus groups.

**Participant focus groups.**

Focus groups were transcribed via QSR NVivo 10. Once data was transcribed, an inductive thematic analysis was conducted in order to provide themes based on the participant responses (Massy, 2011). The analysis provided further contribution towards the outcome evaluation from the intervention. The structure of the questioning was based on three main discussions: (1) participants’ experience of the project, (2) life skill learning and transfer, and (3) coping with challenges. Although participants’ responses were guided somewhat by the semi-structured questioning (Appendix 14), there were no set themes that were targeted (e.g., problem solving) and participants were instructed that they were free to discuss any aspects of the intervention. The purpose in doing so was to ensure participants’ responses were un-biased towards specific skills taught on the programme. This would hopefully highlight what skills resonated most with the participants.

Unfortunately during one of the focus groups, the fire alarm went off during the first discussion section. As a result, the final discussion section (3) was unable to be completed due to their following lessons. Therefore, the responses from ‘Discussion 3’ presented in the focus group results section, are only from one focus group. No further data collection was possible, as it was the students’ final week attending their course.

**Results**

The following will be separated into two sections, to report the quantitative and qualitative results. The components of the outcome evaluation (ARQ, YLSS, participant focus groups and participant feedback forms) will be presented together (as one intervention), whereas, the formative evaluation methods (AR reflections) will be presented separately as
individual interventions. The rationale in separating the results of the AR reflections is to support the action research approach and provide the reader with details on continual implementation changes over the course of delivering four interventions.

**Quantitative Findings**

The results from the ARQ will be outlined, followed by the YLSS. Before moving on to the qualitative findings, physical fitness test results will be provided alongside normative data.

**Adolescent Resilience Questionnaire.**

A two-way mixed factor ANOVA was conducted to assess the between subject variable of intervention (four interventions) as well as the within subject variable of time (pre and post intervention). In addition to the difference in scores before and after the intervention was delivered, in line with the aims of the research, potential differences across the interventions was sought, as all were delivered in different formats (e.g. three consecutive days or spread over several months).

There was no significant interaction between the interventions and time, $F (3, 39) = 0.877, p = 0.46, \eta_p^2 = .063$. Furthermore, there was no main effect for ARQ scores across time, $F (3, 39) = 0.149, p = 0.701, \eta_p^2 = 0.004$. With regards to the between-subject effect, there was no significant difference between the four interventions, $F (3, 39) = 0.711, p = 0.551, \eta_p^2 = 0.052$, which suggests the different intervention delivery formats used had no effect on resilience trends. However, ARQ scores within intervention 1 and 4 both increased, suggesting practical significance which will be explored further within the qualitative findings. It is important to recognise that participant numbers across all interventions was small, which could have an impact on the statistical significance of results.
Figure 5. Mean pre and post-intervention ARQ scores

Youth Life Skills Scale.

To determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in YLSS scores across the four interventions, a one-way between-groups ANOVA was conducted. There was no statistically significant difference in YLSS scores across the interventions, $F(3, 37) = 2.067, p = 0.121$. Figure 6 illustrates the mean YLSS scores across all four interventions. As there was no pre-intervention measurement, the YLSS scores presented below highlight scores in comparison to the likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = about 50/50, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). Therefore, the maximum score over the 54 questions would be 270 (if scoring 5 on all questions). The results suggest there was a moderate level of life skill learning across all four interventions (i.e., between 3 and 4 on the likert scale), with the highest being within intervention 4.
Figure 6. Mean YLSS scores

**Body composition and physical fitness tests.**

The following section will detail results from the body composition and fitness tests: BMI, waist circumference, 1-mile run/walk, and hand-grip strength. All results will be illustrated in reference to normative data due to the cross-sectional nature of testing. As such, the testing was used as a descriptive marker of health to determine the general fitness level of participants.

**BMI.**

Table 9 displays the mean BMI scores across all four interventions. Normative data is provided from Cole et al. (2007), where a BMI score would correspond to 25 kg/m$^2$ for ‘overweight’ and 30kg/m$^2$ for ‘obese’ at the age of 18. Therefore, cut-offs are provided by Cole et al. (2007), aligned with centile curves for each age group and gender. Where
participants have been classed as ‘normal’ this represents all BMI scores <25kg/m². In summary, 60% of participants who completed the BMI test were either overweight or obese.

Table 9. Mean BMI scores.

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<tr>
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Table 10 shows waist circumferences when compared to normative data from European-American adolescents presented by Fernadez, Redden, Pietrobelli, & Allison (2004). The results from table demonstrate that 74% of participants were classified within the 75th percentile of above. It should be noted that all participants from Intervention 4 did not complete waist circumference measurements. During testing, the initial few participants did not want to complete the waist circumference measurement. Consequently, the remaining participants also did not want to complete the test if prior participants had not done so.
Table 10. *Waist circumference categorised in to four percentile brackets*

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<td>5</td>
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**1-mile run/walk to measure cardiorespiratory fitness.**

The 1-mile run/walk test was used in order to estimate VO$_{2\text{MAX}}$ to measure cardiorespiratory fitness. Healthy Fitness Zone (HFZ) classifications were used in line with Welk, Laurson, Eisenmann, and Cureton (2011). VO$_{2\text{MAX}}$ was estimated using the prediction equation (Cureton, Sloniger, O’Bannon, Black, & McCormack, 1995) that includes age, gender and BMI. The Cooper Institute established the Fitnessgram® battery of tests to determine a ‘Healthy Fitness Zone’ within youth (Meredith & Welk, 2007). Based on using Cureton et al. (1995) equation within the Fitnessgram® recommendations, 1-mile run/walk times beyond 13 minutes are considered unclassified. Therefore, the results in Table 11 demonstrate that of the 20 participants who completed the test, 60% were either unclassified or outside of the HFZ.
Table 11. *Estimated VO2 in comparison to the Healthy Fitness Zone per age group.*

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<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
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</table>

| Health Fitness Zone – VO2MAX (mL/kg/min) | 41.4 | 39.7 | 42.5 | 39.4 | 43.6 | 39.4 | 44.1 | 38.9 | 44.2 | 38.8 | 44.3 | 38.6 | 44.3 | 38.6 |

| N ≥ HFZ | 5 | 1 | 2 |
| N < HFZ | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Unclassified (>13mins) | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 |

*Grip strength to measure musculoskeletal strength.*

Grip strength was measured using a dynamometer and results are presented in Table 12. Normative data from Ortega et al. (2011) is used as a comparison to represent percentile categories (25th–90th). Results from the test show that 37% (N = 14) are below the 25th percentile, whilst 45% are within the mid-range percentiles (25th-75th).
Table 12. Hand-grip strength measurements categorised into five percentile groups based on normative data from Ortega et al. (2011).

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<td>25-50th</td>
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<td>76-90th</td>
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Qualitative Findings

Participant focus groups.

As part of the outcome evaluation, a content analysis was conducted in order to identify participants’ thoughts towards the intervention implementation and skills developed as a result. Therefore, the themes represented below are based on the semantic representation of content, rather than any underlying meaning (Patton, 2002). The themes are broadly aligned with the semi-structured questioning (Appendix 14). Therefore, they are separated into three sections, representing the three main ‘discussions’: thoughts on the intervention, life skill learning and transfer, and coping with challenges. To highlight the interactions between group members, as part of the focus group, short discussions will be referenced alongside individual quotes (Macnaghten & Myers, 2004). The following section will report
results from the practical task before introducing the ‘discussions’ to provide the reader with an idea of the content that fuelled subsequent questioning.

*Engaging participants in practical tasks.*

In order to gauge their general understanding and memory of the intervention, at the beginning of the focus group, participants were divided into two smaller groups and provided with a single sheet of flip-chart paper. The sheet was divided into two parts: golf skills and life skills. Groups were tasked with recalling the skills they had developed during their participation in the intervention (see Figure 7 and Figure 8). The initial practical task provided an ideal topic for discussion later in the focus group. Photographs were taken of participants’ responses and are provided below.

The content represented in Figure 7 and Figure 8 (below) demonstrates participants’ general recall of the intervention whilst highlighting some of the major skills and techniques they associated to. Both groups were able to recognise the golf-specific techniques, such as: putting, chipping, stance, and grip. Similarly, both groups recalled some of the life skills taught as part of the intervention, including: problem solving, goal setting, communication skills, and teamwork. In addition to the skills that were directly targeted within the intervention, participants also commented on additional skills they felt they had learnt, such as: safety and adhering to rules.
Figure 7. Focus Group 1 – participant task

Figure 8. Focus Group 2 – participant task
**Discussion 1: Participants’ experience in the project.**

To ease participants into the questioning, initial discussions focused around their overall perceptions and experience of the intervention. In order to do so, a non-threatening environment was crucial in order to allow participants to feel comfortable in expressing their honest opinions and thoughts towards the intervention (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Although other staff members were present and active during the focus group, it was important participants understood they were able to speak freely about their involvement and that there were no right or wrong answers. Initial questioning focussed on what they did and did not enjoy about the project.

*Enjoyment.*

Being the first question, participants were slightly hesitant to begin, however, once one participant spoke, others began to join in and the discussion snowballed. When asked about what they enjoyed about the project, participants’ responses varied significantly from: ‘you get free food’ to ‘I liked how we were learning different things. Like one week we couldn’t do it [skill] and then the next week we were listening and taking it in … and we were like getting better’. Some participants commented on the specific golf tasks such as, ‘learning about driving and chipping’ and the new experience of playing golf, as one participant commented: ‘I think just finding out how relaxing golf is’. Whereas other participants made reference to the non-golf team-building tasks: ‘I liked doing the work inside… like trying to make a tower and stuff out of paper… it was really good’.

Overall participants enjoyed the golf activities and the practical team challenges indoors. In responding to what they did not enjoy about the project on the feedback forms, some participants left it blank, whilst others wrote: ‘there is nothing I didn’t like or enjoy’. However, some reported that they did not enjoy the written work within the feedback forms.
Within the focus groups, participants commented on adapting the structure of the written work to avoid moving between practical and written tasks frequently:

Like we were getting all in to it and then we would like stop and go do written work...

I know that you have to do it… like, you could say... start in the morning with the writing and then just hit the balls afterwards.

In response to this suggestion, another participant commented: ‘Or… do that all day and then at the end of the day just chill out in the class and do the work… that would be better’.

In addition to the structure of the intervention, where challenges were mixed with writing and practical tasks, participants also reported several other aspects of the programme that they did not enjoy. When discussing what changes they would suggest to make to the intervention, participants reported they did not enjoy having to wait for others to hit several balls before they had a turn: ‘Waiting… having to wait for people and things… like having to wait for people to hit the ball’. Also, there were several comments about the weather throughout all discussions. Although participants, by and large, recognised that we obviously have no influence on weather conditions, it presented an opportunity to discuss what time of the year the intervention should be delivered, as one participant commented: ‘at the end of the [academic] year…because it would be warmer’. The journey from participants’ institutions to the golf club was also recognised as a dislike: ‘the trip up to the place was a long journey… it was long but it was a laugh’. The journey time from both focus group institutions to the golf club is approximately 50 minutes. When the AR suggested a potential closer golf club to use, another participant commented: ‘then we would have spent more time there’.

Once we had discussed aspects of the intervention they did and did not enjoy, the final questions in the first discussion section were focused on their expectations of the project and the comparison from school/college. Participants commented on the freedom and
independence in the intervention, as well as the emphasis on practical activities: ‘It was the fact that we weren’t stuck in class all day and it was more active and talking rather than sitting down writing’. Similarly, participants compared the project to their normal school curriculum: ‘well it was different subjects to what we learn at school… different activities and we’ve never learnt to play golf’.

Across both focus groups, participants referred back to the initial task (Figure 7 and Figure ) and to the practical skills and challenges they completed as part of the intervention; this being a key contrast to school/college classroom-based activities. Due to spending the vast majority of their learning within a school environment, they also anticipated the intervention to involve more written tasks and be similar to what they currently experience:

AR: Ok, next thing… was it what you expected from the project?
P1: No! I thought it was going to be really boring but it wasn’t.
P2: I thought it was going to be, like, lots of written work and then… just a tiny bit of golf, but it was different… I didn’t expect it like that.
P3: It was in a good way
P2: Everyone judges things like that.
Staff member: Yes, absolutely! But it was better than you thought?
P2: Yes! Yeh, 10 times better.

Discussion 2: Life skill learning and transfer.

After a short break to distribute refreshments, participants were asked to review the notes they had made on the flip-chart paper to inform the following discussions (see Figure 7 and Figure ). Initially, participants were asked to comment on other contexts where the life skills they had learnt on the project could be utilised. Most participants provided short one word/phrase answers and required probing on specific details. They were able to identify the
key skills, which were targeted within the intervention and identify potential transfer to school or college:

P1: Problem Solving
P2: Teamwork
P3: Communication
P4: Setting small goals for yourself
P2: Not to achieve over your... like set realistic targets... not too high
P5: Negotiation skills and working under pressure
P3: Yeh, ‘cos when you first told us you can use golf skills out of golf and life skills... I was like ‘shut up, what's he on about’. Now I know what you mean now. I don't think you are so crazy now.

Responses on the feedback forms were less aligned to specific skills and instead highlighted certain tasks: ‘how to lead a session, how to communicate with others, how to control a group, how to work with others better’.

*Life skill transfer.*

Once participants had identified potential contexts where they could transfer skills to (college/school, part-time employment, work experience, family environment), the following questions focused on whether they had actually used the skills in such contexts. Again, in general, participants were reluctant to provide detail until they were questioned. One participant made reference to problem solving within the family environment: ‘Definitely problem solving with family. So when me and my sister are arguing as usual… finding a way of getting out of it or just making sure that they don’t turn their argument towards me’. Another participant commented on goal setting: ‘In school, so you’ve got to do your homework and setting goals that you can reach. Then solve the problems in tasks that you are set in class’.
The participants from one focus group had recently been on work experience placements, which the staff member in attendance brought up as we were discussing the transfer of skills. One participant commented on communication skills during his placement: ‘Yes, teamwork. Also listening skills, like the farmer would give me a task to do and I have to make sure I listened to the correct instructions so I didn’t get it wrong’. Another participant commented on problem solving: ‘Yeh… and S.T.A.R. when thinking about problems in the salon, having to stop and think about the consequences and actions’.

As a final question within the second discussion section, participants were asked if they could select one thing they have taken from the intervention that they have found beneficial in other contexts. Some participants made reference to specific tasks and challenges, whereas others were able to identify certain skills, such as problem solving, leadership, communication and aspects of social support:

P1: How to encourage other people… ’cos like, when some people don’t hit it right… you would say ‘unlucky, but try again’.

P2: Learning on the range

P3: You know when we were on the grass and you had to like show people… and they had the [blindfold] around their head…

P4: Yeh, I liked that… learning how to communicate.

In both focus groups, participants were able to recall specific tasks with reference to the skills they were targeting. Often, when one person would start describing a task, other participants would contribute and comment on the skills they found useful or had developed within the task. At times, the different responses provided enough depth to fuel the discussions. However, the majority of the time, participants required additional probing and further questions in order to elaborate on the responses. This was primarily done by the additional staff members, as they were keen to ensure participants were discussing their experiences of the project: ‘Ok, so all of those skills that you have listed that you could use in college... do
you think you have used any of them based on what you have learnt from the project’. After a few seconds to consider their answers, a few participants gave one word responses of, ‘yes’. The AR then probed further by rephrasing the question: ‘...so any of the skills that you have learnt on the project... have you actually used any in college?’ Although this was a section of the focus group that participants struggled to respond to, similar to earlier discussions, once one participant began speaking, others joined in.

**Discussion 3: Coping with challenges.**

Before commencing the final discussion section, participants were shown a video of their participation in the intervention. The video clip, approximately two minutes long included photos and short clips of the group playing golf and completing challenges. The aim in creating the video clip was to provide participants with a ‘snapshot’ of their time at the golf club. The break between the second and third discussion provided an ideal opportunity to show the clip, as we had already covered the skill learning and recall elements to the focus group.

The final discussion section started with participants discussing some of the tasks and challenges they were set throughout the course of the intervention. Once participants had discussed and reminisced about numerous activities they had completed during the intervention, they were asked what challenges they had faced recently and whether the newly developed skills had supported them overcome such challenges. Participants struggled to identify challenges they had recently faced. The staff members in attendance prompted them and commented on a recent presentation they had to do for an assignment. Participants commented on the difficulties they experienced when being put under a pressurised situation with their peers: ‘that was scary’ and ‘I don’t like presenting in front of others like that’. Earlier in the focus group, one participant made a comment regarding having to perform a golf task in front of others: ‘I have to admit one of the challenges was trying to hit a ball with
people watching... to be honest I wasn't enjoying that part’. Referring back to this comment when discussing challenges enabled participants to understand the connection made between facing a similar challenge under pressure. Participants commented on how they approached such challenges and why they did not give up:

P1: If you’ve got a target that you are aiming for and you are trying to get it, and its realistic enough, then you keep practicing and you don’t give up and then you finally get it... because practice makes perfect!

P2: Then I don’t stop believing in myself

P3: The thought of being on the dole!

P1: I just don’t stop believing…

P4: Erm… just being brave in yourself

Reflection.

Finally, participants were questioned whether the ability to reflect had supported their learning or assisted them in overcoming challenges. Questions involving reflection as a skill were linked to the ‘resilience reflection’ sections of the booklet. Due to the constant involvement in reviewing and evaluating each task during the intervention, participants were well aware of the reflective elements:

AR: So, the last question of the session... you've be really good so far... in the booklets, you had to reflect at the end of each day. Ok, so you had to think about what you learnt…

P1: Like setting your target for next time?

AR: Yes, exactly [P1]... you then set your target for next time. Based on having to do that every single day and every single time, having to reflect and think back to the stuff you had learnt... would you say you now reflect more?

P2: Yes.

P1: Yeh.

P3: Yes.

P4: Yep.

AR: How?
Reflecting on one's action I've noticed.

Ok, good.

So you know not to do something ever again.

Yeh, you think about the better way of doing things... and you try to push yourself to do those things.

Don't assume something is shit... because it could be good.

Although the level of contribution from individuals varied across the two focus groups, all participants contributed to discussions. However, the majority of participants were able to identify the skills they had developed during the intervention, whether through the focus groups or feedback forms; both those targeted by the AR, as well as indirectly taught skills. Participants were able to identify some contexts and specific scenarios where they had transferred and utilised various skills but struggled to provide specific details. At certain points where participants were unable to identify the transfer of life skills, staff members prompted the group on recent assignments or tasks in college/school.

**Process evaluation: AR reflections.**

The following section will provide a reflective account of the AR’s experiences in delivering the four interventions. The purpose in doing so is to provide a process evaluation of the intervention implementation and continued action research approach. Similar to the pilot phase, the intervention was changed and ‘tweaked’ as a result of the AR’s experiences in delivery. In line with previous research by Hawe et al. (2008) and Nathan et al. (2010), the components of the intervention were not altered but instead the form they adopted was adapted according to the participants’ ability and learning style. The components in the current intervention consisted of the following:

- Six core life skills: problem solving, goals setting, communication, managing emotions, social support, and reflection;
- Promote resilience via the Challenge model (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005);
• Provide an autonomy supportive learning environment.

The process evaluation detailed below predominantly took the form of process-assessment method of evaluation (Chen, 1996). Therefore, reflections were based on whether or not the programme was improving life skill development and transfer in order to determine its success, from the AR’s perspective. As a result, informal discussions with staff members are included in order to provide an element of quality in ascertaining whether or not they had witnessed a change in the participants’ behaviour. Furthermore, discussions with AIFs provided an additional element of triangulation and subsequently resulted in changes to intervention based on their experience in supporting its delivery. Pseudonyms are used within the reflections to ensure staff members’ identity remains confidential, whilst participants are represented by intervention and male/female classifications (e.g., I1M1 = intervention one, male participant one).

Similar to the reflections outlined within the pilot phase, the following section will be written in the first person. As the evaluator (internal) was also the intervention facilitator as well as the researcher, the first person perspective should hopefully provide the reader with a unique account of battling objectivity with subjectivity whilst continually sliding along the inductive-deductive continuum.

**Intervention 1.**

I had time to prepare for the new intervention and although I wanted to test out new ideas based on my experiences from the pilot phase, such as more integrated skill learning with golf, rather than separate ‘teaching’ segments. However, I was conscious of remaining consistent with the message of resilience I was providing. I had to ensure the resilience theme was maintained and the Challenge model was incorporated throughout all aspects of the intervention. Having delivered the taster session a few weeks back, I had reflected on each individual within the group and tried to anticipate their level of understanding towards
learning the skills. Waiting in the clubhouse with everything prepared, I was no longer nervous, unlike the pilot interventions. I felt confident and well prepared for the session ahead; I had to be due to the schedule over the next four days.

The first session went well and surprisingly smooth, with no issues with behaviour or disengagement. The ability level of the group was quite low with basic literacy skills. There was one participant who had Down’s syndrome, of whom I was unaware of prior to the first sessions, as she did not attend the taster session. Although it did not faze me, I still questioned myself and my ability towards being able to interact with her and adapt tasks towards her needs. A brief discussion with the three staff members during the morning break allowed me to gain further information regarding the ability level of the group. I was told that a few participants had mild learning difficulties and one had some difficulties with attention span. By this point, I was not surprised as I had prepared for a low ability group and had experience from the pilot interventions. However, from speaking with the staff members it seemed that although they were a low ability group, the context of learning within a golf club setting had an impact on their engagement and level of application towards learning. A change in environment represented a novel learning experience in comparison to the everyday context of school.

*Contextual impact on participant engagement levels.*

During the lunch break on the third day of the intervention, the staff members commented on the change in behaviour of several participants in comparison to their normal school classes. They were shocked by the level of engagement and application of the students. Although they recognised that golf is more exciting for them than most of their regular classes, some commented on the participants’ application towards learning and willingness to contribute to group discussions:
Tom: Such a difference when they are here compared to class eh?

Rebecca: I know, it's like they are on a different planet!

AR: What are they like at school?

Tom: They just don't listen and they switch off if they can't do a task

Christie: Especially you know who [I1M1]… when he can't do something there is usually a tantrum…

Rebecca: I mean… they are loving this [intervention], they were saying on the bus back yesterday and talking about the coaching task you did with them… I get it… being out here when the weather is nice is so much better than being stuck in a classroom… but if they are learning out here, then what's the difference?

AR: It's often the way… with the previous groups I've had, the teachers usually comment on that.

Tom: Have they been good… the other groups?

AR: Yeh, I mean… this group is a bit more challenging with the likes of you know who [referring to I1M1], and also some of the others with their ability levels but they've been great really.

The discussion then continued about several participants and how the staff members usually deal with low attention span and behavioural problems, particularly with I1M1. On several occasions, I1M1 was pesterling me to either do something before any of the others (e.g., hit a golf ball on the range) or to start using the driver club on the driving range. We discussed his level of learning and low attention span. By the third day of the intervention, I felt as if I had a reasonable understanding of his personality traits and how to deal with him when he didn’t want to do a task that was set or he wanted to be at the centre of the group:

[I1M1] today was quite a handful. Although saying that, I think he is definitely improving. Once he knew the rules and expectation of the intervention, he respected them and the boundaries. However, I don’t know how much of an impact I can have on him… thinking about the focus on resilience… today we managed to have a bit of a laugh on promoting a growth mindset. He was complaining that he couldn’t hit
the ball off the ground, most of the time it would just bounce along the grass and not go very far. He kept shouting ‘I can’t do it’. After the first few times he said it, I started adding in ‘yet’ to the end of his shout, saying ‘you can’t do it… yet’. I wanted him to understand that no-one is perfect the first time they hit a golf ball and it takes time to develop through practicing.

During this task on the driving range, one of the teachers made a comment, “he’s exactly the same at school”. In this instance, the different context had little effect on his motivation to continue to try when he would fail. Half way through the task, I discussed the importance of ‘being strong mentally’. I used these terms as very few of the participants had heard of resilience when I introduced the concept on the first day of the intervention. I asked several participants to give examples from school where they had struggled to do a task and decided to give up. Using these examples, as well as discussing I1M1’s frustration towards his golf technique, I was able to introduce them to the skill of controlling emotions. When they understood the connection between the two, I was able to go into more detail around techniques and strategies towards managing their emotions, such as the pre-shot routine.

Process evaluation: ensuring implementation fidelity.

I spent the evening of the second day of the intervention considering whether I had implemented the past two days as I had intended. As a result, my concerns for implementation fidelity centred on the conceptual underpinnings of the Challenge model of resilience. I questioned whether I had emphasised the concept of resilience enough to see changes in their understanding and subsequent transfer of resilience-based skills. As a result of initially including reasonably difficult tasks in order to demonstrate resilience, I felt as if I had ‘lost’ a few participants who struggled to identify a growth mindset. Therefore, as part of the process-assessment evaluation of intervention one (I1), I decided to alter the programme
for the following days of the intervention; a change from process-assessment to process-improvement evaluation (Chen, 1996).

Based on the success of the ‘Apprentice task’ (see Appendix 15) within the pilot phase interventions, I had included it within the schedule for the current intervention. However, based on the process-assessment evaluation, I decided to simplify several components of it. I increased the time for each section of the task, as well as allowing staff members to assist each group throughout every section of the task. In addition, I altered the original plan to begin the third day with a brief recap (ten minutes) on the previous two days. Instead, I felt a thorough review of the ‘challenges’ they had completed was more appropriate. Furthermore, I included a task on ‘how to train to be mentally tough’ in an attempt to explicitly outline the Challenge model of resilience; being exposed to gradually increasing levels of stress in order to develop effective coping strategies (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). Participants and the staff members found it surprisingly fascinating as we discussed training to be able to cope with exam pressure. The task had not been delivered previously, so I was cautious of the exploratory ‘inductive’ approach. Based on the excited response from participants and staff members, it will be included within future interventions but at an earlier stage of the intervention.

Following the final day of the intervention, I was able to adopt a more deductive approach to evaluation, as no more changes were ‘exploratory’ changes were able to made, moving away from inductive reasoning (Creswell et al., 2011). I concluded that my experiences in delivering I1 to a range of ability levels and participants with additional needs, allowed a greater understanding towards its target audience. The age of participants whom I was targeting for the intervention (13-16yrs) had lower levels of understanding towards some of the intervention content. I had naively assumed the content would be appropriate for the
given age group; however, changes had to be made to provide a much more simplistic intervention that still contained the same ethos.

**Changes made for Intervention 2.**

The changes made to I2 based on my experience of delivering to participants of a lower ability (I1), were based around providing less instructions for each tasks and less ‘theory’ content, whilst still maintaining the content based on the six life skills.

1. *Less talking, less writing, more doing*

Within the feedback forms, some participants commented that they did not enjoy the writing parts to the intervention. Short and sharp instructions are needed to move straight into a task, rather than explain the purpose and link to resilience, to ensure participants are kept engaged.

2. *Simplify the theory*

Alter some of the language when referring to ‘resilience’ to incorporate being ‘mentally strong’ and ‘bouncing back from difficult challenges’. Less theory explanation prior to each task and should simply move through the motions of each task, rather than pausing to refer to the aim of the task in reference to the entire intervention.

**Intervention 2.**

The second intervention was delivered within a school environment as part of a BTEC Sport course, over the course of five months. Each of the eleven sessions was one hour long and the intervention was concluded with a four hour visit to the golf club. As a result, the intervention was fragmented and subsequently had an impact on its effectiveness. Therefore, evaluation primarily took the form of a *process-improvement* evaluation (Chen, 1996) due to the novel delivery schedule. I felt very restricted by the delivery context and intervention schedule. Having to adapt to short sessions that ended up being weeks apart provided a
Too many participants, too little time.

Having met the class teacher prior to the intervention, she informed me of the size of the group, their needs and certain students to “keep your eye on”. After the initial meeting I was excited to deliver the intervention within this particular format, keen to explore a more traditional approach, similar to the SUPER (Danish, 2002b) and GOAL programmes (Danish, 2002a). I felt prepared to deliver the intervention within an indoor, sports hall complex, having recently ordered some new training equipment.

Following the first few sessions, I came to realise the difficulties in delivering the intervention to a large group of lively adolescents. Having had an AIF to support me with the first few sessions, she was sorely missed for several weeks when she was unable to attend. The teacher was always in attendance and very supportive, however, she was slightly reluctant to intervene unless absolutely necessary.

The number of participants in the group (16) meant that I was unable to spend as much time with each individual to support the development of golf technique. As a result, at times, participants would become frustrated and on several occasions the AIF asked me to help members of her group who were struggling with specific skills. In addition, the limited equipment stations resulted in participants becoming impatient and misbehaving.

There were certain participants within the group who required more attention than the others. This was primarily due to their behaviour. After several sessions, I was beginning to understand the friendship groups and those who would misbehave when in the same group. I reflected on the difference in challenging behaviour in comparison to I1 and the pilot
interventions. Discussing the issue with the AIF, we concluded the context in which the intervention was being delivered probably had a significant impact on their behaviour:

AR: I guess in their minds… they are in school, it’s simply part of their course.

AIF: Yeh, I mean [teacher] said they are usually much worse than this

AR: We really need to mix things up next week and do something completely different but still incorporate the skills

AIF: Like a different activity? Do you think they’d be like this at the golf club?

AR: If they were there, they’d be in a public space… they would have to behave… in school, they can do what they like.

In order to attempt to keep the participants engaged with the tasks, I decided to use the next session as a means of experimenting with a new activity. With the support of the AIF, we created a fusion of basketball and Quidditch (taken from the Harry Potter movies) where participants had to work as a team whilst there were several objects in play: a basketball, tennis ball, and squash ball. Taking an inductive approach, in experimenting with new tasks, was very effective in keeping the whole group engaged within the activity. We were able to pause the game at specific points in order to incorporate a new object; attempting to simulate increased pressure. Altering the teaching method of problem solving and communication allowed us to concentrate on the aims of fostering resiliency in the participants, rather than ‘fighting fire’ and simply keeping participants on task. Participants had to engage with each due to multiple objects in play. During each ‘pause’, they had a quick ‘team huddle’ to discuss how to alter their tactics and ultimately solve the problems they were facing.

Experimenting with new activities to engage participants provided an ideal opportunity to refocus their energy on the aims of the intervention. However, I found the short sessions difficult in relation to building momentum and typically spent the initial 10-15 minutes of each session reviewing the previous one. The fragmented nature of the
intervention resulted in the teaching the skills in less detail. During the final session of the intervention (full day delivered at the golf club), participants behaviour had dramatically changed and it was a far more productive session. In part due to the extended session length to deliver more detailed tasks but also with being based in an external and unknown environment, there were less incidents of behavioural management.

On the other hand, generous amounts of time between sessions allowed me to set homework tasks based on transferring the skills to other contexts. The homework aided the capacity to introduce life skill transfer week-by-week. Some weeks, I simply asked participants to write down three problems they had to solve during the week and bring the list to the following session to aide discussions and further learning.

**Changes made for Intervention 3.**

Due to the longitudinal structure of I2, the first section (3 days) of intervention three (I3) was delivered whilst I2 was still being delivered. Therefore, changes made to I3 were based on the partial completion and experiences to date from I2. As such, the change to I3 was more aligned to a key reflection, rather than direct alteration of the intervention content. A key learning point from my perspective was to alter tasks based on the needs and personalities of the group. I felt I had become too structured and aligned to the format of the post-pilot intervention. In reality, I was still learning and the intervention was still evolving.

1. **Adapt to the needs of the group**

If something isn’t working with the group, adapt it and change to suit their engagement and learning style. Don’t be afraid to alter tasks in order to engage participants, as long as the skills are being taught in a constructive manner.
Intervention 3.

The reflection from I3 largely consisted of comparisons towards I1 and previous pilot interventions. Due to the similarities in participants’ ability levels, I felt as if the specific tasks and activities within I3 were delivered and received very well, with positive responses from the participant feedback forms. Seeing the beneficial effect of the basketball/Quidditch session in the previous but still on-going (at the time) intervention, I was keen to explore new types of activities in I3. It is important to recognise the main components (i.e., six life skills) of the intervention were not altered, only the form in which they were delivered across certain tasks.

Implementing the Challenge model of resilience.

In previous interventions I recognised the difficulties in incorporating the Challenge model of resilience in a manner that participants understood and enjoyed. Previous attempts evolved around presenting participants with several challenges throughout the course of the intervention with increasing levels of difficulty. Within I3 I based the Challenge model on a television game-show (The Cube) where contestants were required to complete tasks based on fine motor skills, reaction speed, physical coordination, cooperative tasks (e.g., guiding blindfolded team-members), and golf technique. The game-show theme provided a skeleton to deliver the challenges succinctly whilst engaging the participants. Points were awarded for effort and achieving their previously set goals for each task; ensuring realistic goals were set. The aim in doing so was to build a mastery climate that focused on individual and team effort as well as development. Although participants were initially confused by receiving less points for winning the task (in comparison to the other team) than achieving their goals, eventually tasks were viewed as a positive challenge rather than eliciting a coping response.

On several occasions during the post-challenge reflections I felt as if the participants really grasped what I was trying to achieve during the Cube tasks and overall in delivering
the intervention. They were able to identify the benefits in reflecting after each challenge to ensure they learnt from their mistakes and successes. This was the first time across all the interventions that I had delivered where I felt the intervention was being delivered as originally intended. With my perception of increased implementation fidelity, the initial three days of the intervention went very smoothly with minimal disruption, apart from the occasional blizzard. However, participants were more than happy to be outside playing golf in freezing temperatures, demonstrating their obvious engagement in the process.

**Changes made for Intervention 4.**

Based on the positive response from participants in relation to the Cube tasks, they provide a suitable application for the Challenge model of resilience. Although participants’ initial levels of ability (in dealing with the challenges) will still need to be ascertained, implementing the tasks as team-based allows participants’ to rely on their individual and collective strengths.

1. **Implement the Cube tasks**

Implement the Cube tasks as team-based activities from the second day onwards, utilising the first day to gauge participants’ ability levels in dealing with tasks.

**Intervention 4.**

Having met with several members of staff from the college, I was confident I had a reasonable understanding of the participants I was expecting. Keen to incorporate some of the new content from I3, I ensured everything was displayed neatly on the tables for their arrival to the first session. Based on the challenges faced due to the fragmented structure of the on-going I3, I felt very certain that the structure of intervention four (I4) was going to be the ideal format for delivery. However, as I waited for the minibus to arrive at the golf club, I felt slightly anxious, as this was the oldest age group I had worked with.
One intervention, nine individuals.

As I got to know the participants it became apparent that the key to developing the resiliency of the group was to know the individuals in great detail. Each individual within the group had complex needs and some had a unique home/personal life that I was gradually becoming privy to. Although I struggled during the first session to adapt to the needs of certain individuals with learning difficulties and mild autism, I felt as if the intervention was having an effect on the participants’ behaviour. During the lunch break of the third session, the staff members commented on the difference they had witnessed the behaviour of certain individuals during regular college classes. We discussed one participant in particular who had difficulties controlling his emotions and would often hit things in anger. Both staff members commented on the difference in his behaviour whilst at college in comparison to the intervention, as well as the change in his behaviour since starting the intervention:

Gwen: I think the pre-shot routine task this morning was great… with controlling emotions… especially for Luke.
Nicola: What a difference he is here eh?
AR: What’s he normally like at college?
Nicola: If he gets angry, he’ll punch doors… walls… whatever
AR: Why do you think he is different here?
Gwen: I’m not sure, he is much calmer here. He loves the golf, you saw how great he was last time with the coaching task… I’ve never seen him like that before.

It was clear that the intervention was having an effect on I4M1. However, it is difficult to determine whether his change in behaviour can be attributed to his involvement in the intervention. Nonetheless, I hadn’t considered the potential additional skills that participants might have developed as a result of participating. I was consumed by the desire to ensure participants developed life skills and demonstrated signs of transferring them to additional contexts.
Following the third session, I tried to reflect and assess the intervention from an objective perspective, with my evaluator hat on. As a result, I considered the fact that each individual could take something away from the intervention that was different to everyone else and was not directly taught or included within the aims. Intrigued to explore this idea further, I had decided to include a question based around individual perception within the post-intervention focus groups (see Appendix 14).

**Discussion**

The purpose of the current chapter was to evaluate the effectiveness of the post-pilot resilience-based life skill intervention. A combination of process and outcome evaluation methods was employed in order to continue the action research approach, as well as provide a summative conclusion towards the intervention success (Clarke, 1999). Based on previous research (see Iachini et al., 2014; Shek & Siu, 2006), the blend of process and outcome evaluations was deemed an appropriate method within a critical realist evaluation paradigm (Maxwell & Pittali, 2010). Therefore, the following narrative will initially discuss the results from the evaluation and descriptive markers of health from fitness testing before outlining its contribution to the current literature. Finally, the limitations of the study will be outlined.

The aims of the intervention evaluation were separated into two strands that complimented a mixed methods approach. The first aim was to understand the effect of the intervention on participants’ resilience-related life skills. In order to achieve this aim, six core life skills were taught using direct and indirect teaching strategies (Gould), whilst implemented under the Challenge model of resilience (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). The six skills were selected based on their association to resilient behaviour and coping strategies outlined in previous research (see Chapter 2). The secondary aim of the intervention evaluation was to understand how to develop adolescents’ life skills in golf and provide them
with the capacity to transfer the skills to contexts beyond sport. In order to achieve the aims, a total of 50 participants were involved across four interventions, delivered over the course of a twelve month period.

**Effectiveness in Developing Resilience-based Life Skills**

**Outcome evaluation.**

Results from the outcome evaluation suggest that the intervention was not effective in developing the resiliency of participants. The results from the pre and post-intervention ARQ measurements were not statistically significant. When reviewing the difference in mean ARQ scores before and after the intervention implementation, on two occasions (I1 and I4) scores increased, yet not statistically significant, they still yield a practical significance. There are several potential reasons why there was no statistical relevance for all scores and why some decreased (I2 and I3). Firstly, resilience is not a stable construct and has the potential to fluctuate over time and across contexts (Davydov et al., 2010). The time taken to deliver I2 and I3 was five months and three months respectively. Therefore, the lapse in time could have caused a decrease in ARQ scores. Secondly, personal circumstances have the potential to change over the given periods. For example, if an individual had experienced difficulties within their home life over the course of the intervention, the post-intervention subscale ‘family’ would have been affected. Finally, both interventions (I2 and I3) were completed towards the end of the academic year. As participants neared their exams period, stress levels could have increased over the course of the intervention, resulting in lower ARQ scores upon completion (Coleman, 2011).

Alongside the ARQ measurement, the YLSS was used as a method of evaluating participants’ life skill learning and transfer beyond the intervention. When comparing the results of the YLSS to potential scores on the likert scale (1-5), all interventions were
between three (‘about 50/50’) and four (‘agree’). Therefore, the results demonstrate a reasonable effect of the intervention in developing participants’ life skills. Although the YLSS has not been developed for the purpose of this research, the skills that it measures (problem solving, leadership, time management, goal setting, coping, and communication) provide a suitable match towards those taught in the intervention. As the YLSS has not been used previously to measure the effect of an intervention, there are no results to compare with those shown in this thesis. However, the results do demonstrate promising outcomes of the intervention in terms of life skill development and transfer.

**Process evaluation.**

The purpose of the process evaluation was to ensure fidelity of implementation was achieved, as well as ascertaining whether the intervention was implemented successfully. Taking the form of a process-assessment evaluation (Chen, 1996), via the AR’s reflections, the results demonstrated that the interventions were delivered as intended. However, working with different populations across the interventions resulted in adapting tasks to suit their needs. Adaptation was only instigated via specific activities or the structure of certain tasks. The core components of the intervention remained constant in order to support a rigorous approach (Nathan et al., 2010). Implementation variability was minimised due to the interventions being delivered by the AR, rather than different staff. This approach differed from Iachini et al. (2014) where numerous sites and staff were utilised to implement the intervention. As a result, the AR was able to draw on tacit knowledge and experience gained from implementing several interventions in order to suit the needs of participants and deliver content based on their learning style. For example, learning from the pilot interventions that building rapport within the initial sessions aids life skill learning and potential transfer. Adopting a process-improvement method of evaluation, such developments were crucial to the successful delivery and potential outcome of the intervention.
**Impact of implementation context.**

The findings from the process evaluation also demonstrated the importance of contextual factors in implementing a life skills intervention successfully. Previous research has cited the impact of contextual factors on the ability to implement an intervention successfully (Hodge, Danish, & Martin, 2012; Iachini et al., 2014; Rajan & Basch, 2012). When comparing the findings from I2 to the other three interventions, it is clear that the context of delivering the intervention within a school setting had an impact on the delivery of the intervention. Such findings are supported when compared to aspects of the outcome evaluation. When reviewing the mean scores from the ARQ (*Figure 5*) it is evident that I2 was least effective in developing participants’ life skills and resiliency. Participants were used to their school environment and were not in a public space. As a result their behaviour was more challenging to control within the sessions. Subsequently the time spent teaching the intervention content was diminished due to the focus on managing the group, supporting the findings from Holt et al. (2013). These findings support the results from Iachini et al. (2014) where coaches reported having to adapt lessons and activities due to lack of time as a result of attention to behaviour challenges.

Iachini et al. (2014) also reported the potential inter-relationship between influencing factors, suggesting that altering one factor could decrease the negative influence of additional factors. The results from the process evaluation in the current chapter suggest that if the school delivery context was altered to the golf club, attention to behavioural challenges would be minimised, consequently more time would be devoted to developing participants’ life skills. Indeed, it was clear from the AR’s reflections from I2, when the context was altered from the school to the golf club for the final session, participants behaviour had dramatically improved.
Fitness Testing as a Descriptive Marker of Health

The battery of fitness tests (BMI, waist circumference, 1-mile run/walk, hand-grip strength) was administered in order to provide a descriptive marker of the participants’ overall health. The initial aim of developing and implementing the resilience-based life skills intervention was to target individuals who were not heavily involved in sport, as it has been demonstrated that individuals who participate in sport may already demonstrate high levels of resilience (Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014). Therefore, it should be recognised that targeting individuals who are not heavily involved in sport would be less likely to show high levels of physical fitness and health.

Based on the four tests administered, a reasonable conclusion can be drawn on the fitness level and overall health of the individuals. Results from the BMI data demonstrate that 60% were either overweight or obese. In addition, 74% of participants were categorised within the 75th percentile (or higher) in reference to waist circumference. Therefore, in terms of using BMI and waist circumference as markers of overall obesity and abdominal adiposity respectively, the majority of participants would be considered of ‘poor health’ and at risk of cardiovascular disease (Ortega et al., 2008). Furthermore, with regard to aerobic capacity, 60% of participants were either unclassified (>13 minutes) or outside of the HFZ for their age category. Utilising hand-grip strength as a marker of musculoskeletal fitness, 66% were in the lower half (<50th) of percentile range, suggesting that the majority were below average in comparison to normative data. Overall, the majority of participants who completed the battery of tests would be considered to be at a poor level of health and fitness (Ortega et al. 2011).

Contribution to Existing Literature

The current chapter adds to the existing literature on sport-based life skills interventions from three inter-related perspectives. Firstly, the mixing of methods in
evaluating a sport-based life skills intervention provides a holistic approach to understanding how an intervention supports the development of life skills within adolescents. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the experiences of participants, in conjunction with objective measures of life skill development and transfer, provides a novel approach to exploring the phenomenon. Previous intervention evaluations had adopted a single-method approach and, subsequently, either provided subjectivity or objectivity. A recommendation by Gould and Carson (2008) for more mixed methods evaluations has received little attention. However, the current chapter provides such a gap in the existing literature.

Secondly, the process of utilising the AR’s existing skills and experience as a trainee sport psychology consultant in order to compliment his role as the intervention facilitator and researcher, presents an innovative approach. Previous research has relied on coaches, teachers, youth workers, and peer mentors to deliver sport-based life skills interventions (e.g., Forneris et al., 2007; Weiss et al., 2013). As a result, implementation fidelity can be compromised. Where sport psychology researchers have implemented life skills interventions, there is little detail provided on their expertise to deliver a youth intervention. Therefore, the reflexive narrative provided by the intervention facilitator presents a unique insider’s perspective on the implementation and evaluation of a sport-based life skills intervention.

Finally, the contribution made by the current chapter to the existing literature is the use of multiple populations throughout the delivery of the intervention. The involvement of participants from different age groups, ability levels and additional needs, has emphasised the importance of considering individual differences for intervention design and implementation. To date, previous sport-based life skills interventions have attempted to standardise the delivery with respect to participant sampling. Although this may warrant a rigorous approach
that improves validity and reliability, the current chapter demonstrates that a critical realist approach to intervention implementation, delivery, and subsequently evaluation, provides a vital insight into the real-world ‘mechanics’ of youth development. In understanding what works, with whom, and within what given context, it delivers a vital insight into life skills interventions. As a relatively new field of research, it is important to recognise how interventions work with reference to specific populations in order to potentially influence youth on a larger scale.

**Limitations of the Intervention Evaluation.**

Within the merits of research, specifically applied research, no design is without its limitations (Robson, 2002). The limitations of the intervention evaluation are influenced as a result of its novel design and association with applied research. Firstly, the use of an internal evaluator to determine the effectiveness of the intervention could have potentially biased the results (Clarke, 1999; Torres et al., 2007). The internal evaluator was not only involved in the overall implementation of the intervention but also its delivery. Although the use of an internal evaluator provides a unique ‘insider’s perspective’, the potential to bias results could influence the outcome of the intervention and lacks objectivity (Torres et al., 1997). In an attempt to minimise this, a reflexive log was kept by the AR to ensure an understanding of any potential bias was critiqued. Also, the professional philosophy and epistemological paradigm of the researcher was identified and acknowledged.

Secondly, as with all qualitative inquiry that includes an element of subjectivity, the results of the intervention evaluation should be interpreted through a lens of criticality (Seale, 2004). Therefore, the reliance on reflexive practice as a method of evaluation in the present chapter could limit the capacity to generalise results. Although the aim of qualitative research is to provide a rich in-depth account of personal experience and perception, the lack of source triangulation limits the validity of the results. The use of mixed methods was employed to
minimise this limitation but additional sources of evaluation, such as teachers’ perspective, could have strengthened the results.

**Conclusion**

Overall the present chapter offers some evidence towards the effect of the post-pilot intervention in developing resilience-based life skills. The results provide valuable insight into what does and does not work in delivering a sport-based life skills intervention. Furthermore, the inclusion of a trainee sport psychology consultant, who delivered and evaluated the intervention, provides a unique viewpoint on the nature of doing applied research and the importance of translating theory to practice in order to inform the wider public.

The mixing of quantitative and qualitative methods to conduct a process and outcome evaluation provides a unique contribution to the existing life skills intervention literature. Previous intervention evaluations have predominantly focused on outcome variables in assessing effectiveness, rather than process-oriented efficacy and implementation fidelity. The results of the process evaluation have highlighted the importance on contextual factors in delivering a life skills intervention to youth, considerations towards the learning environment being crucial to the success of the intervention. Furthermore, the narrative provided by the AR’s reflections supports a triangulated approach towards the intervention evaluation. In doing so, presents a novel and rigorous design to evaluate a life skills intervention.
CHAPTER 5

General Discussion
Introduction

The purpose of the present chapter is to provide a concluding synthesis of findings from Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, identifying the specific contributions to knowledge, and associated strengths and limitations. Due to the multiple fields of research explored, the implications and contribution to knowledge will be discussed across several domains, including: academic research, applied and professional practice of researchers and coaches, as well as the profession of sport psychology. Following a brief overview of the purpose of this thesis, specific contributions to knowledge from study one (Chapter 3) and study two (Chapter 4) will be provided alongside a summary of the process undertaken and subsequent results. The conceptual and theoretical considerations from both studies will then be discussed before addressing the strengths and limitations of the programme of research. Finally, the future directions for the field of research and applied practice will be outlined prior to the concluding remarks.

Purpose of the Thesis

The primary aim of the thesis was to develop, implement, and evaluate a resilience-based life skills intervention for adolescents through the medium of golf. In developing an educational sport-based intervention, an exploratory, rigorous action research approach was initiated during the pilot phase of the intervention. The process involved in designing an enjoyable, informative, and effective intervention for adolescents through golf required a unique blend of applied consulting skills, pedagogical experience, and entrepreneurial acumen. As such, the secondary aim of the thesis was to explore the role and impact of the author as a trainee sport psychology consultant and doctoral student in developing and implementing the life skills intervention. Following development through a pilot phase (Chapter 3), the intervention was then delivered to four additional groups and subsequently
evaluated on its success in delivery and effectiveness to develop transferable life skills (Chapter 4).

**Study One: Developing a Resilience-based Life Skills Intervention**

The current section will outline the nature and strengths of study one (Chapter 3) in designing and piloting the intervention. A brief summary of results in relation to the four key themes that arose from the AR’s reflections: the delivery of activities, building rapport with participants, life skill learning, and finally life skill transfer.

Following an extensive literature review (Chapter Two), an initial intervention skeleton was formed to include six skills that were associated with resilience:

- Problem solving;
- Goal setting;
- Communication;
- Management of emotions;
- Seeking social support;
- Reflection

Based on previous literature that highlighted the importance of resilience within positive youth development (PYD; Lee, Cheung, & Kwong, 2011; Sanders, Munford, Thimasarn-Anwar, Liebenber, & Ungar, 2015), it was appropriate to explore the development of resilience within an intervention that includes life skills. Furthermore, given the lack of life skills interventions targeting specific resilient behaviours (e.g., positive adaptation), the insight provided into the development of an intervention (Chapter 3) provides a notable contribution to the applied life skills literature.
In order to teach the skills within a sporting environment, an emphasis was placed upon Gould and Carson’s (2008) model of coaching life skills. Specifically, the author targeted direct and indirect teaching strategies, such as ‘team building’ and ‘providing leadership opportunities’, in order to facilitate life skill development and aid the transfer of skills to additional domains. In doing so, the project required a unique exploratory design through an action research approach that enabled the intervention to be continually developed based on the author’s reflections on delivery. This rigorous approach in constantly adapting and improving the intervention design, content, and delivery based on reflections of participants’ needs ensured its quality was upheld when delivered to different populations. In determining what required altering, the AR kept a reflective log as part of the implementation process, which was supported by informal discussions with participants. Furthermore, the inclusion of a two-phase reflexive process (see Figure) allowed the author to review his actions through a lens of criticality as the intervention facilitator (Hickson, 2011). Applying the dual role as intervention facilitator and researcher resulted in becoming immersed within the process of engaging in applied research in order to understand the social phenomenon. As a result, it was crucial to utilise reflective practice to make sense of the experiences and ensure professional development was captured in a way that was representative of the journey (Patton, 2002). In addition, due to his prolonged involvement in the design and implementation of the intervention, using reflective practice provided a method of identifying potential researcher bias and ultimately reducing threat to validity (Robson, 2002). Due to the nature of the applied research, it was important that the AR remained involved throughout as a ‘façade’ of the intervention, particularly in building relationships with stakeholders and participants.

The outcome from the pilot phase resulted in the creation of a 16-hour intervention that was flexible in delivery and adaptable to suit numerous populations. An intervention
‘passport’ booklet was created and tested within pilot three; however, its use was to be formally introduced following all pilot interventions. An essential component in creating a sustainable and rigorous life skills intervention was to understand what aspects of the intervention were successful (i.e., activities that participants enjoy) and have the potential to develop life skills. The development and piloting of sport-based life skills interventions is rarely considered and/or reported. Yet, the difficulties in developing an intervention structure that is logistically operational, conceptually sound, and denotes high implementation fidelity, should not be overlooked (Conn, Algase, Rawl, Zerwic, & Wyman, 2010). Consequently, the results from Study One provide the reader with an essential understanding of, and insight into, intervention design and implementation. Alongside the development of content to inform the post-pilot intervention, a number of key themes were drawn from the reflections provided by the AR. These included specific factors relating to: (a) the delivery of activities; (b) building rapport with participants; (c) the ability to support life skill learning; and, (d) supporting potential life skills transfer.

**Delivery of activities.**

The findings from the three pilot interventions suggested that the nature by which content and tasks were delivered had an impact on participants’ engagement and subsequent potential for learning. When initially meeting participants, understanding their likes and dislikes was important to adapt the content to their interests. For example, certain groups were heavily involved in a range of sports, particularly rugby. Therefore, adapting the way in which the content is delivered (by using rugby-specific examples) proved beneficial in the quality of responses within group discussions, as participants were able to reference sports they had knowledge in. The ability of the coach to adapt activities and practices in line with participants’ needs and characteristics is well supported in previous literature (Camiré et al., 2011; Trottier & Robitaille, 2014).
In addition, gauging which learning environment (cooperative or competitive) was more effective in supporting a resilient approach to challenges, as well as their engagement, proved important within the delivery of specific activities (Coleman, 2011). This finding supports previous literature by Trottier and Robitaille (2014) that highlights the importance of the coaching and learning environment created by the coach to development life skills within adolescents. The environment should take into account the needs of the participants as well as the effect of the coach’s values and philosophy (Camiré et al., 2011; McCallister et al., 2000).

Finally, having a particular focus on participants’ individual strengths supported the integration of the ‘skill’ social support. In team-based activities, participants were more aware of who within the group is more suited to provide support to other team-members, once discussing individuals’ strengths. Often, participants struggled to identify their strengths, particularly when questioned by the AR; potentially due to a lack of rapport that had been established. Given the duration of the intervention, the potential for a lasting effective relationship was limited. Previous literature has highlighted the need for long-term commitment to establish an effective coach-athlete relationship, as highlighted by a coach in Gucciardi et al.’s (2009) study, “just as the coaching process is a long-term venture, so too is the relationship we form … and there needs to be a commitment to maintaining such a healthy relationship over time and not just for the short term” (p. 1490).

**Building rapport with participants.**

Across all three interventions, the importance of building rapport with participants to support their engagement and life skill learning, supports previous literature within the sport psychology domain (Fifer, Henschen, Gould, & Ravizza, 2008; Sharp, Hodge, & Danish, 2015). Within the current programme, the delivery of the intervention to numerous adolescents ranging in age from 13-16 years old confirmed the importance of establishing rapport due to the potentially sensitive nature of discussions (e.g., challenges faced at home).
Based on the AR’s experience of the initial session (or day) of each pilot intervention, it emerged that very little ‘content’ should be introduced and instead the focus should be on building rapport to ease participants into the process. Again, this supports the work of sport psychology practitioners when initially meeting new clients (see Appendix 6), providing further evidence in the link between the profession and delivering life skills interventions. Where possible, the delivery of a ‘taster session’ allowed the initial rapport to be built, which led to the intervention content being able to be delivered during the first structured session – instead of using the time to establish a connection with the group. Indeed, the use of ‘taster sessions’ allowed initial rapport to be established with participants. Previous life skills interventions have not reported the use of use of ‘taster sessions’. Iachini et al. (2014) reported mixed results in relation to pre-existing relationships and the potential for this to act as a facilitating or debilitating factor. The AR’s reflections from Chapter 3 emphasised the importance of initially establishing, as well as building rapport with intervention participants. This finding supports conclusions made by Gould, Collins, Lauer, and Chung (2007) and Petitpas et al. (2005), that a well-established, trusting, and caring relationship with an adult (beyond the family context) fosters positive youth development, an important contribution to the existing knowledge in the delivery of life skills interventions.

**Life skill learning.**

Throughout the three pilot interventions, the delivery of all six core skills gradually moved away from a ‘school-like’, structured environment to a practical experiential learning process. It became apparent that participants’ attention span was limited when indoors completing a task in the form of group discussions. Therefore, greater emphasis on experiential learning proved a more effective way to firstly introduce a skill and subsequently teach it. To elaborate, initiating a practical task on the driving range provided learning
opportunities to emerge and then promote discussions within the group, supporting the benefit of a cooperative learning environment (Jones, 2012).

**Life skill transfer.**

Results from the pilot interventions suggested that the rapport established between the AR and participants had an effect on the potential to transfer life skill to additional contexts. Specifically, participants were reluctant to share challenges they faced, to support discussions of transfer, in contexts outside of sport, such as school, home, and social life. Once participants felt comfortable within the environment and had built a rapport with the AR, they became more willing to share difficulties they faced in their personal life. This highlights the similarities in consulting with athletes as a sport psychology practitioner and/or coach (C. J. Knight, personal communication, April 27, 2014; Gould et al., 2007). Therefore, the importance of delaying discussions around life skill transfer until rapport has been established provides a contribution to the existing knowledge of how life skills interventions should be structured and delivered. This new knowledge should therefore direct coaches and practitioners to target life skill transfer discussions once participants feel comfortable to do so.

**Study Two: Process and Outcome Evaluation of Life Skills Intervention**

Previous research has identified the difficulties in initiating life skill transfer, as well as measuring it across additional contexts (Gould & Carson, 2008). Where the development of life skills is cited as an aim of a sport-based youth programme, assessing the transfer of skills to other contexts is considered necessary within the defining characteristics of life skills (Holland, 2012). Therefore, the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of a life skills intervention becomes particularly challenging. The lack of an objective measure of skill transfer alongside the challenges associated with providing opportunities for youth to transfer skills, such as community service, prevent the advancement of the field of research (Petitpas,
et al., 2005). Utilising quantitative and qualitative methods in this programme of research provided a unique contribution towards evaluating the intervention and transfer methods. Within the limited number of sport-based life skills intervention evaluations, researchers have adopted a single-method approach (see Table 7.), despite Gould and Carson (2008) calling for a more holistic approach to intervention evaluation. Therefore, the outcome evaluation outlined within this thesis (Chapter 4) provides an innovative contribution to the existing life skills literature.

In addition to the methodological contribution, results from the mixed methods evaluation provide supporting evidence for the importance of context in delivering an educational sport-based life skills intervention. Specifically, in relation to Intervention Two (I2), the context of delivering the intervention within a school environment proved challenging due to the lack of facilities and the participants potentially feeling ‘too’ comfortable within their familiar surroundings. Consequently, managing the group’s engagement and behaviour became a priority. Although not statistically significant, the YLSS scores were lowest from the results of I2, supporting the practical significance of context for life skill development. Furthermore, previous sport-based life skills interventions, such as the SUPER programme (Danish, 2002), have been structured to be delivered as short one-hour sessions. The findings from this programme of research do not support those of previous studies where one-hour weekly sessions are delivered (see Forneris, Danish, & Scott, 2007). With regard to I2, spreading the intervention over a series of 12 sessions fragmented participant learning and a lack of momentum resulted due to less content being delivered. Therefore, in contributing to the current knowledge in this area of research, the results from the process and outcome evaluation suggest that a more effective intervention delivery structure would take the form of a typical school day (e.g., 9am – 3pm). Although this may limit the potential for life skill transfer between sessions as fewer sessions will need to be
delivered, if participants aren’t given the opportunity to learn the content, they will lack the capacity to allow transfer to additional contexts. Ultimately, there is a greater chance of participants understanding and retaining information if session length is increased, which could influence the transfer of skills.

Focusing still on the method adopted, the programme of research is the first to use the YLSS beyond its creation in assessing life skill learning and transfer. The use of a valid and reliable scale increases the rigour of the evaluations (Clarker, 1999). Utilising the YLSS to triangulate and verify evidence from the qualitative findings provided a unique method in assessing the development and transfer of life skills. The measure was adapted with ease and suitable for the age groups of the participants. Its use, therefore, in future life skills interventions could provide an appropriate quantitative measure of life skill learning and transfer.

**Conceptual and Theoretical Issues**

The programme of research documented within this thesis provides a unique approach by combining the concepts of PYD and resilience to foster the development of both. Although the findings support the advancement of sport-based youth development research, it is vital to ensure the research is theoretically grounded due to the overlap between these concepts. PYD and resilience both take their roots from developmental systems theory and are largely based on similar assumptions and characteristics (for a review, see Masten, 2014). Specifically, the association towards positive adaptation as well as the emphasis placed on the person-context interaction (Masten, 2014). Therefore, the purpose of the following section is to highlight some of the conceptual overlap and distinctions between resilience theory and PYD stemming from the programme of research. A conceptual and theoretical overview of resilience and PYD is covered within Chapter 1, therefore, to avoid repetition, only findings and issues faced within the research will be discussed.
Applying the Challenge model of resilience.

As one of the models of resilience theory, the Challenge model was used as a means of theoretically grounding the intervention content and the form in which it was delivered. Due to this novel approach in utilising it within the context of a life skills intervention, there were a number of issues faced in ensuring the Challenge model was supporting rather than hindering youth development. Firstly, the Challenge model aims to gradually improve an individual’s capacity to overcome a risk by exposing them to moderately low levels of risk (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). However, judging what can be considered as ‘moderately low’ proved difficult. Once participants were provided with a chance to practice on the driving range during the initial sessions, the difficulty level was increased whereby targets and goals were introduced. The difficulty level of the targets (e.g., placing cones on the driving range to create a ‘fairway’) had to be of a level complex enough to challenge participants to elicit a response in order to deal with the demand (Gucciardi, Gordon, Dimmock, & Mallett, 2009). If the challenge was too easy, participants did not have to utilise any of the skills or strategies that were taught and developed. If the challenge was too difficult, participants would become disengaged and lose confidence in their ability. Therefore, the first few sessions on the driving range were spent teaching the basics of golf technique whilst also gauging an appropriate level of risk. In addition, in order to distinguish between coping and resilience, the AR tried to create a mastery climate where participants were praised for effort and development, as well as cooperating and assisting others. Although this was not measured, responses within the focus groups suggested that the climate was such that participants understood the benefits of cooperative learning and applying effort in order to achieve their goals. However, due to the limited length of the intervention, changing behaviour and participants’ perception of competition and winning, was
challenging. The following section will discuss the use of the Challenge model of resilience to provide theoretical grounding towards intervention delivery.

**Coping with challenges to demonstrating resilience.**

The concept of coping is “characterised by its response to a stressful encounter and by its varying effectiveness in resolving outstanding issues” (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2014, p. 16). In creating a mastery climate that applied the Challenge model, the ‘Cube’ tasks (see Appendix 16) were created in order to engage participants with a competitive task where more points were awarded for effort and achieving realistic goals (set by participants) than winning. Within the initial tasks, it was clear that participants lacked positive coping strategies and displayed a fixed mindset. In applying the Challenge model of resilience, difficulties arose where an emphasis was placed on appraising a task as a positive opportunity to develop their skills. Initially, participants were unable to grasp the importance of skills that can be developed through golf and assist them in day-to-day life. Therefore, the ability to recognise the benefit in developing life skills through golf had an initial impact on participants’ capacity to demonstrate resilience. *Figure 3* demonstrates a conceptual model of resilience and coping as a result of the AR’s reflections from delivering the intervention. The model was created based on the reflections from the pilot phase (Chapter 3) and intervention evaluation (Chapter 4) and provides a representation of the AR’s experience in developing adolescents’ resiliency. The purpose of the model is not to provide a comparative display of intervention results but instead outlines a visual representation of the change in participants’ resiliency from the AR’s subjective perspective. It is hoped practitioners working in the field of sport-based youth development could use the model as a guide and further informing future research.

Upon commencement of the intervention (left side of *Figure 3*), participants have little knowledge and comprehension of how life skills can be developed in sport and
subsequently transferred to other life contexts. As participants complete the intervention (moving towards the right side of the diagram) their knowledge and understanding increases. Consequently, this leads to a more positive appraisal of the challenges set (risks) and therefore leads participants to draw on newly developed assets and resources, demonstrating positive adaptation. It should be used as a reference to the AR’s reflections from this programme of research, rather than a comparison to other models.

**Figure 3.** Conceptual model of positive challenge appraisal

The capacity for participants to demonstrate resilience as a result of intervention participation relied on several factors including: contextual processes, the AR’s ability to demonstrate how skills are transferred, and participants challenge appraisal. The model shown above is not to be confused or compared to Lazarus and Folkman’s (1984) transactional model of stress appraisal. Although there are similarities where individuals
appraise a stressor as a potential challenge or threat, the ‘challenges’ noted within this thesis were specific tasks designed to elicit a facilitative coping response. The findings from the intervention evaluation suggest that positively appraising the task was preceded by their knowledge and understanding of life skill transfer from sport to additional contexts.

Ultimately, the ability to change behaviour will require a longer intervention, especially “given all the changes occurring during early adolescence, it would be surprising for a brief intervention to have strong long-term effects” (Petersen, Leffert, Graham, Alwin, & Ding, 1997, p. 490). Nonetheless, the results from the programme evaluation show some initial evidence towards the potential influence of a resilience-based life skills intervention on PYD. In reference to the developmental contextual view of PYD, a process of thriving requires longitudinal tracking and positive individual-context interactions (Lerner et al., 2005). The fact that an individual’s ability to recognise their participation in sport could have a beneficial impact on their everyday life would suggest a positive interaction between said individual and the context (i.e., sport). Therefore, the involvement in a life skills intervention could provide a positive interaction between an individual and a given context within which the intervention occurs to initiate the process of thriving. In this case, the process of thriving was initiated by applying the Challenge model of resilience.

Conceptual overlap between PYD and resilience will present further challenges for future researchers exploring the potential for resilience to support youth development. Careful consideration towards the discrete differences should therefore be advised, such as the focus on thriving (PYD) versus the return to an ‘okay’ state (resilience). The current research focused on the Challenge model of resilience (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005) in order to provide a theoretical framework to deliver a life skills intervention with the aim to foster resiliency. Although results from the outcome evaluation were mixed, the practical significance of findings provides some insight into the potential conceptual issues. Delivering
to individuals over a short period of time presents challenges in identifying causal mechanisms, as well as, ensuring positive development.

**Strength and Limitations**

Identifying the strengths and limitations of research provides a critical lens with which to view the unique properties of methodological rigour and validity, ultimately understanding the world around us (Howitt & Cramer, 2008). The strengths of the present research project lie in its unique and innovative design in developing and implementing a life skills intervention. The holistic approach (i.e., mixing methods and association to descriptive markers of physiological health) called for by Gould and Carson (2008), provides a key strength in deepening our understanding of life skills development. Its limitations are associated with the complexities in conducting applied research, particularly with multiple stakeholders.

**Strengths.**

The action research approach adopted as part of the pilot phase (Chapter 3) as well as the process-improvement evaluation (Chapter 4) is a key strength of this programme of research. The richness in becoming fully immersed within collaboration, change, and evaluation allowed the researcher to engage with participants (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). The ability to make constant changes, or ‘actions’, based on the AR’s reflections to improve the intervention, provided a rigorous, systematic process of quality assurance (Koshy, 2010). Indeed, Petitpas et al. (2005) referred to the important consideration towards case study methodology “when designing and implementing youth development through sport programmes so that the programmes can evolve to best meet the needs of the participants” (p. 72). The inclusion of reflective practice within action research further strengthened the evaluative capacity of the researcher, being located within the research, rather than watching from afar (McAteer, 2013). Situating the AR as the researcher, evaluator, and practitioner,
offered an internal perspective to make changes where appropriate and further strengthening the fidelity of implementation (Clarke, 1999).

Alongside the action research approach that utilised both quantitative and qualitative methods, a key strength in this programme of research is the creation of a theoretically grounded and rigorous life skills intervention. Life skills research, within the wider PYD domain, is still a relatively new field of research. Therefore, the construction of an evidence-based intervention that has the potential to support adolescents’ personal, social, emotional, and physical development is a key strength and contribution towards the field of research. Responding to the call for mixing methods by Gould and Carson (2008), this programme of research has not only designed and created a life skills intervention but also assessed its efficacy and effectiveness.

An additional strength, associated to the intervention evaluation, is the mixed methods design. Producing quantitative objectivity alongside qualitative richness and depth, compliments the overall scope and reach of the evaluation. Furthermore, data and source triangulation ensured a rigorous intervention evaluation was conducted (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In mixing methods, the adopted critical realist evaluation paradigm complemented the action research approach. To elaborate, evaluating what works, for whom, within what context provided an appropriate method of examining the effectiveness of the action research, as the intervention was shaped and moulded for each population.

A final key strength is the applicability of the findings towards the professional practice of coaches, teachers, sport psychologists, and youth workers. The applied focus of the entire programme of research was constructed in order to maximise its impact towards the general public, most importantly young people, by targeting those who were not heavily involved in sport. Specific contributions to academic research have been discussed; however,
the potential contribution to a much wider audience of those working with young people demonstrates its true contribution to knowledge.

**Limitations.**

As with most research, a key limitation of this project lies within its strengths. Due to the multiple contributions to knowledge as a result of a novel, rigorous research design, the comparison of results to previous research is challenging. To the best of the author’s knowledge, this programme of research is the first to: (a) use a mixed methods approach to evaluate a sport-based life skills intervention; (b) use a resilience theory within a life skills intervention; and, (c) associate the implementation of a life skills intervention with a trainee sport psychology consultant. Therefore, comparisons to previous research, such as Holt et al. (2013), are limited due to these studies not involving trainee sport psychologists as intervention facilitators or utilising mixed methods evaluations.

A second limitation is the lack of randomised control or quasi-experimental design. Causal inferences are therefore limited to attributing life skill development and transfer to intervention participation. Due to the absence of a control group or even ‘dose response’ group, it is difficult to infer causality (Patton, 2002). A quasi-experimental design was not adopted due to difficulties in participant recruitment; displaying further challenges in applied research. The immersion of the AR within the intervention afforded the opportunity to build relationships with staff members from participant institutions. As a result, informal discussions with staff members documented within the AR’s reflections provided some evidence as to the effect of the intervention (Holt et al., 2013). Although internal validity was compromised, having staff members present throughout provided the opportunity for them to witness the changes in participants’ behaviour as a result of the intervention.
Thirdly, although data triangulation was maximised, source triangulation could have been improved. Although self-report measures are common within social research, understanding the teachers’ and/or parents’ perspective would have provided a more holistic understanding of life skill transfer. As young people spend the majority of their upbringing at either school or home, a representation from such contexts could have provided information of participants’ ability to transfer life skills (Hardcastle et al., 2015).

Finally, the intervention implementation was designed to be a short programme to ease its utility within school timetabling. However, ideally resiliency needs to be fostered over a longer period of time, allowing participants to develop the necessary skills and strategies to deal with adversity across a range of contexts (Petersen et al., 1997).

**Future Research Directions**

Due to the novel approach adopted to design, implement and evaluate a life skills intervention, there are numerous avenues of future research to explore. Firstly, the lack of an objective measure of life skill learning and transfer has been recognised as a concern for the advancement of life skills research (Gould & Carson, 2008). Therefore, further support for the YLSS is required to assess its use across different populations, cultures, and contexts. Results from the intervention evaluation suggest it is an appropriate measure of life skill transfer for the specific population used within this research. Support for its use with additional age groups should be sought if it is to be recognised as an effective self-report measure of life skill transfer. In addressing this much needed method of evaluation, an important direction for future research would involve the use of a randomised controlled trial. The creation of a theoretically-grounded life skills intervention documented within this thesis provides the initial step in conducting a controlled trial with random assignment to a control and intervention group. Utilising this ‘gold standard’ design allows for a potential causal
relationship between intervention participation and the development of resilience-based life skills.

Building on the work of Hardcastle et al. (2015) and Camiré et al. (2013), future research should assess the transfer of life skills from multiple sources. Therefore, maximising source triangulation to include numerous sources such as parents, coaches, teachers, alongside intervention facilitators will provide a holistic understanding of life skill transfer to contexts involving such individuals. Objective measures of life skill development and transfer are lacking within PYD research (Gould & Carson, 2008; Weiss, Bolter, & Kipp, 2014). Therefore, future research should address the role of parents and teachers in facilitating and assessing the transfer of skills to the home and school environment, further enhancing the validity of life skills interventions. Furthermore, combining newly-developed quantitative measures such as the YLSS with qualitative measures involving parents and teachers (e.g., observation, interviews, and focus groups) maximising source and data triangulation will strengthen this growing field of research.

Future research should address the potential for sport-based life skills interventions to foster resilience in young people who are not heavily involved in sport. Results from Study 2 demonstrated mixed evidence for the development of resiliency as a result of participation in the intervention. Factors influencing the results could be related to intervention structure and theoretical grounding. Therefore, a worthy line of inquiry would incorporate further exploration of intervention structure as a means of developing youth. Previous life skills intervention structures have either taken the form of 1-hour weekly sessions (e.g. Danish, 2002) or used as a ‘bolt-on’ activity to existing youth development programmes or sports activities (e.g., Papacharisis et al., 2005). However, due to the findings from Study 2, further research should explore the potential effectiveness in delivering the intervention as complete days (e.g., 9am-3pm) over an extended period of time to aid the potential for the transfer of
life skills. Youth development interventions that are delivered over a prolonged period such as the First Tee (Weiss et al., 2013), are able to develop adolescents’ life skills and potential to thrive whilst retaining their involvement within a supportive environment.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to design, implement, and evaluate a resilience-based life skills intervention for adolescents through golf. Study 1 (Chapter 3) utilised an action research approach, incorporating reflective practice, in order to provide a rigorous intervention that demonstrated the potential to develop participants’ resiliency. The in-depth pilot process undertaken contributes to the existing life skills research and begins to provide a rigorous evidence base for the design and development of sport-based life skills interventions. The knowledge and experience gained from delivering three pilot intervention allowed the AR to develop an intervention that incorporated six skills shown to be associated to resilience: goal setting, problem solving, managing emotions, communication, the ability to seek social support, and reflection.

Study 2 (Chapter 4) incorporated a mixed methods design to evaluate the efficacy and effectiveness of the intervention. The evaluation revealed contextual influences on the development and transfer of life skills. Results from the process and outcome evaluation revealed some evidence towards the development of life skills and participants demonstrating resilience. Doing so revealed numerous factors that influenced the effectiveness of the intervention and subsequent capacity to support life skill learning and transfer under four categories: (1) delivery; (2) building rapport with participants; (3) life skill learning; and (4) life skill transfer:

1. Delivery

• Adapt the delivery of tasks and activities to support the needs of participants
• Provide a learning environment suitable to the needs of participants and incorporates the facilitator’s values and coaching philosophy
• Focus on team-based activities that highlight individuals’ strengths and competencies

2. Building rapport with participants
• Ensure initial rapport is established before targeting life skill teaching
• Include a pre-intervention ‘taster session’ to build rapport and gauge participants’ needs and learning requirements
• Emphasis on establishing and building rapport aids the potential for life skill learning and transfer

3. Life skill learning
• Priority towards experiential learning
• Provide a cooperative learning environment to support interactivity and engagement

4. Life skill transfer
• Build rapport with participants before approaching transfer of life skills
• Provide commonly-faced scenarios and contexts (e.g., taking an exam) for the given age group to engage with life skills transfer

The above findings will hopefully provide a worthy resource for the professional practice of coaches, teachers, sport psychologists and youth workers. Supporting youth to develop life skills spans many disciplines and fields of inquiry. However, it was the aim of this programme of research to explore the context of sport as a vehicle to develop adolescents’ resilience-based life skills. Therefore, based on the contributions to knowledge outlined in this chapter, it is hoped that future research will continue to explore the potential
for sport to act as a catalyst for youth development, whilst utilising innovative and applied research designs.
CHAPTER 6

Reflective Epilogue
Introduction

The purpose of this final chapter of the thesis is to attempt to amalgamate and summarise the four-year journey this programme of research has incorporated. A personal journey of learning and development makes the experience of a doctoral degree a highly individualised endeavour. The intrepid expedition of a Ph.D. student, I have come to realise, extends far beyond the ‘ins and outs’ of conducting research. Therefore, I wanted to capture this additional experience in a form which encapsulates my development and growth as an academic, applied practitioner, entrepreneur, and person. The aim is to provide an autoethnographic narrative of my journey detailing the past four years. The self-narrative is not intended to be a self-indulgent act of narcissism but instead should hopefully provide the reader with an insight into some of the challenges faced as part of this programme of research that involved the development of a market-ready product (Gilbourne, 2002).

The chapter will cover a number of themes I feel represent my experience in a manner that explores the challenges I have faced as part of being an apprentice researcher tasked with creating a recognisable and professional brand. Initially, I will discuss the role of reflective practice in engaging with self-narrative and recognising personal development. The entrepreneurial components that are unique to this programme of research will then be outlined before concluding with the key skills that I have developed as a result of the Ph.D. process.

Reflective Practice as a Process of Development

Engaging in reflective practice provides the means of developing greater insight into the complexities of conducting research involving social interaction (Thompson & Thompson, 2008). Positioning the researcher within the context of inquiry (e.g., ethnography) provides a unique internal perspective on the phenomenon. Such a personal, subjective
approach offers a rich, detailed understanding into the experience. Having engaged in reflective practice throughout the past four years, I have come to appreciate its role in serving two overlapping purposes. The first is to understand the influence that I have on ‘what’ and ‘who’ I am researching, suggesting a more ‘reflexive’ conceptual basis to the process (DeVault, 1997). The second involves a solitary experience that uncovers identity exploration and the ‘truth’ of applied research. The former has been referred to throughout previous chapters; therefore, the latter will form the basis for the remainder of this epilogue.

As a relatively deflated Masters graduate, the last thing on my mind upon completing five years of university study was to do a Ph.D.. Having little success in securing a job in sport development, I was adamant that further research and education was not for me. After presenting my plans to increase university sport participation via evaluating their existing programme implementations for a job interview, a member of the panel said, “Why are you here? Based on what you have just presented, you should be doing a Ph.D.”. Consequently, I was not appointed to the position and began exploring the potential for doctoral study. At the time, I did not perceive my skills as a researcher fit for Ph.D. study. Upon attending an international sport psychology conference in Madeira, I was afforded the opportunity to network and engage with current Ph.D. students from across the continent. Listening to their passion and enthusiasm for sport psychology research, I began to rethink my plans to avoid further study. Reflecting on the experience four years later, I will be eternally grateful to the panel member who made me question my future.

Over the course of my Ph.D., I have recalled this experience and questioned how I have developed and matured to the person I am today. Reflective practice, for me, has been an integral part of who I am. It has never been onerous or a chore and I did not need convincing of its worth. Friends, family, and colleagues have commented on my reflective nature and careful choice of words. Indeed, engaging in reflective practice has been a natural
process throughout this programme of research. Nonetheless, my ability to reflect on experiences has developed to become far more critical towards my actions and consequences. The action research methodology adopted in this thesis has undoubtedly forced me to question my practices on a deeper level and create action plans based on my reflections. Prior to starting the Ph.D., I would utilise reflective practice as a trainee sport psychology consultant. However, reflecting on my ability to educate and develop adolescents’ life skills required analysing every detail of my personality, skills, competencies, existing knowledge and prior experiences. The process of constantly updating and developing action plans has resulted in my development as a researcher as well as an entrepreneur. Therefore, part of this thesis has incorporated the development of my skills and competencies in designing and marketing a life skills intervention.

**Entrepreneurial Growth as part of the Ph.D. Process**

Entrepreneurship is managerial behaviour which consistently exploits opportunities to deliver results beyond one’s capabilities. Entrepreneurship demands vision and a sustained commitment – sometimes in the face of much more mundane things that have to be done. It requires the mustering of new, and often other people’s, resources to produce better outcomes (Leadbeater & Goss, 1998, pp. 7).

In the first year of my Ph.D., once I had a reasonable grasp on the aims of the programme of research, my supervisor said “Your Ph.D. is different… it’s unique in creating a product as part of the research”. At the time, I did not fully appreciate the uniqueness of my work, as I had assumed every doctoral candidate had to present a unique contribution to knowledge. Having now experienced four years of applied research that has required analysing and understanding market demands, brand awareness, website development, marketing strategies, and product pitches, I now fully appreciate his comment and the novelty
in my work. Although I considered the potential product/service that would be applicable to the wider society as an outcome from the Ph.D. prior to commencing, I was naïve towards the entrepreneurial aspects of the process. As Leadbeater and Goss (1998) highlighted, the vision and commitment towards the end goal is a characteristic of the verb ‘entrepreneurship’.

Developing a product as part of my Ph.D. has by no means been a simple endeavour. Prior to the Ph.D. interview, I had given thought towards the potential expansion of the final product beyond the programme of research. Although this vision had varying degrees of clarity throughout the Ph.D. process, I had an initial concept that provided the foundations for entrepreneurial growth. As a sport science graduate who specialised in sport psychology, I had, however, very little business acumen other than an interest in property development. Therefore, I had to acquire these skills if I were to create a sustainable product and recognisable brand.

The design, implementation, and evaluation of a life skills intervention represent a prolonged, intensive engagement in scholarly activity. The process of developing a life skills intervention product that is applicable to adolescents has been challenging due to the combination of stakeholders. Combining an external company (golf club) with a university and Ph.D. student provided a ‘real-life’ scenario where evidence-based practice was able to be implemented into society. Nonetheless, competing agendas and a lack of business knowledge resulted in several ‘speed bumps’ and challenges on the road to product development. Specifically, the knowledge of graphic design, marketing, advertising, branding, and protecting the product’s marketable use, all required a trial and error process that had evolved through reflective practice. Although the concept of risk-taking is a common attribute of an entrepreneur (Renko & Bullough 2013), this process is potentially lost within the written research presented in previous chapters. Support was available from supervisors; however, it is worth noting they would not consider themselves entrepreneurs and broadly
speaking, academics are not known for the enterprise acumen. Nonetheless, juggling the enterprise components of the research added an additional ‘hat’ to the already crowded wardrobe of multiple selves. Whilst there are too many incidents to detail in this chapter, I will highlight several that I feel have been critical to the development of the product, including conducting a press release and creating a brand for the intervention.

**Bringing the product to market.**

After the second pilot intervention, we sought the advice and professional expertise from an external marketing company following the award of £2000 internal funding to support the project. The rationale for doing so was to increase participant recruitment rates by creating a recognisable and professional brand. In addition to the marketing company, a graphic design consultant was employed to assist with the creation of the brand logo, advertising posters, and intervention booklet. This process brought further challenges, partly associated to the management of additional internal and external stakeholders. Developing a sustainable brand that had the potential for future expansion and diversification to other sports took time. Initial ideas and concepts were formulated over several months, consisting of clumsy and golf-specific names: ‘Performance and Resilience Enhancement Programme for Adolescents Reaching Excellence (PREPARE)’, ‘Drive Forward’ and ‘Green and Go’. The name ‘Passport for Life’ was selected based on the concept of adolescents requiring a ‘passport’ of skills to ‘travel’ into adulthood. Also, the name incorporated the sport and life-long components of the project.

Once the brand name was selected, a logo was created alongside promotional flyers (see Appendix 17; produced in English and Welsh). The flyers were then distributed to local shops, leisure centres, libraries, and youth organisations. Due to the funding stipulations of this particular programme of research (Welsh Government, European Social Funding via Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarship), the intervention was required to be delivered
within one golf club. Although this allowed a good relationship to be established with club staff members, it also hindered the advancement of the project. As such, any advertising had to target communities local to the golf club.

Initially, a press release was sent to local and national newspapers. The release was successful in gaining some additional coverage of the project on a national radio station. A reporter attended the golf club and interviewed the coach and myself whilst walking around the golf course. Having received a limited brief of the interview, I did not know what to expect. Once I had met the reporter and discussed the project, he then formulated questions based on the key themes we wanted the interview to address. Walking over the green of the fourth hole, it was a very surreal experience being questioned about the project, holding a microphone in my hand, with no audience. The coach was very calm and collected as if he could do this in his sleep. I, on the other hand, had a few re-takes whilst trying to get the message across without too much information. I had presented to academic audiences before but this was a different challenge altogether. Making the project sound engaging, whilst providing key information that would be attractive to adolescents and parents, meant stepping outside of my comfort zone to explain the information in a succinct manner.

In addition to the radio interview, the news department of a national television channel was keen to create a short film as a ‘community engagement’ piece. Having had a ‘dry run’ with the radio interview, I felt more confident in my ability to present the project in an engaging light. Sitting in a chair in the clubhouse facing a camera crew and news presenter, the confidence had all but drained from me as I realised how far I was out of my depth. Having had no media training or experience (besides the radio interview), I found answering the questions quite challenging. Excited at the potential success in recruiting participants as a result of the film, I had so much information that I wanted to provide. As a result, I had several re-takes with the news reporter to ensure a crisp message was conveyed.
Reflecting on the experience as I drove home from the golf club, I felt slightly deflated by the experience. As I unpicked the questions I was asked, I could easily produce a succinct, clear message. Yet, put on the spot within the interview in front of the bright lights of the film crew, I struggled to produce coherent sentences. Several days after the experience, I reflected on what I had undergone and recognised that this was far from my original expectations of doing a Ph.D. I was gaining experience and skills in working with the media, as well as working with marketing professionals to bring a product to market.

The newspaper articles, as well as radio and television interviews, provided the backbone to introducing the project to the wider public. Coupled with posting flyers in shop windows, libraries, and leisure centres of the local town, the advertising campaign (as it was termed) was progressing. Alongside, to support the advertising, I had worked with a website developer to create a website for the project (www.passport4life.co.uk). The site (see Appendix 18) would allow participants to view information on the content and sign up to the programme. At this point, I felt like an entrepreneur bringing a new product to the marketplace. It was an ‘advertising campaign’, rather than simply ‘participant recruitment’. Excited at the prospect of having to seek support to deliver the interventions due to an influx of potential participant recruitment, I waited for the enquiries to roll in.

In reality, very few enquiries were made. As a result, we had to review our recruitment strategy and take a new approach. Reflecting on the failure of the advertising campaign, I recognised that companies spend thousands of pounds (and hours) on marketing and advertising; often with varying success. In comparison, a limited budget for a small research project produced very few ‘customers’. My lack of knowledge and experience in carrying out a full market analysis to determine the size of the potential market and demand for the project (Renko, Tarabishy, Carsrud, & Brännback, 2013), resulted in previous feelings of excitement disappearing. Trying to learn from our mistakes, we (the club, the supervisors
and I decided to approach schools and colleges directly in order to recruit participants. However, numerous emails fell on deaf ears and yielded little response. ‘Door-to-door’ tactics proved more effective in enabling me to pitch the concept of the project face-to-face with teachers and school management staff more effectively. This was a slow process that required patience, as some schools were interested but not at that particular time within the school calendar. Even arranging meetings with key decision-makers within schools and colleges (e.g., headmaster) proved difficult and time consuming.

As we approached schools directly, the lack of teachers’ knowledge of the project created a barrier in gaining entry to work with students. The product was branded in a way to demonstrate a professional programme. Yet, it was new to the market so teachers struggled to identify with the content and novel approach of teaching life skills through golf. Having practiced and honed my ‘pitch’ on many occasions with head-teachers and school support staff, we were finally gaining some interest and recruited from several schools. The need to physically meet with potential stakeholders in order to ‘sell’ the product and convince them of the multiple benefits to their pupils was proving more effective. This is a skill that has taken time to develop throughout the Ph.D. Being able to align my priorities with their agenda to be able to negotiate a ‘deal’, was not a skill I considered relevant to Ph.D. research prior to commencing. This skill of negotiation was a craft that aided my additional ‘hat’ and identity as a travelling salesman. Reflecting on it at the end of the process, the skill of negotiation has been amongst the most influential in developing research acumen. This will hopefully provide a valuable asset in convincing an accreditation panel towards the numerous benefits of the intervention to create a Level 3 ten-credit qualification for colleges.

**Developing unique skills.**

An opportunity arose to create a short film of the project in partnership with the funding organisation. Back in front of the camera again, the film included comments from my
director of studies, the coach at the golf club, and I. In discussing my development, my supervisor reiterated the uniqueness of the programme of research, reflecting the development of entrepreneurial skills:

Specifically, it’s allowed Hamish to develop research, enterprise, and applied skills which is unique within a researcher and it allows him to have an outward focus now in the future to realise that research needs to be conducted for the benefit of society.

The journey that I have undertaken as part of the Ph.D. has provided me with the skills that are transferable beyond the remit of academia. My development as a professional applied researcher is indeed beneficial if I progress into academia. However, the competencies, knowledge, and experiences I have gained as a result of undertaking a Ph.D. will benefit me and hopefully the wider society in whatever career path I choose.

The level of criticality, both towards yourself within reflective practice and in relation to research rigour, can be likened to very few professions. Systematic assessment of processes, outcomes, and consequences can be found in nuances of entrepreneurship (Leadbeater & Goss, 1998). However, the presence of risk-taking within entrepreneurs separates the comparison towards a researcher. Referring back to Leadbeater and Goss (1998), the managerial component of entrepreneurship has perhaps been the most influential in my development as an applied researcher. The risk of spending a great deal of time and effort in creating a marketable product that might not have an impact on the specific results of the research, presented a challenging, yet daunting prospect. Managing a research project or business requires a level of criticality in assessing progress. Often taking into account multiple opinions, agendas, and priorities, a project manager is forced to make decisions based on the most appropriate outcome that supports the aims of the project (D’Mello,}
Kushev, & Mattingley, 2012). I feel that my skills as a *project manager* have been tested throughout the past four years. Making decisions based on producing a rigorous end product (thesis) that demonstrates a contribution to knowledge becomes the focal ethos of managing the programme of research. However, pairing this objective with the unpredictable nature of applied research, as well as the newly experienced world of business, is what makes this Ph.D. unique. The additional skills that I have gained through involvement in internal and external committees, professional organisations, applied consultancy, and learning and teaching practices has provided me with the tools in navigating academia as well as manage this research project.

Early in the Ph.D. process I recognised that completing a thesis alone will not prepare me for a career in academia or any other discipline. In being relatively naïve to the governance and structure of academia I was keen to explore the new environment of research with the potential for a long-term career in the field. My curiosity led me to become involved in the Division of Sport and Exercise Psychology as a Student Representative, attending committee meetings and gaining an understanding of the profession. In addition, involvement in the Association for Applied Sport Psychology as an International Representative provided insight into the profession from a global perspective, leading me to build a network of friends and colleagues, some of whom have shaped my progress as an entrepreneur. Building a system of support with friends and fellow postgraduate researchers globally has allowed the opportunity to share best practice and recognise the benefits to collaboration.

Despite the supportive social environment I have been fortunate to experience, due to the often-solitary nature of conducting a Ph.D., I would argue that every doctoral thesis should contain a reflective narrative that explores the journey of the researcher and initiation into academia. Earlier I referred to myself as an ‘apprentice researcher’, therefore, I see my four-year experience as an initiation into the world of academia. The process has brought
enjoyment, challenge, and opportunities. My development, on a professional and personal level, has allowed me to progress towards commencing a career that I am passionate about. The skills that I have developed as a result of the challenges that I have endured, has fostered a *resilient researcher* and entrepreneur. No one said the journey would be easy and facing adversity along the way is part of the deal. Dealing with remote locations, financial constraints, personal difficulties with loved ones, and attempting to bridge the worlds of academia and industry, have all given me the confidence to face any challenge in the future. Adapting to circumstance and drawing on the skills and resources available to me has directed me towards my current standing. This chapter has explored some of the challenges that I have faced and will hopefully provide a useful resource for future Ph.D. students, as well as experienced researchers involved in the changing world of doctoral research.
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APPENDICES
Appendix 1
## Pilot 1

**Session 1 – 13.00-15.30**

### Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.5hrs</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity Style</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>30mins</strong></td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Take ARQ measure</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Values of the project</td>
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<td>• Group rules’</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What is expected in the programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Group task/wake-up game</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>40mins</strong></td>
<td><strong>Resilience</strong></td>
<td>Whole group</td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How can you improve and develop resilience - Powerpoint</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Resilience as a life skill</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What do they understand by life skills?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Problem Solving</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• How does it link to Resilience</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Introduce STAR - Stand back, Think, Action, Reflect</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reflection</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• What have you learnt from task?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>10mins</strong></td>
<td><strong>BREAK</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>40mins</strong></td>
<td><strong>Problem Solving</strong></td>
<td>Two groups</td>
<td>Golf course</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Play two holes on course – reflection after each one</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What problems do they typically come across?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How do they tackle these problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Use STAR in performance</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>20mins</strong></td>
<td><strong>Transfer of life skills</strong></td>
<td>Whole group</td>
<td>Driving range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reflection from whole session</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How can we use it outside of golf?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Using STAR outside of golf</td>
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<tr>
<td>• School/university/job</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Transfer discussion in pairs on driving range</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>10mins</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reflection</strong></td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What have they liked/not liked</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What works best for them – how do they learn?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• More practical element? Do ‘classroom’ section out on the course or the range?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Session 2 – 13.00-15.30

**Goal Setting and Mindsets**

### 2.5 hrs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10mins</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Recap on previous session – group reflection  
- What problems have they faced during the week in school and golf  
- Group task/wake up game  
| Whole group discussion | Clubhouse |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25mins</td>
<td>Performance profiling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Task 1 – 2 groups – what is performance? Create a spider diagram. Feedback to the rest of the group. 10mins, 5mins to present back  
- Discuss Four Corner model – link to goal setting  
| Two groups | Clubhouse |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Task 2 | 3 groups of 4 – mental aspects of sport/golf. Come up with as many as possible  
- Feedback to the group | Three groups |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30mins</td>
<td>Goal Setting</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- Task 3 – Each person has 10 balls to hit, then 5 for competition.  
- Out of your 10 balls, bring them together and get them to set a target for the 5 comp balls e.g. 3 out of 5 off the ground or 2/3 to 70 yds.  
- Go through what are goals? On a post-it note write down 2 goals - one for your performance in golf/sport and one outside of sport.  
- Teach the SMART concept  
- Go back to the post-it notes and make them SMART  
- Have them collate the post-it notes and save them for next week when re-visit it – for a GOAL Board | Three groups | Driving Range |

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25mins</td>
<td>Mindsets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
- Introduce the 2 concepts of mindsets – what are they?  
- Fixed vs growth  
- Show Michael Jordan video clip – link to resilience  
- Discuss clip in groups  
| Two groups | Clubhouse |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| | Coach vs AR – mindsets in action. Driving Range  
Coach as the fixed mindset. AR as the fixed mindset, always complaining when he misses shots (self-talk), annoyed when AR plays a good shot, doesn’t give AR any encouragement, very negative. AR has a growth mindset, always positive, approaches the shot the same way each time, sportsmanship towards Coach ‘good shot’.  
Awards ceremony – AR goes to shake hand, Coach doesn’t accept, very negative towards his own performance and says ‘AR wasn’t a better player, I was rubbish, I played rubbish’  
What can you take away from today – ‘Nothing!’  
AR – positive, sees things as improvement and looks at things to work on and improve for next time etc. | Whole group - roleplay | Driving Range |

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15mins</td>
<td>Planning for the future</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- A1 sheet – each individuals goal for the future (job, uni etc.)  
- All goals in the middle, then branch out to individuals goals on the sheet – breakdown of each person’s future in a couple of goals  
- If they are not sure what they want to do at this stage – then a goal on how to get there and find out – perhaps a goal to cover the next 6 months  
- Review and look at goals | Three groups | Clubhouse |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Homework task – set 1 long term goal, 2 medium term, 3 short term – associated to performance profile</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Session 3 - 9.30-12.00

**Communication**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10mins</td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Whole group</td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Re-visit last 2 sessions on problem solving and goal setting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Have a look through ‘homework’ tasks – revision calendar and performance profile wheel</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Have each person talk through 2 skills on their performance profile wheel</td>
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<tr>
<td>40mins</td>
<td><strong>Coaching</strong></td>
<td>Whole group</td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Talk through the session plans – have whole group discuss ways in which they might improve or change them. Give each group 15 minutes to finalise their session plans</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Bit of an introduction on HOW TO COACH – give them simple strategies for communication, demonstrating skills/tasks, reflect on task afterwards – why they were coached this skill - where will it be useful</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What do you need to be a successful coach?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Have a mini introduction to their ‘skill’ being taught</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Make sure everything is in place for juniors – meet in bar, have props and equipment ready</td>
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<tr>
<td>40mins</td>
<td><strong>Coaching mini-juniors</strong></td>
<td>Coaching – two groups</td>
<td>Driving range + junior course</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Provide support to the ‘coaches’ – Coach one group, AR another</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Facilitate coaching sessions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Emphasise importance of social support – need to support each other in the task</td>
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<tr>
<td>20mins</td>
<td><strong>Reflection</strong></td>
<td>Two groups</td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Coaches discuss and write down positives of their session in detail</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Points for improvement / what would you do differently next time?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Start to link reflection process to golfing performance and outside activities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Where would you use reflection outside of golf? What are the benefits of it? How do you reflect?</td>
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<tr>
<td>30mins</td>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>Whole group</td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Carrying on from coaching reflection – how we communicate effectively</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Forms of communication, body language, process/flow of communicating with person</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Task</strong> – See who is around in the clubhouse to talk to</td>
<td>In pairs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Participant must introduce themselves and begin conversation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Talk to an adult in the clubhouse, learning skills of communicating, must find out 3 pieces of information –</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Name – How long have they been playing golf – Are they a member of the club – If so, how long have they been a member - why do they love golf? Who will win the Ryder Cup?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10mins</td>
<td><strong>Reflection</strong></td>
<td>Three groups</td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How did they find the task -talk through what they found difficult/easy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How did they introduce themselves?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Reflection on todays session:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Write down individually on a post-it note what they enjoyed about the session and 3 things they have taken away from it</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Homework task – next session on managing emotions / adversity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Session 4 – 10.00-12.30

**2.5hrs**

**Town centre – Transfer + Communication**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10mins</td>
<td><strong>Introduction and set up</strong></td>
<td>Whole group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2hrs 20mins</td>
<td><strong>Rotations</strong></td>
<td>Town Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Meet in town centre courtyard – set up equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discuss plan for the session</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rotate tasks every 20 minutes</td>
<td>Three groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensure participants are supervised/observed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Social support – lean on each other for assistance, rather than trying to do it alone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Coach and AR to facilitate questions from public</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Session 5 – 9.30-12.00

**2.5hrs**

**Managing Emotions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10mins</td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Whole group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recap on town centre session – how it links to resilience and aim of programme</td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduce managing emotions – why it’s important</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Wake-up game</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30mins</td>
<td><strong>Managing Emotions</strong></td>
<td>In pairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Emotions experienced in different contexts – school, home, friends – discussion groups – transfer</td>
<td>Driving range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Social support – discuss who is in your support network in different environments</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Feedback and link to caddy within golf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pre-shot routines on driving range – demonstrations using group as a crowd to elicit emotions in participants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Coaching pre-shot routine – peer-led</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50mins</td>
<td><strong>On Course</strong></td>
<td>Three groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2 holes with Pre-shot routines in action – peer-led coaching with</td>
<td>Short course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Texas scramble competition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reflection following each hole</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45mins</td>
<td><strong>Course Management – Challenges competition</strong></td>
<td>Three groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• On course in teams – avoiding obstacles set out on course</td>
<td>Short course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reviewing holes beforehand – setting goals and reviewing challenges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reflecting in teams after each hole – re-aligning goals/strategy time vs speed on challenges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15mins</td>
<td><strong>Reflection</strong></td>
<td>Whole group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reflect on managing emotions session – link to transfer</td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review all five sessions – link to resilience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How have they found the programme?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What have they enjoyed and not enjoyed?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2
Title of Project: PasSPORT for Life
Name of Researcher: Hamish Cox

Participant to complete this section: Please tick each box.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated for this study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that it is possible to stop taking part at any time, without giving a reason.

3. I also understand that if this happens, our relationships with Cardiff Metropolitan University, or our legal rights will not be affected.

4. I understand that information from the study may be used for reporting purposes, but I will not be identified.

5. I agree to take part in this study for the duration of the programme

__________________________________
Name of Participant

__________________________________
Signature of Participant Date

__________________________________
Name of person taking consent (parent/guardian) Date

__________________________________
Signature of person taking consent (parent/guardian)

* When completed, one copy for participant and one copy for researcher’s files.
Information Sheet

Project Title:

The effectiveness of a golf-related resiliency training program on the mental and physiological health and well-being of adolescents within the Carmarthenshire area of Wales.

Background:

The number of stressors and demands that a teenager experiences in the developmental phase to becoming a responsible and socially respectable individual able to thrive in the ‘adult world’ is indeed vast. The coping skills and strategies that are employed in order to deal with adversities such as a job interview, having a healthy balanced lifestyle, a school exam or the loss of a close relative are not taught or developed within the natural school setting or curriculum. Sport has been used as a vehicle for developing and transferring certain life skills in youth and teenagers for some time. Although, the notion of resilience and mental toughness has not been considered alongside the health benefits of sport. Therefore, the purpose of this project is to develop the skills and strategies necessary for dealing with stressful, adverse situations within golf and then transferring these skills to life outside of sport, such as school, college/university and employment.

Parental Participation:

The project focuses on developing the necessary skills in order to be able to live a healthy, balanced lifestyle, as well as teaching teenagers how to be a responsible individual who contributes to society. The involvement of the primary guardian will be paramount to the process and success of the program. Your involvement will enable an insight into the life of your son/daughter from a home perspective. Any changes in your child’s personality or general behaviour towards coping with adverse situations could be noticeable in the home environment.
**Benefits of taking part in the program:**

The program will be based on providing skills and strategies for your child to be able to use in other areas of life outside of sport. The skills will be developed in golf, and throughout the program, their transferability will be analysed with the participants. The overall aim of the program is to develop resiliency related skills in golf that can be transferred to other areas of life such as school, college/university, and employment. Such skills will aid your child to be able to deal with stressful situations, such as a job interview.

**Health benefit:**

A number of fitness tests will be utilised in order to assess current fitness levels (including body composition, strength, aerobic capacity etc). Alongside the psychological skills required in life, healthy living / physical activity and nutritional workshops will also form part of the project.

If you have any further queries regarding the program then please don’t hesitate to contact the Lead Researcher:

Hamish Cox
Appendix 4
Feedback Form

Name (optional): ......................................................
How many sessions (days) have you attended? ............

What have you enjoyed about the sessions?

What did you not enjoy?

Is there anything you would like to change?

Please provide a brief outline of what you have learnt during the sessions you have attended:

•
•
•
•

Would you recommend the programme to a friend?
Your answers to this questionnaire are confidential. YOU DO NOT NEED TO WRITE YOUR NAME.

There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your experiences.

Please be as truthful as you can.

Please read each line carefully and circle the number that most closely tells us how often each statement is true for you.

For example, if you like the hot weather most of the time you should circle number 2.

I like hot weather

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>Some of the time</th>
<th>Not often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you don't like hot weather at all, you should circle 5 (Never).

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
This questionnaire is about you, your family, friends, school and neighbourhood. The following statements may or may not be true for you. Circle the number closest to how it is for you.

**About you...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Almost Never</th>
<th>Not Often</th>
<th>Some times</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>Almost Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My life has a sense of purpose</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I worry about the future</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am easily frustrated with people</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take it easy on myself when I am not feeling well</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My feelings are out of my control</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel good about myself</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I have a problem I can work it out</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I dwell on the bad things that happen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am patient with people who can’t do things as well as I can</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I look for what I can learn out of bad things that happen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tend to think the worst is going to happen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel helpless when faced with a problem</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel hopeful about my life</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I am feeling down, I take extra special care of myself</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can express my opinions when I am in a group</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I can’t handle something I find help</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get frustrated when people make mistakes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident that I can achieve what I set out to do</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a person who can go with the flow</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can’t stop worrying about my problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it hard to express myself to others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident that I can handle whatever comes my way</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to let go of things I can’t control</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have trouble explaining how I am feeling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I push myself too hard to do what everyone else does</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can change my feelings by changing the way I see things</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I try to find meaning in the things that happen to me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect people to live up to my standards</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it easy talking to people my age</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When things go wrong, I tend to give myself a hard time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a shy person</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I just can’t let go of bad feelings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can share my personal thoughts with others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it hard to make important decisions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think about other peoples feelings before I say things</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If I have a problem, I know there is someone I can talk to
Other peoples feelings are easy for me to understand
If something upsets me it affects how I feel about everything
I feel confident to do things by myself
I think things through carefully before making decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>About family...</th>
<th>Almost</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>Almost</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I do fun things with my family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get to spend enough time with my family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family understands my needs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>We do things together as a family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>My family listens to me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in my family expect too much of me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>There is someone in my family that I feel particularly close to</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy spending time with my family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family helps me to believe in myself and my abilities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is someone in my family I can talk to about anything</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>If I have a problem there is someone in my family I can talk to</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>About friends...</th>
<th>Almost</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>Almost</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When I am down I have friends that help cheer me up</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it hard making friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a group of friends that I keep in touch with regularly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making new friends is easy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel left out of things</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have friends who make me laugh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am happy with my friendship group</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it hard to stay friends with people</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer to do things on my own</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get to spend enough time with my friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wish I had more friends I felt close to</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy being around people my age</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel shy around people my age</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a friend I can trust with my private thoughts and feelings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident around people my age</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>About school...</th>
<th>Almost</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>Almost</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My teachers are caring and supportive of me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a teacher that I feel looks out for me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hate going to school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I try hard in school 1 2 3 4 5
My teachers provide me with extra help if I need it 1 2 3 4 5
I join in class discussions 1 2 3 4 5
There is an adult at school I could talk to if I had a personal problem 1 2 3 4 5
My teachers expect too much of me 1 2 3 4 5
I participate in class 1 2 3 4 5
I enjoy going to school 1 2 3 4 5
I get involved with school activities 1 2 3 4 5
I feel that what I say counts at school 1 2 3 4 5
At school students help to decide and plan things like school activities and events 1 2 3 4 5
I am bored at school 1 2 3 4 5
My teachers notice when I am doing a good job and let me know 1 2 3 4 5
Getting good marks is important to me 1 2 3 4 5

About the area you live in, your neighbourhood or community...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Almost Never</th>
<th>Not Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Most of the Time</th>
<th>Almost Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I trust the people in my neighbourhood</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like my neighbourhood</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>There is an adult in my neighbourhood I could talk to about a problem</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in my neighbourhood are caring</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The people in my neighbourhood treat other people fairly</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The people in my neighbourhood look out for me</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, some questions about you...

1. How old are you? ________________
2. Are you:
   - [ ] Male
   - [ ] Female
3. What are you currently doing? (Tick as many as apply)
   - [ ] Attending school
   - [ ] Attending university/TAFE
   - [ ] Unemployed
   - [ ] Working part time
   - [ ] Working full time
   - [ ] Other _______________________
4. Are your parents:
   - [ ] Living together
   - [ ] Have never lived together
   - [ ] Separated or divorced
   - [ ] Something else _______________________
   - [ ] One or both my parents have died
5. In your family, are you the:
   - [ ] First child
   - [ ] Third child
6. What level of school did your mother complete?
   - [ ] Primary School
   - [ ] Secondary School
   - [ ] University
   - [ ] Fourth child or higher
   - [ ] Technical /TAFE
   - [ ] Apprenticeship
   - [ ] Other __________________

   If you don’t know, what is or was her job?
   ____________________________
Appendix 6
10 entry-level competencies of youth workers (adapted from Barcelona, Hurd, & Bruggeman, 2011):

1. Understands and applied basic child and adolescent development principles
2. Communicates and develops positive relationships with youth
3. Adapts, facilitates, and evaluates age-appropriate activities with and for the group
4. Respects and honours cultural and human diversity
5. Involves and empowers youth
6. Identifies potential risk factors and takes measures to reduce those risks
7. Cares for, involves, and works with families and communities
8. Work as part of a team and shows professionalism
9. Demonstrates the attributes and qualities of a positive role model
10. Interacts with and relates to youth in ways that support asset building
Appendix 7
[Email discussion with Sport Psychologist regarding their experience of the first initial meeting with a client. Italics added.]

“So I guess the point I’m making here is, based on my experience, I no longer worry about making the first meeting effective from an “applied” perspective. The first meeting for me is about establishing rapport, talking about whatever the athlete wants to talk about, discussing ethics and perhaps (but often not) coming up for a plan for future sessions. *I actually steer clear from doing anything applied in the first session because I want to make sure the client and I will have a relationship that works (or appears to work) before we start doing anything.*

The first meeting is almost always over a coffee, never charged, and always laid back. I put a lot of thought into location and clothes (I cannot over emphasise the importance of what you wear when meeting children and parents, and when meeting professional athletes). I make sure I have the forms I want signing (I have consent forms for parents and kids re. the sharing of information and a contract that outlines confidentiality etc) and I have a notepad (but I never ever make notes when I consult, that doesn’t work for me. I write everything after a session). I make sure I’ve read up on the sport (getting language right is important, unless you are very good at laughing at yourself) and that’s it. I rely on being able to chat about anything… and *being flexible.* To me this is absolutely critical to taking an humanistic approach to consulting. There is no way I could plan for a session (taking a humanistic approach) before I have met the client and chatted to them about everything from school/work, to family, to sport. If I was approaching the meeting too scheduled I know from my own experience that I find myself getting drawn into a very CBT approach (which generally doesn’t work with my personality).”
### Intervention 1

**Session 1 – 9.30-14.00**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity Style</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.5hrs</td>
<td>Resilience and Problem Solving, Goal Setting</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>30mins</td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Welcome and fill in Passports</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Wake up games – group circle with hands</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Fill in ARQ</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Life Skills in Sport – flip-chart</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduction to resilience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30mins</td>
<td><strong>Problem Solving</strong></td>
<td>Whole group</td>
<td>Driving range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How does it link to Resilience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduce STAR - Stand back, Think, Action, Reflect</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Basics of grip</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Problems faced whilst learning to play golf – analyse each other’s performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15mins</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30mins</td>
<td><strong>Problem Solving</strong></td>
<td>Three groups</td>
<td>Putting green</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Ultimate Frisbee – what problems to they face and how do they solve them?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Differences in stance – leading to different problems</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Basics of putting – lie, break, wind, speed of green</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Run through STAR method in pairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>20mins</td>
<td><strong>Goal Setting</strong></td>
<td>Whole group</td>
<td>Driving range</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What are goals?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• On a post-it note, write down 3 goals – one for your performance in golf, one for life outside</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Go through SMARTER – evaluate and re-do</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Return to goals and make them SMART</td>
<td>In pairs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Who is involved in your goals – social support</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>45mins</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
<td>Three groups</td>
<td>On course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1hr</td>
<td><strong>On course – goals and problem solving</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Set goals beforehand</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Analyse problems for each hole – and set a goal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Start to bring in reflection at the end</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Why do we reflect?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o What is it for?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o What went well etc.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Session 2 – 9.30-14.00

### Goal Setting and Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10mins</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30mins</td>
<td>Goal Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40mins</td>
<td>Coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15mins</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45mins</td>
<td>Coaching sessions – three groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45mins</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1hr</td>
<td>On course – communicating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Introduction
- Recap on previous session – group reflection
- What problems have they faced during the session
- Group task/wake up game – Chinese whispers – communication

#### Goal Setting
- Each person has 10 balls to hit, then 5 for competition.
- Out of your 10 balls, bring them together and get them to set a target for the 5 comp balls e.g. 3 out of 5 off the ground or 2/5 to 70 yds.
- Link to goals outside of golf – post-it notes for school/home

#### Coaching
- Talk through the session plans – have whole group discuss ways in which they might improve or change them. Give each group 20 mins to create session plans
- Bit of an introduction on HOW TO COACH – give them simple strategies for communication, demonstrating skills/tasks, reflect on task afterwards – why they were coached this skill – where will it be useful
- What do you need to be a successful coach?

#### Break

#### Coaching sessions – three groups
- Hamish and staff members to be included in session – as participants
- Short debrief/reflection after each session
- Complete reflection sheets after all sessions completed

#### On course – communicating
- Texas scramble for 5 holes – 1 team member blindfolded per hole
- Other forms of communication – link in social support with other members of the team

#### Reflection
- Reflect and review performance form the course
- Reflection from the 2 days so far – what they have learnt – test their learning of STAR and SMART
- Begin with managing emotions –
- What emotions do they experience – what prompts the emotions
### Session 3 - 9.30-12.00

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.5hrs</th>
<th>Managing emotions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 25mins | - Recap on previous session – group reflection  
- Communication tasks – what have they learnt  
- Group task/wake up game – roleplay of emotions in school |
| Whole group | Clubhouse |
| 35mins | Managing Emotions  
- Emotions experienced in different contexts – school, home, friends – discussion groups – transfer  
- Social support – discuss who is in your support network in different environments  
  - Feedback and link to caddy within golf  
- Pre-shot routines on driving range – demonstrations using group as a crowd to elicit emotions in participants - Coaching pre-shot routine – peer-led |
| Whole group | Driving range  
Groups of 3 |
| 15mins | BREAK |
| 45mins | Managing emotions + goal setting/reflection  
Obstacle course set up on each hole  
  - 3 holes with Pre-shot routines in action – peer-led coaching with  
  - Texas scramble competition  
  - Set goals for each hole – considering the obstacles – points system for hitting/missing targets.  
  - Reflection following each hole |
| Three groups | On course |
| 45mins | Course Management – Challenges competition  
On course in teams – avoiding obstacles set out on course  
Reviewing holes beforehand – setting goals and reviewing challenges  
Reflecting in teams after each hole – re-aligning goals/strategy time vs speed on challenges  
  - Prize for winning team |
| Whole group | On course |
| 1hr | LUNCH |
| 30mins | Reflect and review on whole programme  
  - Feedback on course structure/content and sessions  
  - What have they learnt – review learning and transfer |
| Whole group | Clubhouse |
Appendix 10
## Intervention 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1hr</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity Style</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1hr</td>
<td>Session 1 – Introduction / Taster</td>
<td>Three groups</td>
<td>Large Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduction to the course</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fill out Passport booklets</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Obstacle course in main hall – gauge learning and skill level</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Life skills in sport</td>
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<tr>
<td>1hr</td>
<td>Session 2 – Problem Solving</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
<td>Small hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How does it link to Resilience</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduce STAR - Stand back, Think, Action, Reflect</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Basics of technique – grip and stance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Half group with large net and others on chipping nets</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Problems faced whilst learning to play golf – analyse each other’s performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>1hr</td>
<td>Session 3 – Problem Solving</td>
<td>Three groups</td>
<td>Small hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ultimate Frisbee – what problems do they face and how do they solve them?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Complete STAR sheets with each task – driving, chipping, putting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>◦ Review each other’s performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>1hr</td>
<td>Session 4 – Goal Setting</td>
<td>Three groups</td>
<td>Small hall</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Link to goals outside of golf – post-it notes for school/home</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teach SMART and fill out booklets for golf goals and school goals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Three stations of goal setting – driving, chipping, and putting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Reflection based on achieving goals and challenges set</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Introduce challenges faced in school – how to deal with specific challenges</td>
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<tr>
<td>1hr</td>
<td>Session 5 – Goal Setting</td>
<td>Two groups</td>
<td>Small hall + classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review last session</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Review SMART and set goals for home life / work / future</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Two groups – one goals setting, other in classroom completing fitness measures</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Technique with goal setting + start planning coaching session plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>1hr</td>
<td>Session 6 – Communication</td>
<td>Three groups</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review last few sessions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communication tasks – Chinese whispers, blindfold obstacle course</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• How to coach – design coaching sessions for following session</td>
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<tr>
<td>1hr</td>
<td>Session 7 – Communication - coaching</td>
<td></td>
<td>Small hall</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Deliver three coaching sessions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Complete coaching reflection and review sheets for all three groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>1hr</td>
<td>Session 8 – Managing Emotions</td>
<td>Four groups</td>
<td>Small hall</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduce pre-shot routines</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Emotions experienced in challenging situations – how to deal with them</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Three groups working on pre-shot routine</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Reflection on how to deal with emotions outside of golf</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1hr</td>
<td>Session 9 – Managing Emotions</td>
<td>Individually</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Complete ‘Pre-shot routine’ for scenario outside of golf</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Link in other skills covered so far – managing emotions under pressure – crown cheering/shouting/silent/watching</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Transfer of golf skills in managing emotions to life scenario</td>
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<tr>
<td>1hr</td>
<td>Session 10 – Nutrition</td>
<td>Two groups</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Food task – dividing good vs. bad foods</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How to read food labels</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• What should athletes be eating – 10,000 calories per day</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• What should we be eating as teenagers? What effect does it have on us long-term?</td>
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<tr>
<td>1hr</td>
<td>Session 11 – Apprentice</td>
<td>Two groups</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Complete Apprentice task in classroom</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Reflect on winning strategy – what skills and resources did they use</td>
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<td>• How did they cope with the pressure of multiple tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>4hrs</td>
<td>Session 12 – Cube tasks</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
<td>Golf Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review content from all sessions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Introduce teams and cube tasks – team names, managers etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Complete cube tasks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Competition on course – in afternoon</td>
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</table>
Appendix 11
## Intervention 3

### Session 1 – 9.45-14.45

**Time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity Style</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 mins</td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Welcome and fill in Passports</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wake up games – group circle with hands</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fill in ARQ</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Life Skills in Sport – flip-chart</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Introduction to resilience – Challenges – split into two teams</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity Style</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 mins</td>
<td><strong>Problem Solving</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How does it link to Resilience</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce STAR - Stand back, Think, Action, Reflect</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Basics of grip</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problems faced whilst learning to play golf – analyse each other’s performance</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity Style</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 mins</td>
<td><strong>Problem Solving</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fox, chicken, seed task in 2 groups</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Complete STAR in booklet</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What challenges have been faced so far – with challenge tasks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What challenges are there in golf– how do you use problem solving to overcome them?</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity Style</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 mins</td>
<td><strong>Problem Solving</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STAR method with chipping</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teach basics of chipping</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Three stations with distance control - challenge</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity Style</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 mins</td>
<td><strong>Challenges in life</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What challenges are you faced with</td>
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<td></td>
<td>How do you currently deal with them and how can we change that?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Present back and reflect as a group</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity Style</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1hr</td>
<td><strong>Problem Solving</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STAR in putting green</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teach basics of putting on short course</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On course competition – putting all three techniques in to practice</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problem solving – using STAR on each hole and reflecting after each hole</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 mins</td>
<td><strong>LUNCH</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 mins</td>
<td><strong>Problem Solving</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>STAR in putting green</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teach basics of putting on short course</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On course competition – putting all three techniques in to practice</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problem solving – using STAR on each hole and reflecting after each hole</td>
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</tbody>
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### Notes

- **Time:** 4.5hrs
- **Activity:** Resilience and Problem Solving
## Session 2 – 9.45-14.45

### 4.5 hrs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10mins</td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recap on previous session – group reflection</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What problems have they faced during the session</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Group task/wake up game – Chinese whispers – communication</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Whole group discussion</td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| 30mins | **Goal Setting** | Three groups |
| What are goals?  |
| On a post-it note, write down 3 goals – one for your performance in golf, one for life outside  |
| Go through SMARTER – evaluate and re-do  |
| Return to goals and make them SMART  |
| Who is involved in your goals – social support  |
| Driving Range |

| 40mins | **Goal Setting** |
| Each person has 10 balls to hit, then 5 for competition.  |
| Out of your 10 balls, bring them together and get them to set a target for the 5 comp balls e.g. 3 out of 5 off the ground or 2/5 to 70 yds.  |
| Link to goals outside of golf – post-it notes for school/home  |
| Clubhouse |

| 15mins | BREAK |
| 45mins | **Goal Setting and Problem Solving**  |
| Linking goal setting and problem solving together with skills required to play golf  |
| On course competition challenges – obstacle course and blindfold hitting  |
| Two groups |

| 30mins | **LUNCH** |
| 1hr | **Goal Setting**  |
| Goal setting in life – school and home life  |
| Future planning – what skills are required  |
| How are you going to get the skills you need for your job?  |
| Review goal setting on driving range  |
| Start to introduce Pre-shot routine – what techniques are they finding difficult  |
| Three groups |

| 30mins | **Goal Setting On course** |
| Review course strategy from earlier  |
| Set goals for each hole and focus on process goals throughout  |
| Three groups |

| 45mins | **Driving Range**  |
| Three groups |
| 1hr | **Clubhouse**  |
| Whole group |

| 30mins | **Short course** |
| Three groups |

| 45mins | **Driving Range**  |
| Whole group |

| 30mins | **Short course**  |
| Three groups |

| 45mins | **Clubhouse**  |
| 1hr | **Driving Range**  |
| Whole group |
# Session 3 - 9.45-14.45

4.5hrs  | **Communication**
---|---
25mins  | **Introduction**  
  - Recap on previous session – group reflection  
  - What problems have they faced during the session  
  - Group task/wake up game – Chinese whispers – communication  
 | Whole group  

35mins  | **Coaching**  
  - Talk through the session plans – have whole group discuss ways in which they might improve or change them. Give each group 20 mins to create session plans  
  - Bit of an introduction on HOW TO COACH – give them simple strategies for communication, demonstrating skills/tasks, reflect on task afterwards – why they were coached this skill - where will it be useful  
  - What do you need to be a successful coach?  
 | Whole group  

15mins  | **BREAK**  
 | 

1hr  | **On course – communicating**  
  - Texas scramble for 5 holes – 1 team member blindfolded per hole  
  - Other forms of communication – link in social support with other members of the team  
 | Three groups  

Reflection  
  - Reflect and review performance form the course  
  - Reflection from the 2 days so far – what they have learnt – test their learning of STAR and SMART  
  - Begin with managing emotions –  
  - What emotions do they experience – what prompts the emotions  

45mins  | **LUNCH**  
 | 

1hr  | **Coaching sessions –**  
  - Hamish and staff members to be included in session – as participants  
  - Short debrief/reflection after each session  
  - Complete reflection sheets after all sessions completed  
 | Three groups  

30mins  | **Communication outside of golf**  
  - What challenges do they face in school and part-time jobs  
  - Present on a topic of choice  
  - What emotions are experiencing when under pressure  
  - Introduce how to deal with the emotions  
 | Whole group  
# Session 4 - 9.45-14.45

### 4.5hrs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25mins</td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Whole group</td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recap on previous session – group reflection</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What problems have they faced during the session</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group task/wake up game – Presenting under pressure</td>
<td>In pairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>35mins</td>
<td><strong>Technique</strong></td>
<td>Three groups</td>
<td>Driving range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General recap on driving range</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Start linking in pre-shot routine</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15mins</td>
<td><strong>BREAK</strong></td>
<td>Three groups</td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50mins</td>
<td><strong>Managing emotions</strong></td>
<td>Three groups</td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 events, outcomes, emotions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Role play scenario</td>
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<td></td>
<td>◦ Possible role-play scenarios –</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ About to go on a rollercoaster ride, everyone is quite nervous/excited. After queuing, one person decides they are too afraid and doesn’t want to go on. This means that no-one in the group can go on the ride – so some are angry and frustrated</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Guys are playing playstation, sister and friends run in and turn it off in the middle of a game – starts a fight. Mum/dad burst in and try to break up the fight but they don’t know who to believe</td>
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<tr>
<td>50mins</td>
<td><strong>Pre-shot routine</strong></td>
<td>Two groups</td>
<td>Driving Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-shot routines on the driving range</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How to use them and why we use them – general introduction and overview</td>
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<tr>
<td>45mins</td>
<td><strong>LUNCH</strong></td>
<td>Three groups</td>
<td>On course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45mins</td>
<td><strong>On course competition</strong></td>
<td>Three groups</td>
<td>On course</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Texas scramble competition on the course with using pre-shot routines</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Considering STAR and SMART on each hole</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reflecting after each hole</td>
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<tr>
<td>30mins</td>
<td><strong>Reflection</strong></td>
<td>Three groups</td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review round and the day</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflect on managing emotions outside of golf – what scenarios</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Devise pre-shot routine for situations outside of golf</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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Appendix 12
### Intervention 4

#### Session 1 – 9.45-14.00

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity Style</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4hrs</td>
<td>Resilience and Problem Solving, Goal Setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>30mins</td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Welcome and fill in Passports</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Wake up games – group circle with hands</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Fill in ARQ</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Life Skills in Sport – flip-chart</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduction to resilience</td>
<td>Two groups</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>30mins</td>
<td><strong>Problem Solving</strong></td>
<td>Whole group</td>
<td>Driving range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How does it link to Resilience</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introduce STAR - Stand back, Think, Action, Reflect</td>
<td>In pairs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Basics of grip</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Problems faced whilst learning to play golf – analyse each other’s performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>15mins</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30mins</td>
<td><strong>Problem Solving</strong></td>
<td>Three groups</td>
<td>Putting green</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Ultimate Frisbee – what problems do they face and how do they solve them?</td>
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<td>• Differences in stance – leading to different problems</td>
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<td>• Basics of putting – lie, break, wind, speed of green</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Run through STAR method in pairs</td>
<td>In pairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>20mins</td>
<td><strong>Goal Setting</strong></td>
<td>Whole group</td>
<td>Driving range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What are goals?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• On a post-it note, write down 3 goals – one for your performance in golf, one for life outside</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Go through SMARTER – evaluate and re-do</td>
<td>In pairs</td>
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<td>• Return to goals and make them SMART</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Who is involved in your goals – social support</td>
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<tr>
<td>45mins</td>
<td><strong>LUNCH</strong></td>
<td>Three groups</td>
<td>On course</td>
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<tr>
<td>1hr</td>
<td><strong>On course – goals and problem solving</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Set goals beforehand</td>
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<td>• Analyse problems for each hole – and set a goal</td>
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<td>• Start to bring in reflection at the end</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Why do we reflect?</td>
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<td>o What is it for?</td>
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<td>o What went well etc.</td>
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### Session 2 – 9.45-14.00
#### Goal Setting and Communication

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10mins</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>10mins</td>
<td>Whole group discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recap on previous session – group reflection</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What problems have they faced during the session</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group task/wake up game – Chinese whispers – communication</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>30mins</td>
<td>Goal Setting</td>
<td>30mins</td>
<td>Three groups</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Each person has 10 balls to hit, then 5 for competition.</td>
<td>Driving Range</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Out of your 10 balls, bring them together and get them to set a target for the 5 comp balls e.g. 3 out of 5 off the ground or 2/5 to 70 yds.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Link to goals outside of golf – post-it notes for school/home</td>
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<tr>
<td>40mins</td>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>40mins</td>
<td>Driving Range + Chipping area</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talk through the session plans – have whole group discuss ways in which they might improve or change them. Give each group 20 mins to create session plans</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bit of an introduction on HOW TO COACH – give them simple strategies for communication, demonstrating skills/tasks, reflect on task afterwards – why they were coached this skill – where will it be useful</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What do you need to be a successful coach?</td>
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<tr>
<td>15mins</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>15mins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45mins</td>
<td>Coaching sessions – three groups</td>
<td>45mins</td>
<td>Driving Range + Chipping area</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hamish and staff members to be included in session – as participants</td>
<td></td>
<td>Driving Range + Chipping area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Short debrief/reflection after each session</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Complete reflection sheets after all sessions completed</td>
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<tr>
<td>45mins</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
<td>45mins</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>45mins</td>
<td>On course – communicating</td>
<td>45mins</td>
<td>On course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Texas scramble for 5 holes – 1 team member blindfolded per hole</td>
<td>Three groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other forms of communication – link in social support with other members of the team</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Reflect and review performance form the course</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflection from the 2 days so far – what they have learnt – test their learning of STAR and SMART</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Begin with managing emotions –</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What emotions do they experience – what prompts the emotions</td>
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</table>
# Session 3 - 9.30-14.00

## Managing emotions

**4.5hrs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Setting</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 25mins| • Recap on previous session – group reflection  
• Communication tasks – what have they learnt  
• Group task/wake up game – roleplay of emotions in school | Whole group    | Clubhouse                |
| 35mins| **Managing Emotions**  
• Emotions experienced in different contexts – school, home, friends – discussion groups – transfer  
• Social support – discuss who is in your support network in different environments  
  o Feedback and link to caddy within golf  
• Pre-shot routines on driving range – demonstrations using group as a crowd to elicit emotions in participants - Coaching pre-shot routine – peer-led | Whole group    | Driving range            |
| 15mins| **Managing emotions + goal setting/reflection**  
Obstacle course set up on each hole  
• 3 holes with Pre-shot routines in action – peer-led coaching with Texas scramble competition  
• Set goals for each hole – considering the obstacles – points system for hitting/missing targets.  
• Reflection following each hole | Three groups   | On course                |
| 45mins| **LUNCH**                                                                                   | Whole group    | On course                |
| 30mins| **Reflect and review on whole programme**  
• Feedback on course structure/content and sessions  
• What have they learnt – review learning and transfer | Whole group    | Clubhouse                |

## Session 4 - 9.45 – 10.45

## Measurements

**1hr**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Setting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 25mins| **Fitness measurements**  
• Take all measurements in sport hall  
• Staff members to run chipping and putting competitions whilst one group taking measurements | Three groups   | Sports Hall              |
| 25mins| **Managing Emotions**  
• Chipping practice with pre-shot routines  
• Pre-shot routines for life outside of golf – college/work/future careers  
• Future career planning if time | Three groups   | Sport Hall               |
### Session 5 – 9.45-14.00

**Managing Emotions and Apprentice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>10mins</td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recap on previous session – group reflection</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• What problems have they faced during the session</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group task/wake up game</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Whole group discussion</td>
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<td>Clubhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30mins</td>
<td><strong>Managing emotions</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• 3 events, outcomes, emotions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Role play scenario</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Possible role-play scenarios –</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• About to go on a rollercoaster ride, everyone is quite nervous/excited. After queuing, one person decides they are too afraid and doesn’t want to go on. This means that no-one in the group can go on the ride – so some are angry and frustrated</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Guys are playing playstation, sister and friends run in and turn it off in the middle of a game – starts a fight. Mum/dad burst in and try to break up the fight but they don’t know who to believe</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Two groups</td>
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<td>Clubhouse</td>
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<tr>
<td>30mins</td>
<td><strong>Pre-shot routine</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Pre-shot routines on the driving range</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• How to use them and why we use them – general introduction and overview</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Three groups</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Driving Range</td>
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<tr>
<td>15mins</td>
<td><strong>BREAK</strong></td>
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<td>1hr</td>
<td><strong>Apprentice task</strong></td>
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<td>• Reflect on winning strategy – what skills and resources were used to overcome the pressure of multiple tasks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Three groups</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Clubhouse</td>
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<tr>
<td>45mins</td>
<td><strong>LUNCH</strong></td>
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<td>45mins</td>
<td><strong>On course – Competition</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Incorporating all skills</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Final session review with recap on learning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three groups</td>
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<td></td>
<td>On course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 13
This survey is anonymous. Please do not write your name or any identifying information on this survey form. Thank you.

Please answer each question as accurately as possible. For this study accuracy is essential, so if you feel that you cannot answer accurately, or do not want to answer the question, please skip to the next question.

1. What is your age? __________ years

2. What is your gender?
   - [ ] Male
   - [ ] Female

3. What is your ethnicity? (check all that apply)
   - [ ] American Indian or Alaska Native
   - [ ] Asian or Asian American
   - [ ] Black African American or Haitian
   - [ ] Hispanic or Latino
   - [ ] Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
   - [ ] White (Caucasian)
   - [ ] Other
**Instructions:** Based on your participation within PasSPORT for Life, please rate whether you have had the following experiences.

How many days of the programme did you complete?  ………………………

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Disagree</th>
<th>About 50/50</th>
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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. It has taught me how to manage my daily tasks</td>
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<td>2. It has taught me how to adjust my schedule when confronted with unexpected changes</td>
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<td>3. It has taught me how to ask for help</td>
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<td>4. It has taught me to look at the entire situation when attempting to solve a problem</td>
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<td>5. It has taught me how to talk to peers with confidence</td>
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<td>6. It has taught me how to control my feelings (i.e. anger, sad, frustration)</td>
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<td>7. It has taught me how to lead by example</td>
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<td>8. It has taught me to share my thoughts in front of a large group</td>
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<td>11. It has provided me opportunities to achieve success through goal setting</td>
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<td>12. It has taught me the value of my time</td>
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<td>13. It has taught me to break down a problem into smaller parts and do one part at a time</td>
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<td>15. It has taught me how to communicate the negative feelings I experience</td>
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<td>16. It has taught me to re-evaluate my goals and make adjustments</td>
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<td>17. It has taught me how to set goals that increase my skills</td>
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<td>20. It has taught me how to overcome obstacles</td>
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<td>21. It has taught me how to turn obstacles into a positive experience</td>
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<td>22. It has taught me how to set goals that I can reach</td>
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<td>24. It has taught me to be prepared for activities</td>
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<td>25. It has taught me how to turn setbacks into a positive experience</td>
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<td>26. It has increased my communication with my parents/guardians</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. It has given me self-confidence to lead people</td>
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<tr>
<td>28. It has taught me to imagine myself solving difficult problems before I actually have to face it</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>29. It has taught me how to manage my emotions</td>
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<td>30. It has taught me how to provide feedback to others</td>
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<tr>
<td>31. It has provided me opportunities to act as a leader (i.e. captain/co-captain)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>32. It has taught me to consider as many options as possible when solving a problem</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>33. It has taught me how to set meaningful goals</td>
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<td>35. It has taught me to manage my negative emotions</td>
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<tr>
<td>36. It has taught me how to instruct people on a task</td>
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<td>37. It has taught me how to identify a problem</td>
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<tr>
<td>38. It has taught me to set goals that I can measure</td>
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<tr>
<td>39. It has taught me how to practice self-discipline</td>
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<td>40. It has helped me believe I can reach all of my goals</td>
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<td>41. It has taught me to think before I act in different situations</td>
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<td>42. It has taught me to find a way around obstacles to accomplish the task</td>
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<td>43. It has taught me how to form healthy behavioral habits</td>
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<td>45. It has taught me to set goals I would like to reach in the future</td>
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<td>46. It has taught me to remain calm in difficult situations</td>
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<td>47. It has helped me respond to negative situations with a positive mindset</td>
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<td>48. It has taught me to set detailed goals</td>
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<td>About 50/50</td>
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<td>49. It has taught me how to set daily goals</td>
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<td>50. It has taught me to come up with creative solutions when solving problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>51. It has taught me how to plan my time when arriving to events, meetings, or activities I participate in</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>52. It has taught me how to verbalize my emotions and feelings</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. It has taught me to think of various ways to solve a problem</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>54. It has taught me how to lead a group of people</td>
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</table>
Appendix 14
Focus Group Procedure

Resources
- Flip Chart paper & Pens
- Dictaphone
- Camera & Tripod
- Food – biscuits + juice, plastic cups
- Putting Mat, balls, clubs

Activity 1 – 10 mins
Groups of 2s or 3s, play G.O.L.F. on the green mat
- Trying to remember things that we have learnt after each successful putt.

Activity 2 – 10 mins
Groups of 2s or 3s – flip chart paper
- Split paper in half – 1 side for golf skills, 1 side for life skills
- Spider diagram – all the skills/activities that you can remember
  o Acronyms for skills
  o Where to use them
  o How to use them

Discussion 1 – experience of the project
1. General discussion and feedback for flipcharts – what have they remembered
2. What did you enjoy about the project?
3. What did you not enjoy about the project?
4. Was it what you expected?
5. What did you expect?
6. What did you take from the project as a whole?
   a. Prompt – e.g. did it make you more confident or comfortable at leading a group etc.?

Play video clip
Distribute food

Discussion 2 – Life skill learning and transfer
1. Looking at the skills on your flipchart paper – would you say you have used these skills at College?
   a. At home?
   b. At your part-time job or work experience?
   c. Explain
2. Have you used the skills in any other areas? How? Specific scenarios.
3. Have you used the skills in general or can you pick out specific things that you have learnt (e.g. STAR)?
Discussion 3 - Facing challenges – resilience

1. Discuss aim of project – more resilient attitudes
2. Has the problem given you skills to be able to cope with certain challenges?  
   a. How? In what circumstances?
3. Do you know reflect more on these challenges and how to overcome them?
4. What specifically do you reflect on?
Appendix 15
TASK 1 – Golf Fun Day

- You are tasked with providing a Golf Fun Day at Carmarthen Golf Club
- The day must have activities for all age groups and all experience levels
- What activities will there be during the day?
- Who will be involved?
  - Volunteers/coaches/parents/junior squad to help out

**Things to consider**
- How many people are coming
- How many activities will there be
  - What will they be
- Catering – food inside/outside or BBQ?
- How are you going to pay for the day
  - What do you need to pay for
  - Sponsorship or fund-raising event beforehand?

Every 5 minutes each group is given a task – 4 tasks in total
TASK 2 – Advertising

You need to attract visitors to the fun day. To do this, you must design a poster for the event that will be displayed in the club, in Carmarthen and in local towns.

- Poster needs to include details such as:
  - When?
  - Who is invited?
  - What it is?
  - How much it costs per adult/child/club member?
  - How long it will last?

- Will there be a logo for the day or will you just use the Carmarthen Golf Club logo?
- Extra points will be awarded for creativity
TASK 3 – Logistics

- Catering
  - What food will be provided on the day to attract visitors to the club?
  - Where will it be? Outside BBQ/Hog roast or inside in the clubhouse?
  - Will there be a marquee or tent outside?
  - Might be good to include this info on the poster to attract people to the fun day.

- Car parking
  - There will be an unusually large number of people coming to the club for the day.
  - How will you handle parking?
    - Parking attendants?

- Ticketing or registering
  - Where will the ticket office be?
  - Who will be looking after people and directing them where to go?

- Two local companies have approached you
  - The Magnificent Marquee Company
  - The Best of BBQs
    - Both would like to come to the event and will expect some money, but you can’t afford both of them – who will you choose?
TASK 4 – ‘Royalty’

As much as he hates to admit it, Bruno Mars is a keen golfer and has heard about the event. However, due to his status he doesn’t want to be surrounded by a crowd all day asking for autographs. However, he might be willing to set aside 30mins for an autograph signing session.

- He will be flying in by helicopter, so will need a separate VIP entrance and section arranged.
  - What time will the autograph signing be?

- BBC Wales have heard about his attendance, so would like to also come to the event
  - Where will they go? Is there space for them and all their equipment?
Appendix 16
Team Name……………………………………………. 

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</table>
RELOCATION

How many golf balls can you transfer from the start to finish in 20 seconds?
• 5 baskets
• 4 people
• Trial Run
• Set an achievable target
• 10 Points for achieving target
• 5 points for the team with the most balls in the end basket
• Negative points for missing your target

Target number.................

Points......................
How many points can you score as a team?

- 3 mins Trial Shots each with chipping net
- 2 shots each
- Set an achievable team target (points to score)
- 10 points if you achieve your target
- Lose points if you miss your target

Target score........................

Points.............................
Navigator

Navigate your lost person through the obstacle course to your team-mate in the quickest time
- 1 Navigator, 1 Lost person, 1 Team-mate
- 1 Trial Run
- Set an achievable target
- 10 points reach target, 15 points for quickest time
- Lose 1 point per 5 seconds you miss your target

Target time..........................

Points.........................
BULLSEYE

How many points can you score as a team?

- 5 minutes trial shots
- 2 Shots each
- Set achievable team target
- 2 points Fairway, 5 points blue circle, 10 points orange circle
- Lose points for missing target
- 10 points for achieving target

Target score.....................

Points.........................
Team must complete the relay in the quickest time with accuracy.
- 0 trial run
- You will be given written instructions
- 25 points to the fastest team
- 2 seconds will be added to the total time for every mistake or touching a cone.

Points........................