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The Soccer Coaching Club program utilized the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model in an after-school soccer program for sixth grade boys between 11 and 12 in a local middle school. Soccer, as the featured physical activity, provided the “hook” for regular attendance. Desired outcomes included improved self-control, respect, and cooperation with others. Research efforts included formative program evaluation, focusing on fidelity to the TPSR model, and summative evaluations of immediate impacts on participant understanding of TPSR concepts and participant behavior, as part of the program evaluation. A mixed methods approach was utilized, and data was gathered through a validated survey instrument, a program narrative, and post-program interview with the participants’ classroom teachers.

Using the two factor model of analysis of the survey data (Li, et al, 2008), the program evaluation yielded statistically significant improvements in the factor of social responsibility, although no statistically significant change was measured in the second area, personal responsibility. The observational data including the program narrative and the data gathered through the validated observational instrument provided evidence of frequent use of the strategies associated with fidelity in implementing a TPSR program and participant behaviors consistent with TPSR learning. The post-program interview with the participants’ classroom teachers yielded observations that indicated some element of transference of program principles to the classroom, and both the classroom teachers and the school’s leadership expressed overwhelming support for the program’s

return next spring and a desire for similar programs in the fall, another indicator of a successful program.

AN EVALUATION OF AN AFTER-SCHOOL SOCCER  
PROGRAM FOR AT-RISK SIXTH GRADE  
BOYS USING THE TPSR MODEL

by

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Children of poverty of every race and ethnicity face an uphill climb. Increasing concentrations of poverty and joblessness leave many youth isolated from the mainstream. Lack of access to jobs, higher education and the social capital that is available to many other kids creates an environment where pursuit of negative and criminal behaviors becomes the most logical path (Wilson, 1987, 1997, Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004, McLaughlin, Irby & Langman, 1994).

For many people who seek to address these issues, one possibility lies in the field of youth development. Youth development has continued to evolve as a discipline, and there now is a consensus on some key elements and terminology (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004, Fraser-Thomas, Cote & Deakin, 2005, Hellison & Cutforth, 2000). Youth development can be categorized both as a natural process through which youth grow toward a fulfilling, productive adulthood, a set of principles that includes viewing youth as a resource to be developed and a rejection of the “deficit model,” and finally, a set of practices that can be applied to youth programs in a variety of settings (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004).

These practices typically also include creating physically and psychologically safe places for kids to be kids, nurturing a caring environment with positive adults in long-

term relationships with participants, youth development principles embedded in the programming, opportunities to build skills, promotion of positive social norms, and development of resiliency and belonging (Hellison & Cutforth, 2000, Fraser-Thomas, Cote & Deakin, 2005).

Within the field of youth development, social responsibility programs have shown promise with underserved youth. A meta-analysis of many such programs across the county has established that there is promise in the approach, but that there is need for more research in the field (Hellison & Walsh, 2002). More specifically, the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (or TPSR) model has been used with some success in a variety of settings (Wright 2012, Wright & Burton 2008, Walsh 2007, Escarti 2010), but it has been utilized with a predominately Latino population in a formally researched setting just once (Buckle, 2005).

Some of the key elements of the TPSR model are treating youth as a resource, respecting the individuality of youth, empowering youth, helping youth envision possible futures for themselves, providing a psychologically and physically safe environment, keeping program numbers small, and providing significant contact with caring adults (Hellison & Cutforth, 2000).

Operationally, the TPSR model includes a series of levels the students work through, which each building on the other. These levels create a logical path of progression for participants and a way to identify goals that both the participants and staff

can identify and understand with a common vocabulary. The levels utilized in TPSR are; respect the rights and feelings of others, effort, self-direction, helping others, and taking it outside the gym (Hellison & Cutforth, 2000).

The Soccer Coaching Club was a program run for boys ages 11 to 12 that were identified by their teachers as exhibiting risk behaviors. There were 14 students who attended the program regularly. The program used the TPSR model, with soccer as the primary physical activity platform for teaching lessons of social responsibility and developing youth as a resource.

This research study sought to establish fidelity to the model, which is particularly important for a new program. This research effort also included an examination of immediate outcomes in terms of TPSR learning.

More specifically, the research questions addressed in this study are listed below:

- 1) Are the principles of TPSR being implemented with fidelity as evidenced by data gathered from the use of the TARE (Wright & Craig, 2011) by staff, attendance data for participants and staff, and from the program narrative derived from the director's field notes and reflections sorted using the Personal-Social Responsibility Themes from Part 2 of the TARE as a framework?

- 2) Are the students exhibiting learning of TPSR principals, including respect, effort and participation, self-direction, and helping and caring for others, by measures



taken through the administration of the PSRQ (Li, et al, 2008) as a pre- and post-test to the participants, as well as a program narrative derived from the program director's field notes, and a post-program interview with the participants' classroom teachers. The data from the PSRQ will serve both as a measure of how effective the program is in teaching the principles of TPSR, and may also serve as an indicator of proper application of the principles of TPSR.

By successfully executing the principles of the TPSR model and teaching TPSR principals, including respect, cooperation, and self-discipline in our program, provide contact with positive adults, a safe space to just be a kid, and engaging activities like soccer, a program of this type can do some small part in giving each of these youngsters a better chance at a productive, positive life for themselves and their families.

Information from all sources, including field notes, interviews, the TARE and the PSRQ showing TPSR learning, serve as indicators of success in applying the model to our program and success in student learning of the principles of the model, particularly in relation to participant perceptions of the staff and program. The desired outcome were to find indications that the program's lessons are being learned, as reflected in reported increases in feelings of respect, self-control and cooperation as indicated by their responses, as well their perception of how they perceived the behavior of themselves and others, such as respect, putting forth a good effort, and encouraging others. Some successes can be noted in this area, including statistically significant changes in social responsibility found in the pre- and post-test administration of the PSRQ.

Like all research based in observational and survey data, the data in this study is subject to certain limitations. The data gathered is taken at face value; we have no way of gauging the honesty of the participant responses, or whether the actions observed reflect actual changes in mindset. This study is also limited in regards to time, place, and participants. Our findings will establish only that a TPSR program was administered in a certain way with certain observable effects in this particular case, and those findings may or may not be generalizable to other situations. It is the researcher's hope, though, that these findings will contribute to the literature and help create a broader knowledge of youth development in general and TPSR programs specifically.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **Youth Development Today**

Within the field of youth development, there now is a consensus on some key elements and terminology (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004, Fraser-Thomas, 2005, Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004, Hellison & Cutforth, 2000). Youth development can be categorized both as a natural process through which youth grow toward fulfilling productive adulthood, a set of principles including viewing youth as a resource to be developed and a refutation of the “deficit model,” and finally a set of practices that can be applied to youth programs in a variety of settings (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004).

These practices typically also include creating physically and psychologically safe places for kids to be kids, nurturing a caring environment with positive adults in long-term relationships with participants, youth development principles embedded in the programming, opportunities to build skills, promotion of positive social norms, and development of resiliency and belonging (Hellison 2000, Fraser-Thomas 2005, McLaughlin, Irby & Langman, 1994).

Another common way of breaking down the elements of good youth development programs is through the “Five C’s” (Benson, 1997); Connections, Competence, Character, Confidence, Contributions. These elements of development are tied together in a “holistic” approach that addresses the four domains of development, physical, cognitive, emotional and social (Hellison, 2009). This integrated approach is one of the keys to the current field of youth development. Understanding that the many challenges that underserved children face are inextricably linked has helped practitioners avoid the mistake of addressing only a single dimension or predictor.

For a more specific look at the current state of the social responsibility area, we can look to the meta-analysis done by Hellison and Walsh (2002) to answer the question “Is it working?” The accumulated results of 26 research studies found promising results as well as gaps in the research and methods. Even within programs with solid evaluation, there were successes and failures, although a lack of data made program evaluation all but impossible. A review of the field (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004) found many effective programs, but many more that demonstrated no measurable impact or lacked any evaluation element. Clearly, there is much work being done, but more and better information is needed on the effectiveness of programs in this area.

### **Youth Development Principles**

To gain a full understanding of youth development, we must consider the origins of the field and its progression. Current views on youth development begin from the

premise that every kid deserves a fair chance in life. Underserved children face an inequity of opportunity and often face an uphill climb. Properly executed youth development programs may be able help address these problems (Granger, 2002). Youth development through sports and physical activity can be broadly defined as using physical activity to teach life lessons and values and help increase the capacity of youth. Ultimately, the goal is to help these youth lead more positive lives, be more optimistic, have more care for others, and engage in more positive behaviors (Fraser-Thomas, Cote, Deakin, 2005).

Sports or other physical activity can be a powerful platform or enticement to get youth to regularly participate in programs by tapping into the passion that many underserved youth have for sport. Sports in a certain context can also reinforce negative lessons, but if the “double edged sword” of sports (Hartmann, 2003) is handled properly, these types of programs may have long-term benefits for the participants.

### **Youth Development and Physical Activity**

Recreation and sports programs as part of day-to-day life have a mixed record in our country. Unlike many other Western countries that boast “right-to-sport” movements promoting universal access to and participation in sport, our country has historically had a more reactive and problem-oriented approach. (Hartmann 2001, Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004, Fraser-Thomas, Cote & Deakin, 2005)

As early as the beginning of the twentieth century, community-minded leaders saw the value of recreation to improve the lives of the people although it is notable that many early forms of “youth development” took a “deficit approach,” focusing on a single problem behavior (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004). The squeaky wheel got the grease, and resources were most often made available in response to problems rather than in the interest of the general advancement of youth.

Starting in the sixties, recreation and other youth programming, including sports and physical activities, have often been viewed as part of the arsenal at our disposal in the battle against many of society’s most intractable problems. Drop outs, teen pregnancy, crime, drug use, mental illness, and lack of job skills were a few of the issues that society sought to address, in part through sports and physical activity programs (Hartmann 2001).

As the eighties dawned, this approach led to a host of efforts to tie youth programming into solving society’s ills. Many of these programs reflected a shift in approach to a “prevention” model (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004), using predictors of problem behaviors. With this new approach came new attention from policy-makers. Major federal anti-crime legislation earmarked money for programs like midnight basketball, and for better or worse, those in the recreation business were suddenly part of the “social problems” industry (Pitter & Andrews, 1997).

But, these programs were often tasked with doing more than youth programming. Instead, they were attempting to address a variety of social problems. This deficit

approach continued to look at youth as a problem to be mediated, and the programs that were constructed often featured rigid rules and structures. This rigid, authoritarian approach contrasted with the feel-good, everybody-gets-a-trophy ethos of suburban recreational youth sports. This divide highlights the political dimensions of what Hartmann (2003) calls the “contested social terrain of sport.” Access to programs, the resources devoted to programs, and the way those programs were run (authoritarian vs. collaborative) all reflected very real disparities of race, class, and income (Hartmann, 2003) that inordinately affect poor kids (Wilson, 1987).

Hartmann (2001) examined midnight basketball as a case study in sports programs as part of what was labeled as the “social problems” industry by Pitter & Andrews (1997). While much of nations youth sports infrastructure is decentralized and largely local in nature, Midnight Basketball Leagues became a powerful brand, and swept across the country during the late 80’s.

It was also during this time that the concept of positive youth development began to take shape. As Pittman and Wright (1991) put it, “Problem-free is not prepared.” A more holistic approach began to emerge in recognition of the fact that many of the antisocial behaviors and other problems that practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers sought to address arose from a combination of factors, not a single predictor.

This is one of the hard lessons of the midnight basketball experience. Youth programs seek problem-oriented funding at their own peril (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004).

The issues that these programs hope to address are multi-faceted and deep-seated. While a single program may be the tipping point for a few participants, even the most “successful” youth development programs will have many failures alongside their success stories (Hellison & Cutforth, 2000). In their zeal to capture scarce funding for the survival of their programs, many program managers have made a kind of deal with the devil, establishing metrics of “success” that are not realistic and in fact may not even mesh with the original goals of program (Hartmann, 2001). As described by Robert Halpern (2005), programs were trying too hard to be things they weren’t out of fear of losing funding or being deemed irrelevant.

This is not merely a funding issue, though. We know now that any single program that purports to be able to make real changes in the problems faced by youth is setting itself up for failure. These problems must be addressed across multiple domains and over long periods of time to affect youth’s likely outcomes (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004).

### **A Change in Attitude**

With these shifts in the policy arena as the backdrop, some inroads had been made toward a different kind of youth programming going back several decades. Some early practitioners began youth development work, despite the fact that the term had not yet been coined. People like Don Hellison at Portland State University (Hellison & Walsh, 2002) and Larry Hawkins in Chicago (Hartmann, 2001) were creating programs that



sought to promote positive outcomes among youth, largely through trial and error. Hawkins program, begun in 1968 in conjunction with University of Chicago, sought to use basketball as a delivery vehicle for educational success (Hartmann, 2001). “The Program” run by Hawkins came to include tutoring, mentoring, and a host of other academic services. Basketball was what drew young people to the program, but Hawkins was insistent that it was not a basketball program. Basketball was simply a tool to provide common ground and make the educational components of the program possible (Hartmann, 2001). Hellison’s personal, volunteer efforts led to programs for some of Portland, Oregon’s most disadvantaged kids and the earliest versions of the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility model for youth programs (Hellison, 1997).

The work of people like Hellison and Hawkins, and later, Martinek (Martinek, McLaughlin, & Schilling, 1999) and others had coalesced into a nascent field labeled alternately the personal and social responsibility model, community youth sport development, positive youth development, and more broadly, youth development.

These programs began from an entirely different mindset, and a different set of priorities and assumptions. Youth were viewed as a resource to be developed, not as a problem to be re-mediated. Youth were respected, and programs sought to meet them where they were. Supportive staff members that cultivated long-term relationships were seen as the key element to programs, rather than a particular activity being the top priority (Hamilton & Hamilton 2004). In fact, the activity itself was seen simply as “the hook” by practitioners including Hawkins, (Hartmann, 2001), Hellison (Hellison &

Cutforth, 2000) and Martinek (Martinek, et al. 1999). Regular attendance at a program, whether it featured basketball, soccer, basket weaving or music, was the key, and these relationships with positive, caring adults were the immediate goal (Fraser-Thomas, Cote & Deakin, 2005, Hellison & Cutforth 2000).

### **The Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Model**

It is important to remember, that these positive traits we seek to nurture are “taught, not caught” (Gould, 2006). Further, as Hellison (2011) points out, successful youth development is possible through sport, but it must be “good sport.” In other words, age appropriate activities where values like sportsmanship and teamwork are higher priorities than winning or personal success, and staff training and attitude are also vital. Therefore, “good sports” programs can develop positive attributes in youth, but they must be properly designed and purposefully create an environment where positive values and life skills are taught. And, if character is not just “caught” by being part of sports, a framework such as TPSR is needed within which one can create that purposeful teaching.

The Soccer Coaching Club program sought to include these generally accepted hallmarks of successful youth programs through use of Hellison’s Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Model (TPSR) (Hellison & Cutforth, 2000) model as the framework for the program. TPSR uses physical activity to teach values or life skills, includes a series of “levels” through which the participants work. Beginning with level one, indicating a participant showing respect for others, the students work through stages

including self-control and active participation in activities, and ideally moving on to demonstrating these new personal skills in other settings, such as school, work or home, and ideally becoming leaders themselves.

Typical of current youth development theory, the TPSR model also emphasizes youth as a resource to be developed, rather than as a “problem” to be “re-mediated” (Fraser-Thomas, Cote & Deakin, 2005). By respecting youth, and valuing them as a resource rather than using a deficit approach, there is a better chance to develop the type of relationships with positive, caring adults that are a key to successful youth development, both as a program and as a process.

The TPSR model and related models, often classified together as “personal social-responsibility models,” or “RM,” have been used extensively in the youth development field (Hellison & Walsh, 2002). Regardless of the particular model or theory that a program may choose, it is reassuring that there is much overlap in the content of successful youth development programs. This is true even when looking at programs as disparate as Larry Hawkins basketball program in Chicago (Hartmann, 2003), inner city baseball and basketball programs in New York, a tennis program in Boston and a snowboarding program in Colorado (Berlin, Dworkin, Eames, Menconi, Perkins, 2007).

All these programs have the same general goal; use various forms of physical activity to help kids lead better lives, and the programs share many attributes, despite different settings and sports.

It's also worth noting that some programs begin as grass-roots efforts that don't have any formally stated framework or a theoretical model with a basis in research or academic theory. Most are based on the "traditional, idealistic conceptions of sports as a site for self-discipline and character building" (Hartmann, 2003). Eventually, as is mentioned in Berlin, et al's (2007) description of the Snowsports Outreach Society program in Colorado, a need for a more clearly stated framework arises, likely motivated by the preferences of funders, and a certain amount of self-examination and program maturation.

A number of programs have been undertaken in this area, including the Basketball Coaching Club in Chicago (Hellison & Cutforth, 2000) and Project Effort in Greensboro (Martinek, McLaughlin & Schilling, 1999), as well as a variety of other youth development programs. Most recently, the model was used with an at-risk population in a gang-abatement study in California (Buckle, 2005) and this provides new insight into the use of this model in that population. This study is of particular interest, since the Soccer Coaching Club program is also a school-based soccer program that serves a diverse population, including a significant Latino male population. This program in California, run through a Police Athletic League, found short-term effectiveness, but like much TPSR work, included successes and failures when participants were tracked over a longer period, indicating the intractable nature of many of the contributing factors to gang involvement.

For our program to be successful in implementing the TPSR model and being true to that model, we will need to be mindful of establishing a culture in the program that follows accepted criteria for youth development programs, (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004, McLaughlin, et al, 2001, Pittman & Wright, 2001). These criteria are consistent with the TPSR model, but can be applied as an evaluation benchmark for any program, regardless of what theoretical model is being used, or even if there is not a theoretical model.

These criteria include treating youth as a resource, focusing on the whole person, respect the individuality of youth, empower youth, give clear, demanding, reasonable expectations, help youth envision possible futures for themselves, provide a psychologically and physically safe environment, keep program numbers small and encourage participation over a long term, maintain a local connection, provide courageous and persistent leadership, and provide significant contact with caring adults

While not as specific as the levels of TPSR, these criteria should be an important part of the framework for the Soccer Coaching Club program and its staff. These principles will comprise a foundation upon which the levels of TPSR can begin to be built. By adhering to these principles, the program will “put kids first” (Hellison & Cutforth, 2000). With this type of environment established, the lessons of the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility, or TPSR, model can begin to be made.

## **Components of the TPSR Model**

The basic components of the TPSR model are a series of levels the students work through, which each building on the other. These levels create a logical path of progression for participants and a way to identify goals that both the participants and staff can identify and understand with a common vocabulary. Below are the levels utilized in TPSR (Hellison & Cutforth, 2000):

- 1) Respect the rights and feelings of others.
- 2) Effort
- 3) Self-Direction
- 4) Helping Others
- 5) Outside the Gym

Some participants may begin at what previously was referred to as a Level 0, where they are disruptive. This classification has been eliminated in more recent iterations of the model. The first recognized level in the terminology is now a level 1. Achieving level 1 involves controlling mouths and tempers, and keeping control of oneself. A participant at level 1 isn't necessarily participating, but they are not preventing others from participating, and they aren't occupying the program leader's attention trying to manage their behavior. This may include a youngster who is simply having a bad day and chooses not to participate at that moment.

Note that level 0 was used for large classes, but with small groups most issues can be handled one-on-one, eliminating the need for a negatively framed level “zero”. Depending on the program, managing this type of behavior can be done through use of a “talking bench” where participants and program staff can sit on the side and talk through a problem. This is one reason that having sufficient staffing levels is important; these types of issues can often be handled quickly, this type of one-on-one interaction still takes that staff member away from the larger group for a time.

Level 2 is centered on effort, and is indicated when a participant is actively participating, showing some initiative and making a good effort. A program participant at level 2 will be playing whatever game the group is playing and following the program leader’s direction. Engaging, enthusiastic leadership can help more youngsters reach a level 2. Engaging activities and introduction of new activities can also be an effective way to bring and keep students at level 2.

Level 3, Self-direction, is achieved when a program participant takes responsibility for their own actions and is able to manage their own activities. This can include a program participant that has decided to work on a skill on their own, and does so effectively while not disrupting any other participant’s activity. This level is also demonstrated if a student takes initiative and helps with pre-activity set-up or post-activity clean up, especially if this is done without a specific request from program staff.

Helping others is referred to as level 4, and is demonstrated by helping behaviors such as assisting others through coaching in regards to sports skills, showing teamwork in passing the ball and encouraging their teammates. This can be encouraged by naming particular youngsters as “captains” for a particular day, or through cross-age leadership when older participants might be called on to run portions of the activities for younger or less experienced participants.

Peer leadership and cross-age leadership opportunities will be sought by having students take turns as team captains, assisting with gym set-up, and other situations as they arise. It is our hope that this will provide some of the growth opportunities typical of cross-age coaching programs, including putting older participants in charge of running portions of the days activities, coaching a “team” of the other participants, and taking turns working as referees and timekeepers (Intrator & Seigel, 2008, Martinek, McLaughlin & Schilling, 1999, Hellison & Cutforth, 2000, Ennis, et al, 1999). This can be an important part of helping students envision their “hoped-for possible selves” that may include coaching, teaching or other leadership roles, as opposed to their “feared possible selves” (Oyserman & Markus, 1990).

The most challenging step in the previous applications of the TPSR model is level 5. Known as “taking it outside the gym,” this is achieved when the lessons of levels 1-4 are applied in other settings, such as home or school. This may be demonstrated by unloading the dishwasher, helping a younger sibling with homework or exhibiting good teamwork in a recess game at school. This level can’t be observed in the program setting,



therefore student self-evaluations and interviews, both formal and informal, can be undertaken with teachers and family members to gauge this level.

Each of these levels is meant to build one upon the other, but they can also be “jumped over,” and there can often be two steps forward followed by one step back, depending on the student and the day. Since people are infinitely variable, this level of flexibility has been most effective way to apply these classifications (Hellison, 2011).

Within TPSR as our framework, the physical activity serves as the platform or “hook” to facilitate teaching the life skills lessons of TPSR (Hellison & Cutforth, 2000).

Within the physical activity realm, soccer is an obvious choice for the physical activity element due to that sport’s popularity in the Latino community, but basketball may also be appropriate. Some interviews with community members indicate that many Latinos enjoy basketball, particularly when playing with other Latinos, and having some change-of-pace should help attendance by keeping the program fresh. While some flexibility is a key attribute of youth leadership, soccer is scheduled as the primary activity and “draw” but basketball will be utilized as a secondary activity. This choice will be just one of the ways in which the youngsters will be given a “voice” in the program.

### **Program Evaluation**

Program evaluation in youth development presents many challenges. The very nature of youth programs can make evaluation that meets standard definitions of rigor

very difficult to meet (Hellison & Walsh, 2002) and the demands of evaluation in the field often defy the use of standard methodology (Greene, 2000). Researchers in youth development are left with the dilemma of remaining on the high ground of the academy, solving clear-cut but perhaps less important questions, or descending to the lowly swamplands of practice, where the impact may be more immediate, but variables are infinite and the answers often unclear (Schon, 1995).

This dilemma can become a question of survival when faced by an academic discipline, particularly a relatively new field like youth development. Like any field that has a foot planted firmly in world of practice, youth development faces a number of challenges to producing typical academic research. Nonetheless, if the field is to progress, it is important to build a body of research while answering the two pressing questions in the field of youth development; is this type of programming worth doing, and does it work (Hellison & Walsh, 2002)?

The first step in this process must logically be program evaluation. It would be impossible to determine whether the successes or failures of a particular programs was a result of the theoretical model used unless it is first determined if the model was correctly applied.

Program evaluation is not easily undertaken, though. Research in the field is often conducted by program staff. These are the people that are on-site each day a program meets, and these are also normally the people who best understand what the

program is trying to accomplish and by what means. As a result, program evaluation is often an “inside job.”

While program staff are normally the best people to conduct this type of research, they are also often up to their elbows in facility issues, kids, staff and all the other details of running programs. They are often stretched to the limits, trying to meet the needs of underserved populations with limited staff and resources. Add into this mix the fact that one of the hallmarks of a successful program for underserved youth is relationships (Fraser-Thomas 2005, Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004, Hellison 1996), which are challenging to measure.

The most logical research model for many youth development researchers in such an environment is a mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2005). An approach that combines observational or qualitative data with quantitative data, with each type adding strength to the other, mixed methods has become a common approach in this complex research area.

This must include a significant element of qualitative data gathering, including the “eyeball method,” in other words, what the researcher sees. How can one tell if a youngster finally begins to not just understand, but practice, empathy? The answer, for many in the field, is to trust what you see (Parker & Cutforth in Hellison, 2000). Qualitative research has been criticized for not being sufficiently generalizable, too much potential for researcher bias, and reliance on subjective data such as self-report journals

and staff observations. A mixed methods approach addresses these issues by the addition of some quantitative elements and the “triangulation” provided by having multiple sources of qualitative data. Fortunately, there is a growing acceptance of both qualitative research and mixed methods in academic research (Maxwell 2005, Creswell 2005).

Researchers in the youth development field have also produced validated measurement instruments that have allowed researchers to add a significant quantitative element to their evaluations and strengthen the validity of this type of research, including the Personal and Social Responsibility Questionnaire, or PSRQ (Li, et al, 2008), and the Tool for Evaluating Responsibility-Based Education (Wright & Craig 2011). The TARE includes both an Observation Instrument with formats for gathering qualitative data as well as several quantitative, Likert-type forms, as well as a Post-Teaching Reflection tool that was adapted from the Observation Instrument. Both instruments offer an opportunity to achieve greater standardization within a research study, and for meta-analysis across multiple studies. In an increasingly data-driven age, these types of validated instruments will no doubt strengthen the research in this area and aid greatly in performing quality program evaluation in the TPSR field.

Of course, much of what youth development programs hope to accomplish won't generate immediate evidence. Every child is different, and just as children reach different development milestones at different times, youth development programs faces the challenge of “delayed” or “sleeper” effects (Hellison, 2000). Who is to say that a program participant who shows no measurable change in behavior or attitudes during the

study's duration doesn't wind up returning to the program's lesson's later in life? By the same token, how is it possible to measure whether the simple fact of knowing that someone cared doesn't have an impact? How can the researcher know that the outcome for a particular youngster wouldn't have been much worse without the program? A cause and effect relationship can rarely be established within youth development research, and the field is filled with both successes and failures (Hamilton & Hamilton 2004).

This program model was used for the Basketball Coaching Club in Chicago (Hellison & Walsh, 2002) and Project Effort in Greensboro (Martinek, et al, 1999). Most recently, the model was used with a Latino population in a gang-abatement study in California (Buckle, 2005) and this provides new insight into the use of this model in an at-risk population with significant Latino presence. This study is of particular interest, since the Soccer Coaching Club program will also target an at-risk population with a significant Latino male population, and will also use soccer as the base activity. This program in California, run through a Police Athletic League, found short-term effectiveness, but like much TPSR work, included successes and failures when participants were tracked over a longer period, indicating the intractable nature of many of the contributing factors to gang involvement.

## **Why Evaluate?**

In a big picture view, the value of this type of program evaluation discussed above should be twofold. The dissemination of best practices, the distribution of advances in the field, and the benefits of knowing about the successes and failures of those in the field from across the country and the globe can be of great value to youth development practitioners. This serves the long-range goals of all youth development; helping more people become happy, productive members of society by improving the lives of young people (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2005, Halpern, 2003, Fraser-Thomas 2005)

Secondly, the creation of a research base will contribute toward the acceptance of the discipline within the academy. Universities are uniquely well-situated to conduct these types of programs, with facilities, manpower, and expertise all housed in institutions that should be seeking ways to reach out to their surrounding communities (Hellison, 2000). Through the advancement of youth development as an academic discipline, we also serve our ultimate goal. By improving the training and education available to future youth program staff and leaders, we also serve our mission of improving the lives of young people. (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004)

At a more micro level, most program evaluation serves immediate and very important goals for program managers. Both formative and summative purposes are served by good program evaluation. In good formative research, data gathered by researchers will be used in an ongoing basis to make changes that can improve the

program. This is consistent with the principles of TPSR programs; specifically, putting kids first; if it's possible to improve a program immediately, it is worth doing. Secondly, in summative research, it is possible help establish "fidelity to the model," in other words, "Am I doing it right?" (Hellison, 2011, p. 174). Summative assessment can also be applied to another important evaluation question; "But Does It Work?" (Hellison & Walsh, 2000, p. 294)

## **Challenges**

In youth development work, it is important to remember that there an endless array of variables that you cannot control, such as family dynamics, relationship issues, economic pressures, dislocations, etc. Life happens, inside and outside the gym, and it's a messy process. An additional challenge is created by the nature of youth development. Many of the desired results of the Soccer Coaching Club program, or other personal social-responsibility model programs, are challenging to measure in the short-term; our goal is better long-term life outcomes for our participants. Many of the outcomes of a social responsibility program like Soccer Coaching Club are long-term, and may not become measurable until many years later, if ever. This is what Lickona (no date) refers to as the "sleeper effect." The more transient lives of underserved youth can further serve to confound long-term study.

It is also important to keep an open mind and be flexible with these plans. Just as formative evaluation is a continuous process that should allow for program improvement,

program staff will continuously evaluate our evaluation processes, looking to match our evaluation plans and objectives with the reality on the ground and the goal of putting the kids first.

Taken as a whole, research in this field remains limited and leading researchers in the area have called for additional research (Hellison & Walsh, 2002). This study will add to the body of knowledge in the field, helping improve practice in the field of youth development, and thereby serve the primary goal all youth development program. Regardless of geography, theoretical model, or population served, youth development professionals work to help improve chances that kids will live better, happier, and more successful lives, for their own benefit, and for the good of our larger community.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODS**

The Soccer Coaching Club program provided a cohort of male participants age 11-12, with a six-week after-school soccer program that met for two afternoons per week for approximately two hours per session. The program used the TPSR model to teach the program participants concepts like respect, self-control, and teamwork through physical activity, primarily soccer. The accompanying research utilized a mixed methods approach, including quantitative elements including the use of two validated instruments, as well as qualitative elements such as field notes and a focus group interview, to conduct a program evaluation. The goals were both to evaluate the fidelity with which TPSR, the program's theoretical model, was applied, and to evaluate the effectiveness of this model with this population in producing certain immediate outcomes.

More specifically, the following research questions guided this study:

- 1) Are the principles of TPSR being implemented with fidelity as evidenced by data gathered from the use of the TARE (Wright & Craig, 2011) by staff, attendance data for participants and staff, and from the program narrative derived from the director's field notes and reflections sorted using the Personal-Social Responsibility Themes from Part 2 of the TARE as a framework?

2) Are the students exhibiting learning of TPSR principals, including respect, effort and participation, self-direction, and helping and caring for others, by measures taken through the administration of the PSRQ (Li, et al, 2008) as a pre- and post-test to the participants, as well as a program narrative derived from the program director's field notes, and a post-program interview with the participants' classroom teachers. The data from the PSRQ will serve both as a measure of how effective the program is in teaching the principles of TPSR, and may also serve as an indicator of proper application of the principles of TPSR.

### **Sample Population**

The population served by this program was male sixth-grade students of a low-income middle school in central North Carolina. The sixth grade classroom teachers at the school were asked to recommend male sixth grade students that exhibit risk behaviors. This generated an initial pool of roughly fifty students. The final pool of participants was generated by sending a letter home with each child recommended for the program explaining the program and inviting their student to participate.

The initial plan for the recruitment efforts for this program had included a goal of 12-15 students, which is consistent with best practices in youth development (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004). When the recommended students were invited to register, a larger number than anticipated by program staff and school leadership responded. Our initial program group wound up including 30 youngsters during the earliest weeks of the

program prior to the beginning of data collection. These early sessions will be referred to as “phase one” and served as pilot sessions, following the model of a similar TPSR soccer program targeting at-risk youth (Buckle, 2005). Phase one included six sessions over roughly three and a half weeks, and allowed the program staff to become comfortable working with the kids and provided opportunities for the staff to learn the teaching strategies of TPSR.

This development reflects the reality of working with a community partner and trying to meet their needs, thereby “putting the kids first” (Hellison, 2009). This was also influenced by the principal investigator and school staff’s ethical concerns regarding excluding certain students while accepting others. There was also some attrition anticipated, and ultimately, when we moved into our final six weeks, referred to as “phase two,” and began gathering data, we had roughly 16 students that had emerged as regular attendees, defined as students who attended at least half of the sessions. Through use of the PSRQ on participants who attended at least half the sessions, data was collected on 14 kids. This excludes two students who attended regularly but for which it was not possible to get either a pre- or post-test. For other data gathering, such as field notes and teacher feedback, some students who didn’t qualify as regular attendees are included. This group of 14 regular attendees was composed of 4 African-Americans, 8 Latinos, and 2 whites.

Our group of participants was aged 11-12, and this pre-teen age range was of particular interest due to the fact that for each year that that youngsters of any type can be

kept away from gang activity, they become less likely to be successfully recruited, and the program is focusing on male students at the recommendation of community stakeholder and school staff, and because over 90% of gang members in North Carolina are male (Gangs in North Carolina, 2011). The sixth graders were also identified by school leadership as a group needing physical activity-based after-school opportunities, since sixth-graders are not eligible for school sports teams.

The program attempted to contribute toward these particular youth moving toward behaviors consistent with more positive outcomes. The program staff attempted to build relationships and support from their families, through informal interaction at pick-up time and providing all communication in English and Spanish. Parents desire positive activities for their children, and the convenience of a program that provides after-school supervision right on the school campus provided support for student participation and to help their families support regular attendance.

### **Physical Activity**

In the interest of attracting regular attendance, the program needed an activity that would generate ongoing interest among our participant group. Research has shown (Borden, et al, 2006) that males gravitate toward sports activities. In the community where the school is based, soccer is recognized as the most popular sport as measured by youth participation numbers. Using soccer as the activity “hook” allowed the program to

be more successful in engaging the participants by tapping into the passion that many of these young people already feel for the sport (Hartmann, 2003). This sport was incorporated as the primary physical activity in this after-school program.

While sport is simply one method of reaching kids, there is a logical tie-in between a team-oriented activity like soccer, and the principles of youth development and TPSR. Respecting the rules and the people running the program and the games is important and was emphasized. Respecting others through positive behavior and teamwork and cooperation were emphasized through a variety of activities including soccer games and drills.

During the course of the program, these activities also included team-building activities, like picking up a soccer ball between the backs of two players without using their hands, supporting each other in pairs, leaning into one another like an A-frame house, and blind-folded obstacle courses. These games provided great opportunities to talk about level 1, respect and level 4, helping others and caring (for example; providing good directions to the blindfolded person, rather than running them into the obstacles as a joke).

Our scrimmage games were one of the primary vehicles to address issues of level 2, effort and participation, and level 3, self-direction. The participants' effort level varied, and when a participant seen as a leader had a bad effort day, it affected everyone. It was sometimes challenging to balance having a positive environment where the

program staff respected the kids by encouraging them to play hard, even when they may have been having a bad day. This is one reason that future versions of the program will likely include one or two games against other teams to create an incentive to “practice” harder. This would also facilitate more discussions about goal-setting. This will be addressed in more detail in the Discussion section.

### **Setting**

The program ran for a total of nine weeks during the spring, including three weeks of pilot sessions that were labeled “phase one,” and six weeks during which data was gathered, identified at “phase two.” The program met two afternoons per week at a middle school that was part of the county school system. This is a public school that serves roughly 650 students in grades six through eight. The campus includes several areas that served program needs, including a large front lawn for playing soccer and doing other physical activities, and an auditorium room with a back-stage area that served as a changing room and some tables and chairs in front of the curtain that were used when the participants were doing any paperwork including the pre- and post-testing.

While soccer is the primary activity, the use of a school setting has the advantage of being a familiar environment, and there are facilities including bathrooms and water fountains.

## **Transportation**

The school is located within walking distance to much of the student population, and some of the participants were children who would simply walk home after the conclusion of the program just as they would have walked home after school. Parents or other family members were responsible for picking up other students at the end of the program, but there were no issues of transporting children to the program location, since they will already be on the school campus at the end of the school day.

## **Staffing and Training**

The principal investigator also served as the program director. The director sought to provide leadership and consistency in applying the principles of the program, combining strong leadership with compassion and empathy for kids and setting a relaxed, positive tone. The principal investigator has had significant coursework in the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility model (Hellison, 2000, 2003) on which the program was based. The principals of this model are consistent with my own values and approach to youth development and youth coaching. As a long-time youth coach and a youth athletic program administrator, numerous elements of the TPSR model have been incorporated into my own youth coaching and league management.

Cultural competency is also a key element (Borden, Perkins, Villarruel, Carlton-Hug, Stone, Keith 2006) to connecting with the diverse population represented in our

pool of participants. The director is experienced in working with children of a wide variety of racial, ethnic and socio-economic status populations through prior professional and personal experiences, and also is conversant in English and Spanish, and has a familiarity with Latino culture. An affinity for all types of children helped create what Nel Noddings (1988) called an “ethic of caring,” and an approach that TPSR experts often classify as “putting kids first” (Hellison, 2000). Significant knowledge of and experience playing and coaching soccer among the student staff proved to be of value, although experience and knowledge of running youth programs, and interacting with local institutions, including the school system and the recreation department proved to be key elements in the program actually operating.

At the staff level, having some soccer knowledge and some fluent Spanish speakers were identified as important characteristics for both running the program and for interacting with parents and other community members. This did not mean that every staff person needed to be fluent in Spanish or a soccer expert. But, it meant that among a staff of six people, there was a goal of having at least two strong Spanish speakers and two thoroughly knowledgeable soccer people. When the program staff began, it included a program director with some Spanish skills, a Spanish minor, a former Elon University soccer player, and former high school player.

These skills, both in language and soccer, helped in building the type of relationships that are the key to successful youth program (Fraser-Thomas et al, 2005). On a more intangible level, as is typical of the principal researcher’s experience with



college student volunteers, there was also a level of enthusiasm and fun that served to keep the kids generally engaged and wanting to participate every day (Martinek, lecture 2010). All the program staff also needed to be philosophically compatible with TPSR and valuing all children as a resource, which they did. There was some minor adjustments for some of the more serious athletes on our staff, as their most recent experiences had been as part of highly competitive teams, and wasn't always consistent with giving kids a voice and respecting each young person, but they quickly adjusted.

Recruitment of program staff benefitted from the resources of Elon University, where the principal investigator is a faculty member. Elon has made service learning and community engagement an institutional priority, and as a result, there is a well-established relationship between the local school system and Elon's service learning office. The program staff was comprised of a program director who is a faculty member at Elon, and a staff made up entirely of Elon University students, and the resources that made available helped the program navigate many start-up tasks; the students background checks and training were organized and paid for by the university, and were honored by the school system.

Elon's students are able to compile a "service transcript" and there is a strong campus culture of service. As a result, when the call for volunteers went out, a number of qualified, eager students responded, and a group of students was assembled as program staff that brought a variety of skills and backgrounds.

**Staff Training and Screening.** Once these students had volunteered to help, there were several organizational steps they passed through to be prepared to work with young people in this type of program. The first of these were required by principal investigator and the Kernodle Center for Service Learning at Elon, and they serve protect the students, program participants, community partners and the university as well. The first step was a background check. The university paid for this, and has an agreement with the local school system whereby they honor Elon's background checks. In addition to the background checks, the students are required to complete a Title IX training, which covers a variety of important ethical and practical issues in regards to working with youth. These requirements served to give the school staff and leadership a greater level of confidence in our program staff and met their requirements for volunteer screening.

The student volunteers were trained in the TPSR model during two classroom sessions conducted by the principal investigator on the university campus. The first was during an initial interest meeting during which the program was explained in very general terms. At that time, basic paperwork was completed, including background checks to be administered by Elon, and Title IX training required by Elon. Several of the students had already completed these requirements due to other volunteer activities. The students were also introduced to the concepts of the TPSR model, but in the most basic of terms. Program goals were discussed, including increased evidence of teamwork, cooperation, dispute resolution, and more.

During a second meeting, more program details were discussed, and the TPSR model was addressed in more detail, with a focus on how it related to them as staff members, and how it should guide their own specific behaviors within the program and in their interactions with the kids. The levels within TPSR were examined, including the fact that students may jump over or back from session to session or event moment to moment, but that the goal is a general trend upwards. The students were made aware that they should not expect smooth sailing at all times; if these kids were perfectly behaved in school, they likely would not have been referred to the program.

Training sessions in TPSR were conducted for staff with the first occurring during the week leading up to the program's start and the second following week two of "phase one." The training for this program focused on the key elements of youth development work. This training began with the principal of developing youth as a resource, rather than as a problem to be remediated. Sport was presented as a platform from which to teach positive life lessons. Finally, the TPSR model was presented, including the five levels; respect the rights and feelings of others, effort, self-direction, helping others, and taking it outside the gym. The training also included strategies for implementing the model, including the importance of building relationships, providing positive feedback, and giving the kids in the program a voice. For additional detail and an outline of the training topics, see Appendix D.

The training concluded with a quiz verifying the student staff members understanding of the principles of TPSR (Appendix E). The staff all scored 10 out of ten

on the post-training quiz, indicating their understanding of the basics of the model. There was also ongoing training via reinforcement and feedback from the program director, utilizing observed behaviors and data from program director's notes during the operation of the program to help insure fidelity with the principles of TPSR. The Phase One sessions, which were conducted before the pre-test was administered, also served to reinforce the training, as this provided an opportunity for practice teaching for the staff.

**Program Staff.** Six students from a local university acted as program staff.

While the program staff was all male, they brought a variety of skill and backgrounds to the program, which added diversity and strength to our efforts.

Below are staff bullets.

- “R.H.” A sophomore Sport & Event Management major who is also a Spanish language minor and speaks good conversational Spanish. He attended a central North Carolina high school with some demographic similarities to the Graham Middle School. He played youth soccer and high school basketball, and his father was his high school basketball coach, providing him with first-hand exposure to coaching and working with youth athletics.
- “N.S.” A junior Sport & Event Management major who was a high school soccer player with numerous leadership roles on campus. He wore a brightly colored pair of cleats that was similar to those favored by some of

the students. He had very strong soccer skills and had played for his high school team in Maryland. He underwent something of a transformation from the beginning of the program to the end, starting with a more formal, top-down approach and becoming more comfortable with the program's philosophy of letting the kids be kids and empowering and respecting them. He worked very hard at executing the TPSR philosophy correctly, and also had major credibility with the students due some of the moves and ball tricks he showed whenever our scrimmages included the program staff.

- “J.W.” A senior Sport & Event Management major who played for Elon's men's soccer team as a freshman and has assisted with numerous youth soccer camps. He is African-American and grew up in Virginia. He joined the staff shortly after the program began, after he had resolved some scheduling issues, and therefore he missed the classroom sessions on TPSR. He brought a wealth of knowledge of soccer drills and exercises. He was another staff member who agreed with the TPSR philosophy as it was explained during the operation of our sessions, but he also had a more top-down mentality from his recent college soccer experience. He also made great progress in embracing a philosophy that put the kids first and respected them for their strengths.

- “B.D.” A freshman Engineering major with some youth coaching experience and experience playing recreational soccer. The quietest of our staff, he also had the least experience in the team sports realm. He gravitated toward tangible tasks like setting up the field or retrieving stray balls, and tended not to step forward into leadership of drills or reflection talks. A quietly reliable and valuable staff member, nonetheless, who seemed to feel very strongly about this opportunity to “give back” and was eager to be involved in future iterations of the program.
- “C.F.” A senior Sport & Event Management major from England with some youth soccer playing and coaching experience. Tall and thin with a flair for unusual thrift-store clothes, the students gravitated toward his big smile and friendly personality. While his soccer experience was not as extensive as some of the staff, it appeared that his British accent made him seem exotic to the kids in the program, and they also assumed he had English Premier League-level skills since he spent his childhood in England. When he missed a session, the kids were always asking “Where’s CF?”
- “A.S.” A sophomore Sport & Event Management major from Connecticut who played youth soccer for many years. Another of the quieter staff members, he was also reliable and rarely missed session. He was not as comfortable interacting with the kids, but made great efforts to be positive

and supportive. He has a significant interest in youth development, including completing a summer internship with a youth development agency that works with at-risk kids. He was also generally the first to volunteer for small tasks like running errands, escorting students to the school building or other extra work.

### **A Typical Day; the Soccer Coaching Club in Action**

The outline and narrative below describes a typical day of program activities.

**“Milling around and getting going.”** Our sessions began as the kids arrived at the field after school dismissal. The earliest arrivers were encouraged to take the initiative and set up the field by putting out cones and soccer balls, setting up the goals, and bringing out any other supplies needed for that day’s activities. This activity was overseen by the program staff, but in a casual, one-on-one style as the staff circulates around the field. The goal during the initial minutes of each session was for the program staff to chat with the participants one-to-one. This serves several of our program goals and criteria (Hellison & Cutforth, 2000). The criteria served by this activity include staff showing respect for the youth as individuals and developing relationships with the kids, and for the youngsters, contact with a caring adult.

Once the field is set up, the program participants that are already at the field are encouraged to chat with each other and start dribbling and shooting the soccer balls. As

the staff circulates around, they chatted with the participants about their soccer skills, offering encouragement and instruction. They may also have asked them about family or other personal happenings, offering positive, encouraging words and a little positive guidance if appropriate. This may simply have taken the form of asking a participant how they are and what's new. This time served a significant role in the program's activities for the staff and participants to develop and strengthen relationships, which are considered a key element of good youth programs (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004).

**Circle Time.** About 10 minutes after the official start-time, program leaders called the participants together at the center of the field for a beginning group meeting, a standard part of a TPSR program. Early in the program, this was preceded by the "name game" to help both participants and staff to learn one another's names. Knowing names is an important part of making the kids feel respected as individuals and establishing the relationship that are a key to successful youth programming and creating a psychologically safe environment that is the hallmark of a successful youth development program (Hellison & Cutforth, 2000).

The beginning reflection then focused on the day's lesson, which may, for example, have been a discussion of Levels 1 (respecting the rights and feelings of others) and Level 2 (self-control) of TPSR during the early sessions, or may progress up to Taking It Out of the Gym (or field!) during the program's later stages. These discussions were generally brief and to the point, to avoid losing students' interest and attention, and a variety of formats were employed to illustrate the TPSR lessons. The participants



might have also been asked to provide real examples of behavior that matches a particular level that they have witnessed since the last session. Staff might have also offered examples from their own lives to illustrate the TPSR lesson or goal for that day. Students may have also been asked at this point what level they are shooting for that day, or what level they are working on, or maybe to evaluate themselves on a previous session.

**Opening Kick.** At the conclusion of opening circle time or beginning reflection, the students moved into activities. These varied from session to session, but the theme was soccer-oriented games that incorporated TPSR lessons. For example, these included blindfolded passing drills, or other soccer game-type drills where communication and teamwork are emphasized. Staff attempted to encourage positive behaviors and encourage participants to take leadership roles in completing the drills. Understanding the principles and understanding some specific activities and drills was incorporated into the staff training sessions, and staff participated in some drills in addition to running them.

Several drills were in the staff's plans for any particular session, with staff prepared to modify or select drills based on TPSR objectives. Drills were changed quickly if a particular drill was not working as hoped or not engaging the students. The goal in planning was to have five or six possible activities or drills prepared and but spend significant time on the two or three that seem to gain the highest level of student engagement that day. This part of managing the daily operation of the program was also an opportunity to give the participants a voice, as student preference was often used as the basis for selecting specific activities.

**Play Time.** Following this discussion, the participants were formed into teams for scrimmage games, where on some days, one student would serve as that day's "coach" for their team. The coaches were responsible for organize his team and enforcing game rules. Once the session moves to scrimmage, one, two or three simultaneous games were played, and these were all be "small-sided" games; 5-on-5, 6-on-6, or 7-on-7, depending on attendance and staff participation. TPSR principles were emphasized by encouraging participants to "play by the rules," respect the other players and staff, and by rules modifications that emphasize teamwork, such as an "all-touch" rule or requiring a certain number of passes before a shot.

Sport initiates conflict, but sport can be an important tool in teaching peaceful, constructive ways to address conflict. In regards to game management, to emphasize peaceful conflict resolution, there were some "house rules." If a dispute couldn't be resolved quickly and civilly through discussion, the players would use Rock-Paper-Scissors as a default conflict resolution. It's not fancy, but it worked, and helped avoid a disagreement from becoming a full-blown argument.

An hour of soccer games followed, with teams re-sorted if the original teams are not balanced. Staff observed and were prepared to intervene if needed, but an effort was made to let the youth run their own game as much as possible utilizing peer coaching. Staff also sometimes participated, especially on a day when there are odd numbers or the kids seem to particularly desire staff participation. This had the advantage of providing another type of interaction, and allowing staff to show participants their fallibility

through missed shots or passes, and to help steer the games in the direction of passing and team work. But, it was important for staff not to take the game over; we discussed this idea, and the staff did a good job of being “just another player.”

These games were also modified in a variety of ways to emphasize TPSR principles, including having the teams led by participant coaches, “All-Touch” rules where each player on a team must touch the ball before the team can shoot in some games, and some games will utilize goalies while others were played with very small goals and no goalies, focusing on precise passing and shooting, and emphasizing every defensive player’s importance in defending the goal.

**Closing Reflection.** Once that portion of the activities began to wrap up close to five, we would sit down and conduct our closing reflection. Participants were asked to evaluate their own performance during the session through a variety of methods, including some as basic as a thumbs up, thumbs down or thumbs sideways. The program director also filled out a daily set of field notes after the closing reflection.

Information from these closing reflections were used to help gauge the students’ progress, as well as for program evaluation purposes including adjusting our plans for future sessions, and to help in assessing fidelity to the model and the development of relationships between staff and participants.

## **Data Sources**

Two validated instruments were used in this study. The first is the Tool for Assessing Responsibility-based Education (TARE) (Wright & Craig, 2011). This instrument includes an overview of the lesson, and measures of teachers' self-perceptions of the frequency of desired TPRS teaching behaviors. Part one calls for a brief overview of that day's lesson, as well as a form that is used for interval coding of behaviors during a particular lesson. This section was not used due to research constraints including staffing, timing, and privacy issues regarding minor students in a school setting. Part two records teacher self-perceptions on frequency with which desired TPRS teaching behaviors were exhibited, including modeling respect, fostering social interaction and giving students a voice in the program. Part three measures perception of student responsibility as demonstrated by incidence of elements of the first four levels of the TPRS model; self-control, participation, effort, self-direction and caring, and part 4 provides a format for additional comments or notes.

This instrument was developed in response to calls for better instrumentation in the field of youth development and TPRS (Wright, 2009). This instrument was developed relying on the first author's ten year of experience as a TPRS program operator, and expressed desirable program characteristics in terms of discreet, observable teaching behaviors. While the TARE is a relatively new instrument, the research (Wright & Craig, 2011) established the instrument's reliability. Wright found a 94.4% level of

agreement within one point across the four categories. Part 2 of the TARE was completed by the staff.

This use of the TARE was determined through consideration of the constraints of the research study, the TARE's intended method of use, and the age of the participants. Our staffing was not sufficient in numbers or training to allow for interval coding during the sessions, nor would that have been appropriate and conducive to a positive environment where the participants could feel comfortable. Filming and coding the sessions late from the tapes would have not have been feasible due to resource constraints and the challenges of working in a school setting with minor children.

Much of the language and the way questions about TPSR behaviors, and particularly Teaching Strategies in Part 2, was above the comprehension level of the children participating in the program. Similarly, the staff did not have the vocabulary knowledge or deep enough understanding of the concepts of TPSR to properly utilize the TARE at the beginning of the program. The TARE was utilized by the staff at the program's conclusion, when the staff had been familiarized with the principles of the model and had a better understanding of the levels of TPSR. The TARE was used to gather the staff's perceptions of the frequency of TPSR behaviors within the program, and to solicit open-ended comments from staff.

The second instrument used in the study is the Personal and Social Responsibility Questionnaire (PSRQ) (Li, et al., 2008). This instrument measures TPSR constructs

including the first four levels of the TPSR model; respect and self-control, effort and participation, self-direction, and caring and leadership, and is designed for use by program participants, and the language is simple and appropriate for the students in this study.

The PSRQ utilizes fourteen questions formatted in a six-point, forced response scale with answers beginning with “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Using the two factor measurement model of the PSRQ, the responses to the questionnaire are grouped to measure the two major factors of the TPSR model; social responsibility and personal responsibility (Li, Wright, Rukavina & Pickering, 2008). Personal responsibility includes the elements of level 1, respecting the rights and feelings of others, and level 4, helping others and caring, and the measure of this factor includes the questions that relate to these two levels of the TPSR model. Social responsibility includes level 2, effort and participation, and level 3, self-direction, and the measurement of this factor also includes those questions on the PSRQ that relate to those two levels.

The sample population in this study were all are expected to have some proficiency in English language, but the researchers made available both the original English language version (Appendix A), and a Spanish language version (Buckle, 2005) (Appendix B). Once the program began, our group of participants did not include any youngsters with a preference for Spanish; in conversations with teachers at the school, it was explained to us that among the Latino students in the sixth grade, there were very few who were not born in the U.S. and while it seemed that most of the Latino students

spoke Spanish, there were no students the teachers could identify who had any ability with writing or reading in Spanish. As a result, the Spanish version was made available, but was not used by any of the students.

A post-program focus group-type interview was also undertaken with participants' teachers to add triangulation to the data derived from other sources, and specifically to examine the teachers and students perceptions of the program, including any observations of transference of the principals to the classroom. The teachers were prompted with open-ended questions including;

- 1) What did they hear from the kids about the program?
- 2) What, if any, changes did they see in the kids in the classroom?
- 3) What, if any, changes did they see in how they interacted with each other?
- 4) What, if any, changes did they see in how theY interacted with teachers?

Notes from this interview with the teachers is included as Appendix G.

### **Research Questions**

The program evaluation research starts with 'fidelity to the model,' in other words, whether the model is being applied correctly, or "Am I doing it right?" (Hellison, 2011, p. 174) Beyond fidelity, the next evaluation research question is whether the

program is producing the desired outcomes. We can label these two areas of inquiry as “process” and “outcomes,” which correspond respectively with our research questions.

1) Are the principles of TPSR being implemented with fidelity as evidenced by data gathered from the use of the TARE (Wright & Craig, 2011) by staff, attendance data for participants and staff, and from the program narrative derived from the director’s field notes and reflections sorted using the Personal-Social Responsibility Themes from Part 2 of the TARE as a framework?

The Part 2 of the TARE provides data on how frequently certain desired teaching strategies were observed, as well as observational data on participant behavior. Frequent occurrence of desired teaching behaviors would indicate fidelity to the TPSR model.

A detailed program narrative comprised of daily session notes from the program director was compiled and sorted according to *a priori* themes drawn from the Personal-Social Responsibility Themes categories of the TARE to provide qualitative data that assisted in evaluating fidelity in implementing the TPSR model. Instances of desired teaching behaviors from this data indicate fidelity to the TPSR model.

Portions of the TARE instrument, or Tool for Evaluating Responsibility-Based Education, (Wright & Craig, 2011), an assessment tool designed specifically for use with this type of program, were used to gather summative data on the staff’s own perceptions of their actions during the course of the program.



The TARE served as an indicator of how program staff perceived their own use of the strategies and behaviors indicative of a properly executed TPSR program, including the level to which the staff utilized desired TPSR teaching behaviors.

This portion will examine program outcomes in terms of student learning of TPSR principles.

2) Are the students exhibiting learning of TPSR principals, including respect, effort and participation, self-direction, and helping and caring for others, by measures taken through the administration of the PSRQ (Li, et al, 2008) as a pre- and post-test to the participants, as well as a program narrative derived from the program director's field notes, and a post-program interview with the participants' classroom teachers. The data from the PSRQ will serve both as a measure of how effective the program is in teaching the principles of TPSR, and may also serve as an indicator of proper application of the principles of TPSR.

The questionnaire was administered to the participants at the beginning of phase two of the program and at the conclusion of program as a pre- and post-test. These data measured levels of TPSR behavior in the program participants, as measured by the participant responses on the PSRQ, and was analyzed using the two factor model of analysis of the survey data (Li, et al, 2008).

A meeting was held with the participants' classroom teachers shortly after the conclusion of the program, and a group interview was conducted. The entire set of notes

from the teachers interview are included as Appendix G, and excerpts from those notes are included in both the case study profiles and the section of the results that sorts the data by the common criteria of good youth development programs. This meeting and the interview provided additional data to support or triangulate the findings regarding Level 5, transference, also known as “Taking it outside the gym.” The teachers’ observations based on the participants behavior during the school day and within the classroom setting will provide further indications of immediate outcomes of the program.

All the data compiled for this study is stored in a locked file cabinet in the campus office of the program director, and will be stored in that locked file cabinet for at least three years.

Information from all sources, including field notes, interviews, the TARE and the PSRQ showing TPSR learning, serve as indicators of success in applying the model to our program and success in student learning of the principles of the model. The desired outcome were to find indications that the program’s lessons are being learned, as reflected in reported increases in feelings of respect, self-control and cooperation as indicated by their responses, as well their perception of how they perceived the behavior of themselves and others, such as respect, putting forth a good effort, and encouraging others. Some successes can be noted in this area, including statistically significant changes in social responsibility found in the pre- and post-test administration of the PSRQ.

Like all research based in observational and survey data, the data in this study is subject to certain limitations. The data gathered is taken at face value; we have no way of gauging the honesty of the participant responses, or whether the actions observed reflect actual changes in mindset. This study is also limited in regards to time, place, and participants. Our findings will establish only that a TPSR program was administered in a certain way with certain observable effects in this particular case, and those findings may or may not be generalizable to other situations. It is the researcher's hope, though, that these findings will contribute to the literature and help create a broader knowledge of youth development in general and TPSR programs specifically.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

The Soccer Coaching Club program sought to provide a cohort of participants age 11-12, with a six-week after-school soccer program that met two afternoons a week for approximately two hours. The program used the TPSR model to teach the program participants concepts like respect, self-control, and teamwork through physical activity, primarily soccer. The accompanying research consists of program evaluation, including examination of the fidelity with which the model was applied, and evaluation of the effectiveness of this model with this population in producing immediate outcomes. The immediate outcomes will also be considered as part of the evaluation of fidelity to the model in the program.

#### **Fidelity**

Attendance data for both staff and participants provides additional quantitative data supporting fidelity in application of the TPSR model. These data are represented below in Table 4.1. The program included “phase one,” the three weeks during which the staff people were undergoing training, including practice teaching during the sessions and two classrooms sessions. Phase One included two scheduled sessions per week for three week, with each session lasting approximately two hours. “Phase Two” was the

subsequent six weeks of the program, during which two sessions were held each week, with each session lasting approximately two hours. Two sessions were rained out, leaving ten total sessions in Phase Two. The attendance data in Table 4.1 represents Phase Two, the portion of the program during which data was gathered.

**Table 4.1**

**Participant and Staff Attendance**

<b><u>Participant &amp; Staff</u></b>	<b><u>Sessions Attended</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage</u></b>
<b>Participants</b>		
CHANCE	8	80%
BRIGHTON	5	50%
EDWIN	7	70%
ISAIAH	7	70%
MARTY	5	50%
JAYDEN	7	70%
VINCENT	6	60%
KELLEN	7	70%
MICKEY	9	90%
CHARLIE	6	60%
JUSTICE	6	60%
KELTEN	6	60%
GEORGIE	6	60%
JAMES	5	50%
<b><u>Staff</u></b>		
NS	10	100%
AS	8	80%
BD	7	70%
CF	8	80%
JW	7	70%
RH	10	100%
MC	10	100%

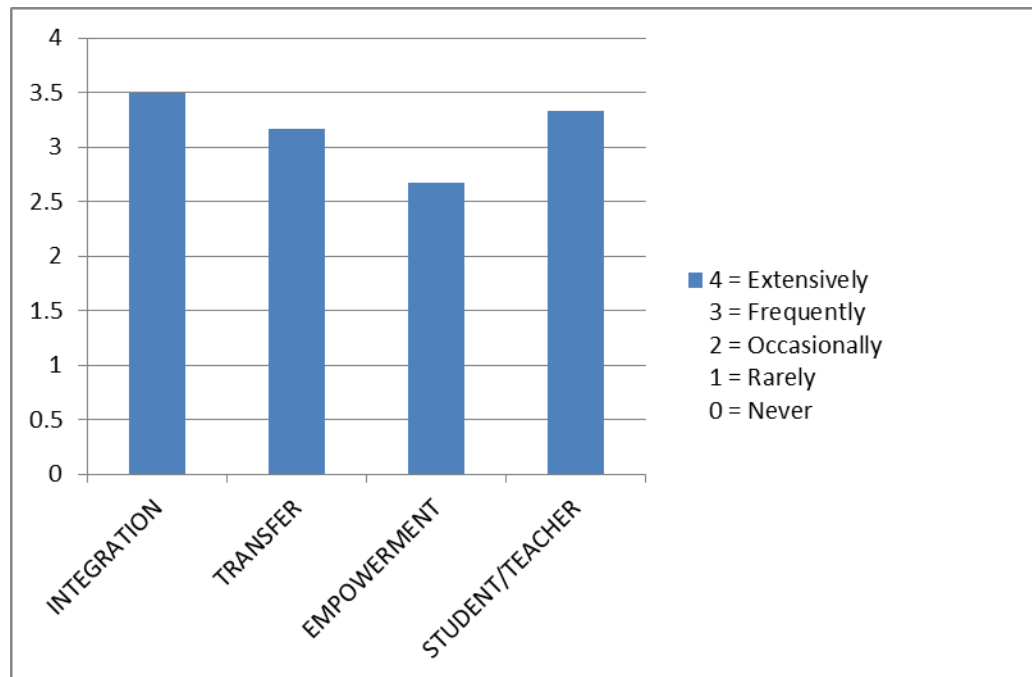
These data are relevant, since regular attendance is generally necessary for a program to be effective (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2005), as is consistency in staffing. The participants listed above attended at least half the sessions in Phase Two, and therefore had regular contact with the program staff. The attendance data of the staff are also represented here. These are relevant data for determining fidelity to our model, since consistency in staffing is an important hallmark of a good youth development program (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004), since relationships between adult leaders and the participants is a key, and regular contact is a key to these relationships (Hellison, 2011). Aside from an occasional illness or academic conflict, the staff members were very reliable in their attendance at scheduled sessions.

The TARE was used by staff to evaluate the frequency with which their activities display the characteristics indicative of a properly executed TPSR program. Elements of a detailed program narrative that were derived from the daily session notes from the program director were organized according to the Personal-Social Responsibility Themes from the TARE and provided qualitative data that assisted in evaluating fidelity in implementing the TPSR model.

The staff responses to the TARE Part 2, which focuses on Personal-Social Responsibilities Themes as demonstrated in the program's activities as measured on a scale that ran from 0 (Never) to 4 (Extensively). The means are graphed below as Figure 4.1. The mean score for all the themes were on the higher end of the scale of frequency, with no individual responses below a 2, or "Occasionally." Over 79% of total responses

in all categories were 3's or 4's, which corresponds to "Frequently" and "Extensively," respectively, indicating a high overall frequency of desired teaching behaviors.

The staff's responses were strongest in the area of Integration, the extent to which responsibility roles and concepts are integrated into the physical activity, with a mean average of 3.50, falling at the high end of the scale between "Extensively" and "Frequently." The next highest mean score was in the category of Teacher-Student Relationship, which is defined as the extent to which students are treated as individuals deserving respect, choice, and voice, had a mean average of 3.33, falling above "Frequently." Transfer, defined as the extent to which connections are being made to the application of life skills in other settings, had a mean score of 3.17, also well above "Frequently." The lowest score of the four categories was a 2.67 for "Empowerment," defined as extent to which the teacher shares responsibility with students. While these data are self-reported and thereby subject to potential bias, the consistency with the program narrative and between staff member responses supports the credibility of the data.



**Figure 4.1 Mean frequency of TPSR responsibility-based strategies**

In addition to the quantitative data that the TARE yielded, there were elements of qualitative data generated using the TARE, which includes an open-ended section for comments in each category or theme.

In regard to Integration, one staff member commented on the participants’ use of “Rock-Paper-Scissors,” a strategy that was introduced as a way to let the students take more control of their own games by calling their own fouls and out-of-bounds calls, and resolving any disputes that arose in that process; “Rock-Paper-Scissors is standard now.”



Another staff member observed, in relation to Integration: "...lesson(s) utilized during the training sessions were designed to stimulate social and personal development, whether in the form of self-confidence, respect toward others, etc..."

In the area of Integration, a staff comment pointed out that the respect for one another and showing caring came easily in some elements of the lessons, specifically when there was team success, but not as easily at other times: "When goals were scored and when other efforts leading to team success, there was mass congratulation delivered from all team members and encouragement was very much present in these cases. It would have been nice to see this in other areas as well though."

Transfer was addressed by a staff member in relation to his own approach to trying to achieve transfer of the lessons of TPSR: "Whenever there was a questioned call or a disagreement I would pull the kids aside afterwards and explain how certain issues could be transferred into their daily lives as they grow. They seemed to understand these philosophies..."

Comments on Empowerment included one staff member who regularly engaged the participants to allow them to be heard, providing "Voices and Choices"; "I was constantly asking a variety of the kids, on different days, how they thought we were doing? Asking if there was anything specifically that they wanted to do? Or anything that they wanted to see more of vs. less of."

There were negatives in regard to empowerment, too. This may be an indicator of why Empowerment was the lowest rated category: “Most will still ‘slip’ if left idle for any length of time.” This comment reflects some concerns that that the sessions could get out of hand or simply be unproductive without staff exerting some significant control.

Some of the staff member comments included reflections on Student/Teacher Relationship, including this comment on the students and teachers relationship regarding dispute resolution: “Encouraged students to resolve disputes fairly w/o (sic) violence.”

Another staff member wrote about efforts to connect with the participants, but expressed regret at not having done more: “I taught a couple of the kids some tricks and moves to try out. I got on well with a lot of the kids and did my best to focus my attention on those who were less like to approach the coaches confidently. I should have been more attentive to this process throughout the entire program. Some days were less successful than others.”

It is also important to remember that there is potential for bias in the staff self-report responses, although it is worth noting that there were both positive and negative comments. Overall, the staff comments reinforce the quantitative data and suggest that there was success in most areas, but that empowerment may have been the most challenging area for the program staff, and an area that deserves additional efforts in future iterations of the program.

**Narrative Program Notes.** The program director took a detailed set of field notes at the conclusion of each session that provides a rich, thick narrative description of the program. These observation data were compiled by the researcher, who was on-site for all planning, all preparation, and all operations of the program. They provided a comprehensive view of the program and the activities within the program, including staff and participant behavior. These data help determine if the activities within the program were consistent with implementing a TPSR program with fidelity. These written notes were compiled into a chronological program narrative which is included as Appendix P. This narrative was then analyzed and sorted according to the Personal-Social Responsibility Themes, which are used to evaluate the use of desirable Responsibility-based Strategies as outlined in Part 2 of the TARE, including Integration, Transfer, Empowerment, and Teacher-Student Relationship.

This analysis found multiple observed instances of each of the desired Responsibility-based Strategies, supporting the program's application of the TPSR model with fidelity, with specific examples related to strategies outlined in the TARE

***Integration.*** In planning the daily schedules in the program, the goal was to incorporate TPSR themes into the activities in ways that were natural and meshed with that day's theme(s). Different formats for our soccer activity were used, seeking to integrate the lessons of TPSR, while also finding a style of play that engaged them, made it fun, and kept it positive.

In the instance below, a rule modification was employed to encourage teamwork as part of helping others, or Level 4:

Since we were working on Level 4, helping others, we extended that theme to teamwork and cooperation. We used a few of the games we had been playing, but modified them to add teamwork as a theme. Our first warm-up activity was a passing exercise... We then divided into two groups and did “World Cup,” a half-field game where teams of two people represent countries, and play against one another. The teamwork twist was to require two passes before a shot could be taken. The kids embraced this and engaged in excellent passing and cooperation. Scoring was way down, but teamwork and passing were way up. (April 15)

In the situation of disputes, we were seeking to allow the kids to resolve their conflicts themselves, thereby integrating levels 1 (respect) and 3 (self-direction). The students demonstrated real “ownership” of this area of program management. The following passage describes an instance where the participants utilized a conflict management tool that the program staff had introduced them to:

We also had a couple disputed calls that we resolved quickly and easily with Rock-Paper-Scissors. This was a conflict resolution strategy we had given them to empower them to resolve their own conflicts, and it worked very well. (April 15)

The participants immediately took ownership of Rock-Paper-Scissors and used it virtually every time there was a conflict, whether it was a question of a foul, who knocked the ball out of bounds, or even who should get the ball first. The boys spent their time playing, and not arguing. The thing to note about this is that it became so routine, that it didn't warrant a mention.

One exercise we used was designed to integrate level 4 (helping, caring) principles and foster cooperation. Level 1 themes of respecting one's partner by providing good directions was also part of the message and values communicated by this exercise:

[W]e did a "blindfolded minefield" exercise, where, again in pairs, one participant was blindfolded and the other had to walk him through a "minefield" made up of soccer balls, pinnies and other obstacles. The kids enjoyed this, although there were varying levels of success. A couple of the pairs gave each other lots of directions like "go that way" while pointing or "come this way" or failed to tell their partners to stop before they bumped into a cone or ball. We also had a few who just wanted to peek under the blindfold, particularly our new pair, "Reign" and "Jacque," so we talked about what we were trying to accomplish and whether peeking really made sense. (May 1)

The following passage illustrates some of the ways we sought to connect the themes of our model with the activities, in this case, with lessons of teamwork and cooperation, and respect. In addition to utilizing rules modifications, the composition of the teams was also set up to help the players develop relationships with each other and develop respect and caring for each other:

We finished with a scrimmage where at least three passes had to be made before a team could shoot. We also divided up the World Cup teams down the middle, mixing kids who hadn't normally chosen one another as teammates and we had very even teams and a good game. Overall, it was our best session yet, and one that included strong TPSR themes throughout the program activities and discussion. It also had the most positive tone of any recent session. (April 15)

We used some activities that were meant to highlight skills beyond the purely physical or soccer-based talents. These team-building activities helped illustrate the value of teamwork and helping others and caring (Level 4) and Respect (Level 1), and

created opportunities for success among some of the kids who were not as skilled at soccer:

During today's session, we tried to introduce some new activities to keep it fresh for the kids. We used a few standard team-building and cooperation exercises that the staff or myself had seen in the past... There was much encouragement, though, and much laughter, as well as some frustration... and positive talk, but the students encountered much more success in this activity. In addition to being a new, fresh activity, this exercise also provided an opportunity for some of the less physically skilled kids to shine; the key here was cooperating and thinking things through and cooperating, not speed and strength. (May 1)

Taken together, these entries indicate there was a frequent integration of TPSR lessons into program activities throughout the program's duration.

*Transfer.* While transfer is certainly the hardest element to judge from the standpoint of program staff, there was considerable time spent discussing the idea of taking the principles of the program "out of the gym," or in this case, "off the field."

In illustrating Level 4 helping behaviors as well as working on Level 5 transference, we sought to remind the students of instances where they already were doing the right things, and develop and emphasize those behaviors. In the session described below, the participants were asked to talk about helping behaviors they had engaged in outside of the program:

Our opening reflection focused on helping, and we asked the kids to give [real] examples. We were looking for both understanding of helping behaviors, but also addressing transfer and hoping to help the students bridge the gap from the field to home and school. Several offered good examples of helping their parents, siblings, or helping each other with things in school. (May 1)

Our participants seemed to have a strong desire for control of their own destiny and having what the TPSR literature calls “a voice.” There had been an altercation between two of the boys during the previous session, and a conversation was held with each of them discussing with each them individually about self-control. This was positioned as being in control of one’s own actions, not as a matter of obeying external rules. The students embraced this idea when presented that way, because it was framed in a way the developed their internal resource, or strength: namely, their urge for autonomy and more control in their own lives on the soccer field, but also in school and at home:

At the beginning of this day’s session, I spoke with both “Isaac” and “Blake” about their confrontation, and both told me that they didn’t want someone else to control them, and that they were fine. This was positive; they learned a lesson of self-control. (May 1)

One program goal was to weave positive messages about possible futures and making positive choices to move in that direction into their daily activities. Possible futures came up at times when participants were not making good choices and when we could address how the same approach would work in the future, and in other settings.

In this instance, there was a scuffle between an African-American boy and a Latino boy. While the hope was always that the boys could resolve their own disputes, there were instances when the program staff had to step in. In this case, the program director stepped in and, and the passage described below involved trying to help the

participants understand the consequences of these types of behaviors in settings outside the program:

I talked, in turn, with each of the boys individually, and Mickey claimed that Vincent had “called him the N-word” in school. Ultimately, it came to light that he had not heard it himself, but had someone tell him that... We also discussed that we let other people control us if we react to what they say by getting into a fight... [and] different rules for different places and what this type of reaction would mean in school or at work... Victor insisted to me that he had NOT said the “N-word” in school or any other time, and that he was just mad that Mickey was pushing him around. We discussed solving conflicts with words rather than reacting with violence. He calmed down some as well. The boys shook hands and apologized to one another and returned to the game. (March 13)

“Mickey” was a young man who clearly had athletic aspirations, and that created an opportunity to build a relationship based on the athletic activities we were engaged in within the program and the program director’s own athletic experience. This led to several discussions about his possible futures, and how the lessons of the program could be applied within other settings, particularly athletic settings:

I am planning to appeal to Mickey through his obvious love for sports and his self-identification as an athlete; the best athletes are positive leaders who are embraced by their teammates, and I believe he would want to see himself this way if it’s presented to him that way. (March 13)

There were a couple opportunities to have these discussions with “Mickey” and he responded in a very positive way within the program.

Another altercation between two participants provided another opportunity to address issues of transfer. There was an incident between two young men who were



generally very positive and engaged, but in this case, they each lost control of their tempers. This provided an opportunity to discuss the impact of their actions in other settings, and what certain behaviors would mean for their possible futures:

Near the end of the session...“Blake” hurt “Isaac” with a hard kick of the ball that hit him in the head. “Blake” said it was an accident, but “Isaac” felt it was on purpose. “Isaac” confronted “Blake” and then “Blake” became angry, and I had to intervene... Ultimately, I was able get each of them to calm down enough that I could talk to them individually...I reminded each of them about how important it was to be in control of yourself if you wanted to succeed in life. “Someday when you have a job, do you think you can try and fight someone every time you get mad?”... Both boys seemed to understand...and were back to playing within a few minutes. (April 24)

In one session, we introduced some activities that would encourage helping behaviors and provide an opportunity to discuss how certain behaviors would work in other settings in their futures. One instance used an activity we called “blindfolded minefield,” where an obstacle course was set up using soccer equipment, and the boys divided into pairs. One participant was blindfolded, and his partner had to direct him through the “minefield” using only using spoken directions:

We also had a few pairs where one participant ran their teammate into things as a joke. This seemed to be meant in good fun, but it provided a good opening to talk about trust, and how they wanted people to perceive them, now and in the future. (May 1)

Although program staff did not have a chance to observe the participants outside the framework of the program, the program activities did present opportunities to discuss

transfer of TPSR principles to other settings and the participants also offered examples of their behaviors suggesting transference.

***Empowerment.*** The concept of empowerment is one of the most important features of maintaining fidelity to the model in TPSR teaching. The idea of respecting the kids was something that was frequently discussed during training, and regularly during the program, but this was the category in which the reported frequency was lowest. The idea of “accentuating the positive” and not spending as much time trying to “remediate” what we may have perceived as problems was repeated regularly. At least one of our coaches, “N.S.”, had played his high school sports in a highly regimented system that was culturally miles away from where our kids were, and early in the program he suggested some things like when practice starts, we blow a whistle and they all have to be lined up within thirty seconds. It was explained to him that these students spent their whole day responding to teacher commands, bells ringing, etc, and that it likely left them feeling powerless. The program director always carried a whistle during sessions, partly as a “coaching prop” but tried very hard not to use it.

The staff was mindful of the fact that the program participants spend their school day under orders from teachers and school staff, and their days are ruled by the clock, period bells, and many other external factors beyond their control. Beyond the fact that their schedule is dictated to them, these students also do not often have much say about their activities. In youth development programs such as this one, there should be an effort to provide kids with a voice in the program’s activities. This was a point that was

discussed in staff training, and during the program's operation. The most common way this principle played out was choice of activities, and trying to provide leadership opportunities such as choosing the teams, setting the rules, and being responsible for resolving their own disputes during games. Although it wasn't possible to provide the participants with these types of choices at every turn, there was a concerted effort to empower the participants in this way. Of course, there were times this led to disagreements if opinion was split, but at that point, program staff had to provide leadership and keep us moving forward with a decision.

In this passage, early in the program, the students were provided an opportunity for empowerment by choosing which game they played in:

We moved on to some basic soccer drills, like "gates," and a "sharks and minnows" type of game. Then, we split into two groups, with a 7v7 game on the larger field, and a 5v5 game on the smaller, lower field. Coaches fill in to even the numbers or to spell a kid who wants to go to the bathroom. We also let most of the kids chose which game they wanted to play in. (March 13)

Playing alongside the kids also provided opportunities the participants to feel empowered. It is certainly empowering for a youngster to strip the ball or block a shot of one of their adult leaders, and this happened with some regularity when staff got involved in the scrimmages. Of course, there were also instances of staff demonstrating considerable skills, but this added to the sense of accomplishment when the participants got the better of a staff member on the soccer field. The following passage describes a

day when the program staff were participating in the games, creating opportunities for some positive interaction and participant empowerment.

This was a day when the staff participated in the soccer, and this helps us show our fallibility, as Doc [Tom Martinek] talks about, particularly myself, since my soccer skills are probably the weakest among our staff. This also helps the kid feel confident; being able to see that many of them possess soccer skills that compare favorably to adults. *(April 24)*

Empowering the kids in terms of giving them choices and responsibilities became easier as the program went along. The kids knew which activities they liked, and were comfortable expressing their opinions to the staff. For example, this passage describes an instance where the students were directly empowered in the choice of activity:

We worked to give the kids a voice in the activities today by allowing them to vote on the activity after we finished our teamwork exercises. The kids voted to do a full scrimmage. We had a very good game... *(May 1)*

By late in the program, the participants had become accustomed to having a role and a say in the program. Several took it upon themselves to help set up the field, and gather up the cones and balls after practice, an example of both empowerment, and a self-direction activity. The youngsters also volunteered some truly positive thoughts and actions about program activities. In this entry, the participants, with no prompting, exhibited empowered behavior by selecting their own activity, and embracing a rule modification that had previously been used to encourage more teamwork and cooperation:

[Today], we also had one tremendous moment of self-direction, when we allowed the kids to vote on what we'd do (they selected a full-field scrimmage) and then they brought up the idea, and insisted on strong team-work rules ("Two passes... no, THREE!") for the scrimmage. We had great fun playing one last soccer game, and then had some pizza before the kids started getting picked up. (May 8)

This instance of the participants embracing their ability to have a voice was echoed in the way they took to using the simple conflict resolution tool the participants were provided with early in the program. "Rock-paper-scissors" was a way for the kids to take responsibility to resolve their own disputes over things like who the ball went off of when it went out of bounds, who would be on what team, or if a foul had occurred. The participants used it frequently and successfully, and staff would only occasionally have to intervene.

Some efforts at empowerment were not successful, but even when the participants' desires were not consistent with our program goals or disrupted our planned activities, we tried to give youth a voice by hearing them out at the very least:

... "The field should be bigger,"... It's important to give the kids a voice, though, and I suggested that he show us how we could make the field bigger. After examining the way we limited by the slope of the land and the placement of trees, he agreed that we couldn't make the field any bigger....Unfortunately, this still did not satisfy "Charlie"... (March 13)

***Teacher-Student Relationship.*** One of our strengths was our staffing numbers; generally, the program director and anywhere from four to six of my student staffers were present. This means the program did not have to be run in a rigid fashion; the program had the luxury of lots of eyes on the field, and the ability for one staff member or the

other to be fully engaged with one or two kids while the remaining staff could keep program activities flowing. The student staff exhibited positivity and genuine interest in the kids, and, maybe just as importantly, they had fun with the kids. The program benefited from the fact that several of the staffers had significant experience with kids, as well as the engaging positive personalities of all the staffers. As opposed to many youth physical activity programs, the college student volunteer program staff came to the program with no preconceived views on any of the particular participants in the program, which isn't always the case with programs run by parent volunteers or school staff.

Even from the program's very first meeting, we sought to establish relationships and give the participants the opportunity to interact with the student staffers. In our very first meeting, one of our major goals was to establish relationships with the participants:

This was our first day...we are running these early sessions as "pilot" sessions; we were not discussing TPSR concepts yet, and we are focusing on just playing soccer, learning the kids names, and getting my student staffers comfortable with interacting with the kids. (*March 11*)

Addressing the participants by name was a key starting point; a person's own name is music to their ears, and when program staff could praise a youngster by name, or even just say hello and exchange a high five during warm-ups, it makes a real impact. To facilitate learning and using the participants names, we did name tags during our first session, and it proved to be a big help:

During our opening gathering, we did name tags for this first day, and it helped a lot. You can see such a different level of reaction in the kids' faces when you call them by name, even if they know they are wearing a name tag. (March 11)

Our program activities also included an effort to help the participants learning one another's names, something we had not previously considered. Many of the kids did know each other's names, so during one session in our first week, we devoted some time and attention to helping the participants learn each other's names and thereby set the stage for showing respect to one another, and engaging in other positive behaviors that were goals of the program:

We had well-planned session today, with circle time focused on the "Name Game." I had realized that during our session on Monday that there were many of the kids that didn't know each other. They are in different classes or "teams" within the school, and many [originally] came from different elementary schools. (April 10)

While all our staffers were engaged and positive, the kids responded to the fact that they were young, closer in age to them than their school teachers or the program director, and there seemed to be a positive connection right from the start. During this session early in phase one of the program, the students were notably interested in engaging with program staff:

Today's session was very problem free...the kids were engaged, positive and eager to play soccer today. They also seemed to take right away to our student "coaches"; NS, AS, RH, CF, and BD. (March 11)

One program goal was a less hierarchical atmosphere, and one where we respected the participants and we strove to meet kids where they were, and to applaud positives and to minimize negatives. Of course, this can have a downside, too. Some kids want to push boundaries, and it's often hard to know exactly at what point it is necessary to intervene. One example involving the use of personal electronics during the day's session is excerpted below. It's hard to know if was the right decision, but it illustrates the philosophy to which the program was trying to adhere.

... his iPod, which he held in his hand playing music during the warmup and would not put away. I let him keep it in his pocket, but ... promise me he would leave it at home on Monday and Wed next week. (April 10)

Another of our major challenges was "Mickey." He presented some undesirable behaviors early in the program. In working with Mickey, one of the program staffs' goals was empowering him and developing respect as a key to gaining a positive response. In this instance, from early in the program, Mickey's behaviors are described, as well as a positive strategy for dealing with them that was ultimately successful:

Mickey ... is used to getting his way, and pushes and shoves and... is also very loud...he has natural leadership potential ... I am planning to appeal to Mickey through his obvious love for sports and his self-identification as an athlete; the best athletes are positive leaders who are embraced by their teammates, and I believe he would want to see himself this way if it's presented to him that way. (April 10)

In the end, I did, in fact, have the above referenced conversation with "Mickey" and he responded with a much more positive approach, much more team-oriented, and



his warm-up behavior became more positive and cooperative, as well, following the framing of his behaviors in terms of a potential leadership role.

Despite our best efforts as a staff, there were some successes but also some students that the staff struggled to develop relationships with. For example, “Charles” never opened up and appeared to harbor suspicion about virtually every direction or activity we laid out. Despite efforts to allow him to express his thoughts, we could never crack his shell and his attendance tailed off.

The staff was frequently reminded that they needed to seek out one-on-one relationships with the kids as a way of cultivating the type of mutual respect that would facilitate positive behaviors. In this session, the program director provided reminders during the session about relationship building with the kids, along with some specific strategies involving a particular participant:

I reminded each of the staff about building relationships, move around the field, talk to kids (names are KEY!!). I reminded them that kids “Don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” .... At the end of the session, we discussed the scuffle and our two challenges, Charles and Mickey. We discussed trying to get ahead of the curve by connecting with each of them early in each session, assigning them tasks, asking them how their day was, and other ways of building a relationship. (April 10)

Developing relationships sometimes calls for creating a climate of mutual respect and may contribute to the participants feeling like the program staff are “on their side” and that they belong. In this instance, one participant was not fully engaged in the program during a session, but in an effort to create an atmosphere of empowerment and

avoiding embarrassing the young man in a way that could have harmed the relationships that program staff was trying to build, the participant was not corrected.

The kids were very friendly today, and “Blaine” was a bit hyper. There were a few girls hanging around watching the program. There are normally a few kids waiting for rides, and such, at the school after classes, but in this case, one of the girls was apparently “Blaine”’s girlfriend, and he was showing off a bit, but nothing that really disrupted the game or that was worth addressing. (May 6)

The staff also tried hard to be interested in what the kids were doing outside of soccer, and stay up to date on what they were thinking about and doing on their own time. This would often take the form of small conversations during the early warm-up portion of each session, although sometimes it was more obvious:

Today, several of the kids were dressed up; a couple of the students were in a team that had done an outing [including a nice restaurant and a university campus] We did have a couple issues... since some of the kids were dressed in fancy clothes, and at least one had forgotten his sneakers. We addressed this by allowing “Kellen” to play goal, where he wouldn’t have to run in his slick bottomed shoes. (April 15)

This type of outing was a good illustration of the efforts that many of the teachers made to provide enrichment activities for the kids, and it gave our staff a nice opportunity to talk with the kids about their experience. Several of them mentioned that this was the first time they had ever been to a “fancy” restaurant, and is a good reminder of all the factors at work in these kids lives, some negative, but some good as well.

One of the interesting by-products of regular contact with kids is watching how they interact, and how that changes from day to day. This can provide an insight into the

youngsters, thereby helping develop relationship between staff and participants. For example, in the instance described below, one participants behaviors were rooted in his activities over the previous day:

... “Mickey”... quit playing several times during the scrimmage and I had a chance to talk with him individually. It turns out he had been in an AAU basketball tournament ...and he was clearly exhausted. I was actually very pleased with M[ickey], though, since the times he took himself out of the game were each instances where a play had gone against him, and ... he simply took a break. This showed good self-control and respect for others from a young man who had exhibited some [negative] behaviors early in the program [in similar situations]. (May 6)

During our training, we spent some time talking about respecting each of the kids, and understanding that many of them would be coming to our program because they had demonstrated negative behaviors in school. In many cases, these kids had already experience lots of negative attention, and therefore, if we were going to develop the desired relationships, we needed to strive for a positive environment, including respecting each student. This could take a lot of different forms, including developing relationships with the kids, not judging them based on what they wore, how they looked, or in some cases, their initial behaviors. Treating the participants in the program with respect was a theme we discussed in a number of times in our training and on an ongoing basis, and was a very important element to the successful relationship that the staff developed with the participants. When the program ended, the participants expressed disappointment that made it obvious that they valued the program, and felt a sense of belonging:

The kids that were there were some of our most regular attendees. They expressed sadness that it was over. 'James' and 'Chance,' particularly, said 'No, don't let it be the last one, we want to keep going!' I felt this demonstrated a sense of belonging and connection to the program and our staff. (May 8)

## **Outcomes**

**Changes in personal and social responsibility.** The PSRQ measure the first four levels of the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility model, which include respect, effort and participation, self-direction, and helping others and caring. The PSRQ questionnaire was administered to the participants (n=14) at the beginning of "phase two" of the program and at the conclusion of program as a pre- and post-test. The pre-test and post-test administration of the PSRQ yielded results that were analyzed using the two factor model, breaking the results into Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility (Li, et al, 2008). The Social Responsibility Factor includes Level I behaviors, respecting the rights and feelings of others, and Level 4, described as helping others or caring. The pre-test yielded a combined mean score of 31.35 with a standard deviation of 5.12 for the questions pertaining to social responsibility. The post-test yielded a combined mean score of 33.63 with a standard deviation of 5.44. Using a paired t-test (two-tailed), there was a significant increase in student self-perception of social responsibility behaviors by an average of  $M=2.29$  on the combined scores of the Social Responsibility questions on the PSRQ, with a  $SD=3.53$ . This increase was statistically significant, using a two-tailed t-test with  $df=13$ , and a t-stat of 2.33 compared to a critical value of 2.16, yielding  $p=.036$ , which means the improvement was statistically significant at the nominal alpha level of .05.

On the second factor, Personal Responsibility, the combined scores of the PSRQ questions that involved Level 2, effort and participation, and Level 3, Self-direction, showed no significant change. The pre-test yielded a combined mean score of 34.36 with a standard deviation of 4.57 for the questions pertaining to personal responsibility. The post-test yielded a combined mean score of 34.29 with a standard deviation of 5.19. On these questions, the mean difference of the combined scores was  $M = -0.08$ , with a standard deviation of 5.43 and a t-score (two-tailed),  $t(13) = 0.05$  compared to a critical value of 2.16, yielding  $p = 0.96$ . This test indicates that there is not a significant difference when compared to the limit set at  $p < .05$  (See Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2**

**Mean Differences of Personal and Social Responsibility Factors in PSRQ Scores**

Variable	Time 1		Time 2		Difference		<i>t</i> (13)	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Social Responsibility	31.35	5.12	33.63	5.44	2.29	3.53	2.31	0.0364
Personal Responsibility	34.36	4.57	34.29	5.19	0.08	5.43	0.05	0.9599

*Note:* Statistical significance was set at  $p < .05$

**Transfer; Teacher Interview.** The PSRQ is designed to measure Levels I, II, III, and IV. The final level, Level V or Transfer, was evaluated through a focus group-style interview with the participants' classroom teachers. This meeting was held shortly after the conclusion of the program and a group interview was conducted with the ten sixth grade classroom teachers. The interview was conducted at the school prior to the sixth grade teachers' weekly meeting, and the principal investigator asked the questions to the group as a whole and took notes on their responses. This data was added to provide triangulation to the data derived from other sources, and specifically to examine the teachers and students perceptions of the program, including any observations of transference of the principals to the classroom. The teachers were prompted with open-ended questions including;

- 1) What did they hear from the kids about the program?
- 2) What, if any, changes did they see in the kids in the classroom?
- 3) What, if any, changes did they see in how they interacted with each other?
- 4) What, if any, changes did they see in how they interacted with teachers?

The principal researcher conducted this interview, and took notes as the teachers spoke. Each teacher comment was noted, although some duplicate comments or agreements with previous statements were summarized or noted without being written down exactly. A complete transcript of this interview is included as Appendix T.

Themes. One of the themes that emerged from this interview was obviously transference; the instances of improved behavior in the classroom support transference of the lessons of TPSR. Although it's impossible to know if the program was the cause of these improvements, these observations are consistent with transference, including better classroom behavior, demonstrations of leadership behaviors, and helping others. One teacher's comment highlighted this theme in regards to our most boisterous, outspoken program participant, and the teacher's comment mirrored what we observed during the course of the program:

'Mickey' really enjoyed it, and his behavior improved a lot.

Another teacher comment addressed a student who was very high energy, and learned to direct it in a positive way during our sessions, while setting a standard with his high level of effort:

‘Isaiah’ became more of leader. He became interested in helping.

Another theme that came up in several of the teachers comments was the improved confidence of the participants and the relationships between the kids in the program. This is, of course, linked with transference of Level 1 and Level 4 skills, but while the TPSR model places great value on the relationships between program staff and participants, the data gathered from the teachers supports the idea that another benefit is strengthened relationships among participants, above and beyond improvements in Levels 1 and 4. The participants are sixth graders, and while they have some classes together, they are drawn from three different local elementary schools, so many did not know each other well before the school year began. This was something that had been a surprise at the beginning of the program, when some of the students didn’t seem to know the others names. It turned out that some of them didn’t have classes together and they had gone to different elementary schools. So, these relationships between the participants and the participants becoming more comfortable with each other was an unexpected program benefit, and seems to indicate Level 1 (respect rights and feelings of others) as well as Level 4 (Helping others, caring), in addition to the Level 5 (transference). The teacher comments below help illustrate this:



He was more positive with other kids.

‘Marty’ was really quiet, but he came out of his shell during the program.

‘Vincent’ really opened up, started to talk and participate more in class

One teacher commented on how she really liked how recruitment had been handled, with the parent letters stating that the students had been “recommended” and that the kids perceived no stigma attached to the program, and felt excited to have been “picked.” This tied to another major theme that emerged from the teacher interview, which was the participants having a sense of belonging. There were other comments from the teachers regarding the kids feeling engaged in the program, and feeling “a part of something.” and while these were not specific examples of transferring TPSR lessons to the school setting, it did indicate that they were talking about the program in the school setting, and we being impacted by it in a way that their teachers could observe. The following general comments reflected that “The kids loved it. They talked about it all the time.”

This was something several of the teachers said, and it came up later in the interview as well; “They were excited to be a part of something.”

During the group interview, the teachers explained that many of these kids had never been part of an organized team, and some were not in the “in-group” at school, so this provided them a sense of belonging.

The teacher comments also produced a theme in regard to future direction for the program. First, the teachers stressed how much they hoped the program returned. Everyone agreed and nodded heads when this was said. They also said they hoped we could do something in the fall, as well. The teachers also felt strongly enough about what the program did with the boys that they expressed a desire for a similar program for girls, which may match up with a female soccer player in our department at Elon who hopes to work with area youth in some capacity, and discussion about that possibility are ongoing.

Another item that came up was that they felt the really serious and skilled soccer players didn't find it competitive enough, and were less enthused about the program as the spring progressed. This was something our staff felt as well, and something that we need to think about for next year. Some thoughts and options in this area include the addition of some "official" games with other teams near the program's conclusion, offering a multi-sport model that would "level the playing field" or perhaps having a "competitive" track and a "participation" track.

These data, which includes strong support from the participants' teachers for the continuation of the program, and numerous observations of improvement in classroom behavior and student interactions, suggests the program's effectiveness in teaching the lessons of the TPSR model, and also indicates some transference. This suggests that the model was implemented with fidelity and that there were some immediate impacts on the participants.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Summary and Implications**

The Soccer Coaching Club program provided a cohort of male participants age 11-12, with a six-week after-school soccer program that met two afternoons per week for approximately two hours per session. The program used the TPSR model to teach the program participants concepts like respect, self-control, and helping and caring through physical activity, primarily soccer with some additional activities.

This study was undertaken to examine the use of the TPSR model in an at-risk population of sixth grade boys, and to add to the empirical base in the field of youth development in general and TPSR specifically. A mixed methods approach was used. This type of approach had been supported by a variety of researchers (Hellison & Walsh, 2002; Martinek, 2000; Walsh, 2007). Youth development is complex, and the program evaluation research in this field demands the ability to examine multiple dimensions of a program simultaneously. The variety of data sources served to triangulate the results and added validity and credibility to the findings.

Regardless of the methodological approach, program evaluation is challenging. As Martinek (2000) has pointed out, evaluating the processes and outcomes of youth programs is a complicated, messy business. Youth programs do not follow a pre-

determined blueprint, regardless of the amount of planning that goes into them.

Nonetheless, it is still necessary to figure out a way to evaluate such programs in the interest of best serving youth.

With that in mind, it may be helpful to consider some broader principles of youth development programs. Good programs create a physically and psychologically safe place for kids to be kids, as well as creating a caring environment with positive adults, youth development principles embedded in the programming, opportunities to build skills, promotion of positive social norms, and development of resiliency and belonging (Hellison 2000, Fraser-Thomas 2005, McLaughlin, Irby & Langman, 1994). Taken as a whole, the data generated during this evaluation points to instances of each of these things happening within this program.

The research also had the specific goals of helping improve the program by evaluating the fidelity with which the TPSR model was implemented and measuring the immediate outcomes of the program. While there is room for improvement in every program, overall, the findings indicated that the TPSR model was applied with fidelity, as supported by a variety of data. These data sources included qualitative data that provided a narrative of the program and brought forth elements that could not be measured via other means, as well as quantitative data that indicated some positive results in immediate outcomes as measured by a pre- and post-test application of a validated instrument. This evaluation may serve to expand the empirical base in TPSR, as the use of quantitative

instruments such as the one employed in this study, the PSRQ (Li, et al., 2008), has been relatively rare in the field (Hellison & Walsh, 2002).

Analysis of observational data including the program narrative, teachers exit interview, and TARE data indicated that there were significant and consistent applications of the principals of the model, and many instances of the students demonstrating their learning through their behaviors in the program.

Despite a program of relatively short duration of six weeks in our “phase two,” the period between the PSRQ pre- and post-test, the results indicated significant improvement in one of the two factors (Li, et al, 2008) analyzed quantitatively through use of the PSRQ. The Social Responsibility factor showed significant improvement, with an increase in student self-perception of their behaviors in regards to social responsibility that was statistically significant. The second factor in the model, Personal Responsibility, showed a statistically insignificant, difference of the combined scores of the personal responsibility questions.

In the interest of best serving youth, it is the researcher’s hope that the implications of these conclusions may contribute to the youth development field in general, and the practice of TPSR specifically. It may be helpful to consider this evaluation in the context of a major meta-analysis of TPSR programs (Hellison & Walsh, 2002) that sought to answer the question “Is it working?” That study of 26 research studies found some programs without adequate data to determine what level of success

was achieved, but even within programs with solid evaluation, there were successes and failures. Some results in this program can be classified as success, including implementing the TPSR model with fidelity and the participants' perceived changes in social responsibility principles and behaviors. There are results that could be classified as failure as well, such as the statistically unchanged area of personal responsibility. This reinforces our knowledge that youth development work is often difficult, many factors are at work in young people's lives, and progress can be uneven, even when programs are well run (Hellison, 2011).

If programs are successful, the participants in these programs learn lessons of social and personal responsibility. Ultimately, the hope of all youth development practitioners and researchers is to provide young people with better outcomes, including happier more productive lives for them and their families.

## **Analysis of Results**

**Process.** The analysis of the quantitative data, as shown in Figure 4.1, supports fidelity to the TPSR model in terms of the themes from Part 2 of the TARE, with all strategies observed at the higher end of the scale of frequency. The qualitative data also illustrates that the staff exhibited high levels of behaviors consistent with Hellison's (2000) core TPSR principles, integration, teacher-student relations, empowerment, and transference (or transfer), as indicated by many of the individual instances recounted. These core principles, for which specific illustrations were found, correspond to the

Personal-Social Responsibility Themes from the TARE. In the following section, these themes from the TARE will serve to focus our discussion.

***Integration.*** This has been identified as one of the key principles of a successful TPSR program (Hellison, 2000). The principles of the model were integrated in some way into virtually every activity in the program. Opening reflections stressed one or two personal and social responsibility themes each day, introducing and then reinforcing these concepts. The physical activity elements also incorporated principles of the model. This integration of physical activity elements of the program along with social responsibility lessons is the goal in this area (Pepitas, et al, 2005).

Physical activity portions of the program had TPSR themes woven into the activities in every session. In some cases, this was in the structure of the activity, such as a scrimmage game with a certain number of passes required before a shot, thereby focusing on both respecting the rights of others by involving everyone on the team, and helping and caring about others by being good teammates and sharing the ball. One example of encouraging these types of level 4 helping and caring behaviors is below:

...[we] did “World Cup,” a half-field game where teams of two people represent countries, and play against one another. The teamwork twist was to require two passes before a shot could be taken. The kids embraced this and engaged in excellent passing and cooperation. Scoring was way down, but teamwork and passing were way up. (April 15)

This integration might go beyond the basic structure of the activity and instead be illustrated by how the activity was operated. For example, teacher-student relationships

were supported in the way that the program was run, including ways in which the students and staff were able to interact;

...when the staff participated in the soccer, and this helps us show our fallibility, as Doc (Martinek) talks about...This also helps the kids feel confident; being able to see that many of them possess soccer skills that compare favorably to adults.  
(April 24)

Integration was also supported by instances where the students demonstrated respect and self-direction by immediately calling a ball out-of-bounds off themselves, or if there was a disagreement on an out-of-bounds call or a foul, immediately employing a conflict resolution tool like Rock-Paper-Scissors. Effort and participation were supported by positive words from staff, encouragement from teammates, and the nature of the full-field games, where hustle was often rewarded with success in scoring goals or making defensive stops.

***Teacher-Student Relationships.*** It is worth noting possible program aspects that were *not* observed in regards to teacher-student (or, in this case, staff/participant) relationships; program staff was consistently positive with the kids, treating them with respect and with a positive tone. With the exception of having to encourage the staff to engage more with the kids during the unstructured time, and the adjustment to a slightly less-regimented practice style for a few, there was never any need for staff to be corrected, and there were no inappropriate or unkind words. Staff never spoke or acted in a way that was overly critical or inconsistent with program principles. This stood in marked contrast to the challenges that can arise in recruiting staff as described in



Buckle's (2005) program, where an "expert" soccer coach was added to the program and proceeded to bring a negative, punitive approach that damaged the relationships that program staff were trying to build with their participants. In the case of this program, the compatibility of program staff with the program principles, successful training, and program staff "buying in" to what the model contributed to the fidelity of implementation, and instead created an environment that embodied an ethic of caring (Noddings, 2003), a concept this often associated with successful youth development programs.

It was also very rewarding to watch certain participants and staff members develop relationships. Some of the kids would ask for "C.F." when he wasn't there, and there was always a rush to be on this staff member's team in a scrimmage situation. His sunny disposition and English accent must have contributed, but his genuine interest in the kids, and his love of playing soccer also shone through and resonated with the students. This instance serves as a reminder of how important relationships are in youth development work (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2005).

Another of the positive developments that was rooted in the teacher-student relationship was the growth in confidence and sense of belonging among some of our participants that seemed, at the program's beginning, to be less gifted athletically and less confident socially. Several of these youngsters were ones that the classroom teachers mentioned as being excited and proud to be a part of something. Some of the kids that seemed to be in the most need of a place to belong were some of our most regular

attendees. Kids like “Jamie” and “Kevin,” who were clearly hungry for positive interaction, virtually never missed a session. This would indicate that the program was successful in creating a physically and psychologically safe place (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2005), and that these kids had made a connection with the program’s staff. A common notion in TPSR programs is that the relationship between the staff and children is one of the key factors in regular attendance (Hellison, 2003). These were also some of the students who were identified in the post-program teacher interview as having talked about the program during the school day, and having developed stronger relationships with other program members.

This may indicate that one positive element of this program, and others like it, is that the youngsters who have the most to gain, or at least are the most eager for programming, tend to be the kids that do, in fact, gain the most, particularly if you look at it with a focus on contact time and program attendance. It is well established that attendance and contact time are strong factors in the success of programs (Fraser-Thomas, Cote & Deakin, 2005, Hellison & Cutforth, 2000)

***Empowerment.*** According to Hellison (2003), empowerment is a key concept in TPSR programs, and empowerment was a program goal and was frequently incorporated into the structure and activities of the program. The participants were empowered to make many choices and have voices in the program. Many of the activities that were conducted each day were decided by the participants. Which activities were chosen to be part of the warm-ups and stretches were generally left to the participants. The activities

for the next portion of each session were generally chosen by the participants from a variety of passing and shooting drills and game-like drills such as a version of sharks-and-minnows. The exact rules and format of the day's scrimmage game was also selected by the students most days. These choices included elements such as whether the game would be full-field or a half-field game like "World Cup", if the coaches played, how many (if any) passes were required before a shot, and how many goals would win the game. Conflict resolution was handled almost entirely by the students using tools like Rock-Paper-Scissors. There certainly were many instances of students being empowered, although there was also room for improvement; attempts to get the participants in the habit of setting up the field were often scrapped in the interest of maximizing the activity time. Similar efforts to have the participants take responsibility for breaking down the field had mixed success, since the participants were picked up at different times, and by the time the soccer game ended, the participants were often outnumbered by staff, who would usually just pick up the cones and balls themselves.

Program staff demonstrated some reluctance to "let go" as much as a complete commitment to empowering the participants would have required, and this may have been a contributing factor to the lack of growth in Level II and III as reflected in the PSRQ measurements. As was reflected in the data, the strongest improvements were in the social responsibility factor, which includes Level I and Level IV. Level III, self-direction, might have been aided by even stronger incorporation of empowerment strategies. The relatively short duration of the program and the age of the participants

were contributing factors to the staff's reluctance to allow participants a greater level of self-direction. This fear was supported by the fact that the students had "free play" at the beginning of most sessions, and this occasionally devolved into misbehavior that risked the safety and dignity of other participants. Depending on the personalities present on a particular day, our awareness talks also occasionally devolved into silliness and the day's theme may be obscured by this. This phenomenon has been studied in higher education (Mitra, 2005) where adult leaders of youth struggled to find a balance between letting go and providing adequate support, where there was a tendency to revert to traditional teacher/student roles when this balancing act was not executed just right.

One contributing factor to these struggles in better empowering the participants was a feeling that the less athletic or less confident participants' safety and dignity might be at risk by an out-of-control kick from a more boisterous teammate or unkind comment from a more outspoken student trying to get a cheap laugh, which could be seen as a failure to deliver the kind of physically and psychologically safe space that a successful youth development program requires (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2005). The comments of "A.S." on the TARE stated that "students mostly needed direction to complete most tasks," and conversations with other staff members revealed similar concerns. Conversely, empowering the participants does not necessarily need to jeopardize the program's role as a safe place for participants, particularly the more vulnerable participants, if the balance between structure and letting go is correctly managed. This view is also consistent with the staff member data from the post-program administration

of the TARE. Among the TPSR strategies measured, Empowerment was scored the lowest, with a mean response of 2.67, falling between “Occasionally” and “Frequently,” while all the other responses fell above 3, falling between “Frequently” and “Extensively.” This is worth bearing mind during future editions of the program, and will likely be a point of emphasis in staff training and program operation.

*Transference.* This is considered the hardest element of youth development programs to teach and to observe, particularly within the program’s framework. Research also indicates that longer programs tend to produce more transfer (Hellison & Walsh, 2002). Despite the relatively short duration of this program, the data gathered from the programs staff’s interaction with the participants show instances observed by the principal investigator of efforts to bridge concepts from within the program to other areas of the participants’ lives. There were incidents within the program that created opportunities to talk about using TPSR concepts in other contexts. For example, there was an instance in which two boys got tangled up, and one of them thought the other had hurt him on purpose:

This was an opportunity to discuss several of our themes, including respect and self-control, and goal-setting. I reminded each of them about how important it was to be in control of yourself if you wanted to succeed in life. “Someday when you have a job, do you think you can you try and fight someone every time you get mad?”...both boys said...“nobody says/does that to me” and we discussed ... put[ting] other people in control of your behavior by allowing them to ‘push your buttons.’ Both boys seemed to understand...and were back to playing within a few minutes. (April 24)

There were also instances where the participants brought issues from the school day to the soccer program. One particular episode involved two boys who got into a scuffle, and ultimately it came to light that the real issue was not anything that happened on the practice field, but rather that one boy, who was African-American, heard from a friend that the other boy, who is Latino, called him the “n-word.” In addition to discussing why that word was hurtful and inappropriate in any setting, some transference concepts were discussed:

We discussed the idea that we might not want to take whatever someone says as the truth, particularly if we haven’t heard it ourselves. We also discussed that we let other people control us if we react what they say by getting into a fight. We also discussed different rules for different places and what this type of reaction would mean in school or at work. (March 13)

There were also times when transfer was addressed directly, such as this opening reflection which addressed transfer and asked the students to provide examples of helping behaviors they had or could do at home or school:

Our opening reflection focused on helping, and we asked the kids to give examples. We were looking for both understanding of helping behaviors, but also addressing transfer and hoping to help the students bridge the gap from the field to home and school. Several offered good examples of helping their parents, siblings, or helping each other with things in school. (May 1)

The sixth grade teachers and school administration were aware of and very supportive of the program and its goals, and this type of connection to other resources has been established as potential contributing factor to transfer (Hellison, 2000, Wright and Burton, 2008). The school’s support, as well as informal contact with parents and other

family members at pickup time, provided additional support to some level of transfer, and were illustrated by the teachers' comments, which were universally positive, and cited individual instances of observed improvements in classroom actions.

**Final Thoughts on Process.** These data, viewed as a whole, supports the contention that the model was applied with fidelity as illustrated by specific instances and supporting data in each of the four major areas of the model.

## **Outcomes**

The analysis of immediate outcomes began with the results of the PSRQ pre- and post-test. This data was analyzed using the two-factor model created by the instrument's designers (Li, et al, 2008). The two factor model combines the questions in the PSRQ in a way that yields a result for each of the two major areas of the TPSR model, Social Responsibility and Personal Responsibility. The PSRQ pre-test and post-test found a significant difference in the Social Responsibility factor, which includes Level 1, respecting the rights and feelings of others, and Level 4, helping others and caring.

It is interesting to note that despite the relatively short duration of the program, there was a statistically significant improvement in Social Responsibility as perceived by the participants. In much of the TPSR literature, it is written that TPSR programs must begin with the principals involved in Level I, respecting the rights and feelings of others. These principals are foundational, and most programs, particularly in the early stages,

will spend a large portion of their time and effort on this part of the TPSR levels. In addition, with the base activity in the program being a team-oriented physical activity like soccer, Level 4, helping and caring for others, is also a key concept with a strong overlap with the concept of teamwork, and one that was inherent in many of the daily activity in the program. It is interesting to note that Level I is generally considered a basic skill and Level IV is more of an advanced concept, but the improvements in these two areas were strongest. This was consistent with Buckle's (2005) research, which also evaluated a soccer-based after-school program. It seems that improvement in Level I is consistent with much of what is found in the TPSR literature (Hellison & Walsh, 2002), the improvement in Level IV, the other part of the social responsibility factor, is more unusual. Most TPSR programs that have been studied have been after-school programs or physical education classes. The fact that both this program and Buckle's (2005) work involved a team sport, and that both specifically focused on soccer as the primary form of physical activity, may have been a contributing factor and warrant further study. The context of a team game certainly seems to lend itself to teaching lessons helping others and has a natural overlap with the team sports concept of teamwork. There may be an inclination toward these concepts among program staff with team sports experience, and continued use of the PSRQ to measure perception in team sports based TPSR programs may show improvements in Level I and Level IV occurring in concert.

Conversely, there was no significant change in the area of Personal Responsibility. In fact, there was a consistent, but very slight decrease in the combined



scores on the questions in this area. While it is probably not wise to put much weight on this measure since the change in scores did not rise to the level of significance, it seems possible that the consistent small decreases in the students' self-perception in this area may reflect some learning of the principals involved. The decrease in self-perception in this area was very slight, but consistent across almost all the participants. This may indicate a greater awareness of what the expectations were in these areas and their own expectations of their behavior was raised by what they were learning in the program. This type of effect has been referred to as response-shift bias (Howard & Dailey, 1979) and could be addressed in future research by adding a retrospective pre-test to the current pre- and post-test design. This can also be expressed as reflecting that the participants "didn't know what they didn't know" at the beginning of the program. By the end of the program, they had encountered some feedback from other participants and staff when they did not meet their "new standards," providing information which they did not have to benchmark against during the pre-test. This is consistent with what Hellison often refers to as the "eyeball" method, in other words, data based on what program staff observes. The principal investigator's "eyeball" data indicated that the participants did, in fact, improve in this area, in spite of what the PSRQ responses indicated.

Taken as a whole, the PSRQ data indicate something that is often noted in youth development; significant improvement can be a difficult to achieve. Future versions of the program will likely include more contact time, and retrospective pre-test administration of the PSRQ may yield measureable improvements in both factors. When

examining the changes between the pre- and post-test on specific questions, certain trends emerged, as well. Within the social responsibility grouping, the biggest changes were on questions that matched up particularly well with themes that wound up receiving significant attention from our program staff due to a variety of factors. The biggest change, a .63 increase on a forced-response question scaled from 1-6, was on the question of encouraging others. Program staff regularly prompted the participants to encourage one another, and discourage behaviors such as laughing at others failures. This came up fairly frequently during the early stages of the program, and was something that tied in with ideas of teamwork, and being a good teammate. Questions 6 & 7, focusing on controlling tempers and being helpful to others, respectively, also showed marked improvement, with increases of .73 and .50 on the same 1 to 6 forced choice model. These were also themes that came up frequently early in the program, and providing opportunities to discuss these ideas, and this may explain the greater changes in these questions. In examining the questions, it also seems that the questions that yielded these greater differences had more of a focus on behavior, while some the others where the changes were smaller were more focused in attitudes. For example, in questions 4, 6 & 7, the operative words are “encourage,” “control my temper,” and “am helpful,” all of which are behaviors, and one could argue, behaviors that are more easily changed than some behaviors suggested by the other questions. The questions that yielded smaller differences had operative words such as “respect,” “am kind,” which may be harder for youngsters to define, and by extension, areas in which change may be harder to impact.

In the personal responsibility factor of the PSRQ, there was consistency. There were very small decreases in the participants' scores in questions with operative words like "try hard," "want to improve." Across the length of the program, it seemed that students did, in fact, improve in some small way, in their effort and participation, but as noted earlier, it may be that they rated themselves lower in these areas because they gained a better understanding of these concepts and were comparing their efforts to a higher standard as a result of response bias shift (Howard & Dailey, 1979).

These are also levels in the model that seem to come into play later in the program, for a variety of reasons. Hellison (2000) described the levels of TPSR as something of a loose progression, where certain levels are typically approached earlier. Level I is normally the first level that is discussed, since without some level of respect and respectful behaviors, it is difficult to establish an environment in which the other levels can be approached. On the other hand, my findings seemed to be consistent with those of Buckle (2005), who found the logic to Hellison's loose progression, but also found a natural linkage between Levels I and 4, the two components of the social responsibility factor in Li's (2008) analysis. The observational data from this program seemed to indicate that Level I and Level 4 fit together in a way that they were easily addressed at the same time, and were addressed from the very beginning of the program. Levels 3 and 4, on the other hand, were difficult to address until issues tied to Levels 1 and 4, particularly Level 1, showed some positive movement. It may be that if we had a longer program duration and time to devote more attention to Levels II and III, we would

have seen results more similar to those in Buckle's (2005) study, which was 27 weeks. This contention is supported by the fact that his program saw statistically significant gains in both the social and personal responsibility factor, but the improvements in the social responsibility factor were much more robust.

Transfer is the final listed level of the TPSR model, and this is reflective of the challenges of transfer. The traditional view of sports and physical activity programs is that they build character and teach lessons that apply to other areas of life (Sage, 1998). While this attitude implies that sports or physical activity naturally teaches these lessons, the evidence is inconclusive. Physical activity and sport certainly can be a conducive environment for character development (Solomon, 1997), but Davidson and Moran-Miller (2005) found that participants in sports often do not make the connection between the lessons of sport and life. This indicates the importance of being mindful about connecting the lessons of the field with other areas of life, involving intentionally designed programs that include carefully designed program structures and staff training (Smith & Smoll, 1997). This ultimately should lead to successful transfer, or what the TPSR model calls "taking it outside the gym."

In this case, staff made efforts to link the lessons of the program with other areas of life, as described in the discussion of process. In terms of outcomes, data was generated through a post-program group interview held with the 10 sixth-grade classroom teachers that generated comments that indicated some level of Transfer. The comments were consistent with what program staff observed; that there were changes in behavior.

There was a pre-program meeting held with the classroom teachers, explaining the program, and some of the principles that would be addressed. This informed the teachers' observations. The data gathered during the exit interview with the students' teachers indicated that in the opinion of the teachers, there were some instances of transference of the program's lessons that they were able to observe in the classroom: "*Vincent*' really opened up, started to talk and participate more in class." The teachers' cited instances of certain students becoming more helpful to other students, exhibiting more leadership, and other examples of positive behaviors that the teachers felt were attributable to the program; "*Isaiah*' became more of a leader. He became interested in helping."

Viewed holistically, the data illustrates that there were certain limited positive immediate results from the program, particularly in the social responsibility area, as well as instances of transfer, and this was consistent with earlier TPSR studies that found strong indications of transfer of respect and self-control to the classroom (Hellison & Walsh, 2002).

There were also some elements that were not considered in advance, including the teachers' view that some of the students also exhibited more positive interaction with their teachers and classmates, but that the participants also developed stronger relationships with other participants in the program, an area that warrants further examination during future versions of the program.

### **Limitations, Challenges, and Thoughts for the Future**

This program, like all programs, was not perfect. The year-round schedule at the middle school created a challenge in gaining and keeping momentum. The program had operated for a week of phase one when the school went on a three-week intersession break where the kids were not in school. Sessions were conducted during two of these three weeks. The week that the program did not meet was during the spring break for the program staff's university, during which they were not available. Attendance was light for the sessions during the intersession break due to transportation issues, and this cost the program some momentum with some of the kids who couldn't get there. Conversely, this logistical challenge also serves to point out the strength of the on-campus site; having the students come to the program right after school and staying until parents pick them up after work was a real strength, but the schedule for next year needs some thought. With a year behind us, it may be smarter to simply start immediately following the spring intersession and run a "short and sweet" six week program without the phase one time. This may involve more than two days a week to increase contact time within that short window, although that may create some issues of staffing availability and consistency that would need to be considered.

The nature and structure of the program's activities are also worth examining. The students that seemed the most enthusiastic about the program were some of the less athletically skilled youngsters. The group had very mixed ability, and it became apparent that the more skilled players desired a more competitive level of play. This may have

caused some of the attrition the program witnessed. This might be addressed by offering multiple programs; one program for the more skilled players and one for simple participation. Another alternative may be to introduce a variety of sports to the program. This would have the advantage of some variety and thereby maintaining student interest, but it would also make every student a “beginner” in some sessions. This might serve to level the playing field a bit and give everyone a chance to struggle and learn together.

Another option would be to add an element of outside competition to the program, reminiscent of the Mike Buckle’s (2005) Police Athletic League program or Catherine Ennis’ (1999) “Sport for Peace” program. In the PAL program, the students were practicing as part of a team that was preparing for games against other teams, while in the “Sport for Peace,” the structure consisted of a school-based league with fixed teams. In these two cases, this program element seems to have lent itself to better learning of the elements of personal responsibility, specifically self-direction and effort, and greater support of the weaker players by the stronger players, since there is more of a concrete group goal to work toward, namely in the form of competition with an “outside” team.

While the ideal program size does not support the sort of “intramural” league that Ennis employed, the addition of a few games with outside team at the end of the program would seem to be the best option. It should be feasible to arrange some uniforms and schedule one or two games on a regulation field with referees, and that may be a good way to give the program a greater focus and help keep the stronger players engaged. This

could also strengthen some elements of social responsibility, since everyone would share a common goal.

In regards to program attrition, it is worth noting, that the attrition happened early, and brought our numbers very close to our original goal of about 12-15 kids, which is consistent with the characteristics of good TPSR programs (Hellison, 2011). The sessions were much more engaged with the group size between 12 and 15, and the students and staff were able to interact more one-to-one and it provided enough players for one small-sided game, which was ideal. This would also be an ideal number for playing games against other teams, as it would allow everyone lots of playing time. Ironically, if we structure the program in a way that we are confident would reduce attrition, there will need to a more restrictive recruitment process to keep the final group closer to the ideal size.

One thought for staffing that may reduce attrition and help build stronger relationships between the staff and participants could be to specifically “assign” certain kids to certain staffers, with the staff having a responsibility to strike up conversations and get to know the kids. This could also extend to having that staffer be in charge of one-on-one talks if there was a problem. The program director personally handled most of these instances, and everyone probably could have benefited from more different voices.



One area that seems promising for future research is the service learning aspect of these types of programs. If universities are going to continue to support and provide funding for projects such as the Soccer Coaching Club, as the researcher's university did in this case, it can only help those efforts if there can be a larger body of knowledge illustrating what learning takes place for the student staff in these programs. Conversations with the program staff indicates that they benefitted in the form of increased confidence, increased intercultural competence, and greater understanding and empathy for those who are different from them, and it seems that these areas would have great potential for useful research. Inter-cultural competency seems to provide a logical area of service learning theory in which to ground this type of work, and improvements in this area would certainly be consistent with effective staff, particularly in relation to treating participants with respect. I would also contend that any efforts that improve the learning experienced by student staff will also improve implementation of programs, by extension, improve the learning experienced by participants. This thesis could also be tested as part of subsequent research.

Using the TPSR model in a soccer-based program with an entirely Latino participant population would also be a potentially useful addition to the literature in youth development and TPSR. With Latinos making up the fastest growing demographic group in the country, creating effective programs for these populations is likely to become increasingly important in the field of youth development, although the realities of recruitment may make this challenging in a school setting.

A similar program with female participants, which is under discussion, would also be a potentially valuable addition to the literature. A program run in coordination to this program, as the teachers and school have requested, at the same school with the same age group, could provide needed opportunities for at-risk female participants, as well as some interesting opportunities for comparisons and analysis of the two sets of data.

## **Conclusions**

If programs are successful, the participants in these programs can learn lessons of social and personal responsibility, come away with a positive experience interacting with adults that demonstrate that they care about them, and apply that positive learning to other areas in their lives. These kinds of programs can be particularly important for at-risk children and children of poverty, who may not have access to other programs due to a variety of factors (Wilson, 1987) but may benefit from well-run youth development programs (Granger, 2002). Ultimately, that is the hope of all youth development practitioners, researchers, and those who attempt to do both, that there are lessons to be applied that can provide young people with better outcomes, including happier more productive lives for them and their families.

In the end, based on multiple sources of data, including the participants own perceptions as measured by the PSRQ, the perception of staff, the perception of the participants' classroom teachers, school leadership, and the observation data gathered by the program director, it is my conclusion that the implementation of the TPSR model in

the Soccer Coaching Club, while not perfect, was largely implemented with fidelity, and the program was successful in creating some positive immediate outcomes despite the constraints under which it was operated.

Another indicator of the success of the program is that the teachers and school leadership have not only asked us to run the program again in the spring. They have also asked if we could create a program for the fall, which was unfortunately not feasible, but they also requested a similar program next year for female students. Current plans call for offering the boys program again in the spring, and there is a possibility of supervising an undergraduate research project that would involve working with at-risk girls through soccer in a coordinate girls version of the Soccer Coaching Club.

Certainly, when all the data is evaluated in light of Martinek's (2000) reminders that youth programming and evaluation are a messy business, the overall picture is one of a successful program. Beyond all the data, tables, and field notes, it clear to me that our work in this program had a positive effect on everyone concerned, myself included, but in particular, the participants. Perhaps the strongest endorsement of the program's overall success was the reaction of students on the final day. Several loudly voiced their disappointment that it was over; "No, don't let it be the last day!"

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**APPENDIX A**

**PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY QUESTIONNAIRE**

	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree
IN MY SOCCER COACHING CLUB SESSIONS...						
1. I respect others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I respect my teacher(s).	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I help others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I encourage others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I am kind to others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I control my temper.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. I am helpful to others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I participate in all of the	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I try hard.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. I set goals for myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. I try hard even if I do not like	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. I want to improve.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I give a good effort.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. I do not make any goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6

**APPENDIX B**

**TOOL FOR ASSESSING RESPONSIBILITY-BASED EDUCATION**

**Post-Teaching Reflection**

**Instructor and Program Information:**

Instructor Name:

Date of Report:

Day of Week:

School/Program Name:

Setting:

Locale (urban, rural, suburban):

Youth Grade Level / Age:

Activity Content:

Teacher Gender:

Teacher Race/Ethnicity:

Reporting period:    Single lesson    Several Recent Lessons    Other\_\_\_\_\_

**Student Information:**

Approximate Number in Class:

Participant Gender(s):

Race/Ethnicity Background(s):

Special Education Included:

## Part Two: Personal-Social Responsibility Themes

After the observation period and interval coding is completed on the first page, provide a holistic rating for these general themes. Consider the overall tone and content of the lesson as well as the Responsibility-based Strategies observed. Interval contextual comments can also guide this qualitative summary.

	4-	3-	2-	1-	0-	Comments
<p><b>Integration:</b> extent to which responsibility roles and concepts are integrated into the physical activity</p>						

<p><b>Transfer:</b> extent to which connections being made to the application of life skills in other settings</p>						
<p><b>Empowerment:</b> extent to which the teacher shares responsibility with students</p>						



<p><b>Teacher-Student Relationship:</b>          extent to which students are treated as individuals deserving respect, choice, and voice</p>						
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*Extensively* – Theme is seamlessly addressed directly and evidenced in multiple ways throughout the lesson through the words and actions of the teacher.

*Frequently* - Theme is addressed directly and evidenced at several points in the lesson through the words and actions of the teacher.

*Occasionally* – Some of the teachers’ words and actions connect to this theme either directly or indirectly during the lesson.

*Rarely* – This theme is not generally integrated into the teaching but may be reflected in some isolated words or actions on the teacher’s part.

*Never* – Throughout the entire lesson, none of the teacher’s words or actions clearly convey or align with this theme

**APPENDIX C**  
**SAMPLE SESSION SCHEDULE**

3:05 PM – Participants begin to arrive, free play and chit chat.

3:15 AM – Circle Time and Opening Reflection

3:20 AM – Activities and Drills

3:40 AM – Form Teams and Decide on Game Format, Play!

4:45 PM – Closing Reflection

4:50 PM - Session officially ends, as facility and staff schedules allow, some staff or participants may stay around and talk, play some more soccer or other games.

Wrap-up; Student help will be requested to put equipment away, and it is hoped that some may seek one-on-one contact with staff, as time allows. This may also be at time to observe and interact with family members who may be picking up some of the kids. This may provide clues and ways to help the student progress personally.

**APPENDIX D**  
**STAFF TRAINING SCHEDULE**

Session 1: Youth Development;

- i. Principles and History of Youth Development
- ii. Goals of Youth Development Programs

Session 2: The Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Model

- i. The Theoretical Model
- ii. TPSR Levels and Strategies

Session 3: Practical Applications;

- i. Group Activities
- ii. Applying Principles of YD and TPSR

Session 4: Using The Measurement Instruments and Understanding the Research Process

- i. The Teaching Assessment for Responsibility-based Education
- ii. The Personal and Social Responsibility Questionnaire

## APPENDIX E

### TPSR STAFF TRAINING QUIZ

- 1) What is the most challenging level in the TPSR model? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) True or False: Students can “jump over” levels and may take steps forward then backwards.
- 3) Level 3 is Self-Direction. Describe an act that would show “self-direction.”
- 4) Which level can be described as “controlling mouths and hands”? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Kids don’t care how much you know until they know \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6) The three most important things in youth development work are:  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) A “deficit” model of thinking should be avoided. Instead, we value and build on students’ \_\_\_\_\_.
- 8) A student who helped his sister with his homework would be operating at what level?
- 9) True or False; We should never allow the kids to pick the activities.
- 10) True or False: In youth development work, you will have successes, but also plenty of failures.

**APPENDIX F**

**CONSENT AND ASSENT FORMS**

**UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO**

**CONSENT FOR A MINOR TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT:**

**LONG FORM**

**Project Title: Soccer Coaching Club**

**Project Director: Mark Cryan**

**Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_**

**What is the study about?**

This is a twice-a-week after-school soccer program using a social responsibility model to teach students things like self-control, respect and cooperation. The purpose of the study is to examine the use of social responsibility model with Latino boys.

**Why are you asking my child?**

Your child has been asked to participate their teacher(s) felt they could benefit from the program. The program is for sixth grade Latino boys.

**What will you ask my child to do if I agree to let him or her be in the study?**

Your child will get a chance to play soccer and other games with the other boys and program staff. The participants will also discuss ideas like self-control, respect and cooperation with program staff and other participants. The program will run approximately six weeks, twice a week from roughly 3 PM to 5 PM. The participants will also be asked to evaluate their behavior, other students' and staff behavior through informal interviews and taking surveys.

**What are the dangers to my child?**

The dangers involved are minimal, including the chance of injury while playing soccer or other games. There is a risk that students may be corrected by program staff for inappropriate or behavior behavior, and there is a risk of altercation with other students. There is no compensation for participation in this program and study.

**If you have any concerns about your child's rights, how they are being treated or if you have questions, want more information or have suggestions, please contact the Office of Research Integrity at UNCG toll-free at (855)-251-2351.**

Questions about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this study can be answered by Mark Cryan who may be contacted at (336) 266-5413 or [mcryan@elon.edu](mailto:mcryan@elon.edu).

**Are there any benefits to society as a result of my child taking part in this research?**

This program and study may help people who work with children be more effective in teaching lessons of social responsibility. The larger goal of this study and similar studies is that young people and their families may be more successful and happier in their lives.

**Are there any benefits to my child as a result of participation in this research study?**

Students may benefit from learning lessons of improved self-control, respect and cooperation. There are no costs to participate, and students and their parents will not receive any payment or other incentive for taking part.

**How will my child's information be kept confidential?**

Your child's information will be kept confidential. All program notes will be stored in a locked file cabinet. When information from this study is used in a thesis or other academic writing or presentations, participants will be identified by their actual name. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

**What if my child wants to leave the study or I want him/her to leave the study?**

You have the right to refuse to allow your child to participate or to withdraw him at any time, without penalty. If your child does withdraw, it will not affect you or your child in

any way. If you or your child chooses to withdraw, you may request that any data which has been collected be destroyed unless it is in a de-identifiable state.

**What about new information/changes in the study?**

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available which may relate to your willingness allow your child to continue to participate, this information will be provided to you.

**Voluntary Consent by Participant:**

By signing this consent form, you are agreeing that you have read it or it has been read to you, you fully understand the contents of this document and consent to your child taking part in this study. All of your questions concerning this study have been answered. By signing this form, you are agreeing that you are the legal parent or guardian of the child who wishes to participate in this study described to you by Mark Cryan. .



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**Participant's Parent/Legal Guardian's Signature**

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**Participant's Parent/Legal Guardian's Signature**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Assent Form – UNC Greensboro**

**Study Title:** Soccer Coaching Club

**My name is:** Mark Cryan

**What is this about?**

I would like to talk to you about the Soccer Coaching Club. I want to learn about teaching things like self-control, respect and teamwork to young Latinos while playing soccer and other games.

**Did my parents say it was ok?**

Your parent(s) said it was ok for you to be in this study and have signed a form like this one.

**Why me?**

We want you in the program because your teachers thought you would benefit from the program, and you are a Latino sixth grade boy, and that's who this program is designed for.

**What if I want to stop?**

You do not have to say "yes", if you do not want to take part. We will not punish you if you say "no". Even if you say "yes" now and change your mind after you start doing this study, you can stop and no one will be mad at you.

**What will I have to do?**

Two days a week, we'll all get together here at school after the school day ends, and we'll play soccer and other games and talk about things like cooperation, respect and self-control. We'll also take a few surveys about how you think the program is going and how you think you're doing.

**Will anything bad happen to me?**

The risks of anything bad happening should be pretty small, but you could get hurt playing soccer or other games. You might have a program staff member get upset if you are doing something that is hurtful or dangerous.

**Will anything good happen to me?**

You will get the chance to play soccer and spend time with your classmates after school. You might learn some things to help you deal better with situations at home or in school.

**Do I get anything for being in this study?**

You won't get paid anything for being in this study.

**What if I have questions?**

You are free to ask questions at any time.

**If you understand this study and want to be in it, please write your name below.**

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**Signature of child**

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**Date**

## **APPENDIX G**

### **TEACHER POST PROGRAM INTERVIEW**

**Tuesday, May 14**

Just a few days after the conclusion of the Soccer Coaching Club for 6<sup>th</sup> grade boys at Graham Middle School, I had the opportunity to sit down with all the sixth grade teachers and discuss the program. This group interview was conducted as part of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers' weekly meeting, and took about 15 minutes.

The teachers offered lots of positive feedback, and they also offered some suggestions and request for the future. They began by clearly stating that they hoped we would run the program again, because they felt it benefited the kids who were part of the program.

#### **Comments and Notes**

“The kids loved it. They talked about it all the time.”

This was something several of the teachers said, and it came up later in the interview as well.

“They were excited to be a part of something.”

The teachers explained that many of these kids had never been part of an organized team, and some were not in the “in-group” at school, so this provided them a sense of belonging.

“They were so happy to be recommended, and I really like how you handled that.”

Communication with the students and their parents had stated that they were “recommended” for an after-school soccer program, and that their teachers felt they would benefit. So, there was no stigma, instead, the kids were proud to part of the program.

There were also specific instances of changes in behavior the teachers observed;

“‘Danny’ really improved a lot, he was more positive in his relationships with other kids, particularly the ones that were in the program.”

“ ‘Mickey’ really enjoyed it, and his behavior improved a lot. He was more positive with other kids.”

This was a young man that was the dominant personality in the program (see case study profile). He was a natural athlete who also played travel basketball, and was bigger and stronger than anyone else, and he exhibited some bullying behaviors early in the program. But, he attended regularly, and I had a few chances to have one-on-one conversations with him about leading in a positive way, and he responded with a much better approach in our sessions. It was gratifying to hear that the teachers notice the same type of change.

“ ‘Marty’ was really quiet, but he came out of his shell during the program.”

This was a Latino student who had good soccer skills, but was painfully shy and quiet at the start of the program, but he opened up and became more confident with each session. It apparently showed up in the classroom as well.

“ ‘Vincent’ really opened up, started to talk and participate more in class.”

“ ‘Isaiah’ became more of leader. He became interested in helping.”

This was a young man who acted out a bit early, but rarely missed a session and he really embraced the program. He was clearly engaged in what we were trying to teach him. He may have been our MIP; “most improved participant.”

### **Support for Level 5, Transference**

One of the themes that emerged from this interview was obviously transference; the instances of improved behavior in the classroom supports transference of the lessons of TPSR. Although it’s impossible to know if the program was the cause of these improvements, these observations support transference, including better classroom behavior, demonstrations of leadership behaviors, and helping others.

### **Relationships Among Participants, Levels 1, Respect, and Level 4, Helping**

Another theme that came up in several of the teachers comments was the improved relationships between the kids in the program. This is, of course, linked with transference of Level 1 and Level 4 skills, but while the TPSR model places great value on the relationships between program staff and participants, the data gathered from the



teachers supports the idea that another benefit is strengthened relationships among participants, above and beyond improvements in Levels 1 and 4.

The participants are sixth graders, and while they have some classes together, they are drawn from three different local elementary schools, so many did not know each other well before the school year began. This was something that had surprised me at the beginning of the program, when some of the students didn't seem to know the others names. But, I realized that some of them didn't have classes together and they had gone to different elementary schools. So, these relationships between the participants was an unexpected program benefit, and seems to indicate Level 1 (respect rights and feelings of others) as well as Level 4 (Helping others, caring), in addition to the Level 5 (transference) that I had hoped to hear about in this interview.

### **Teachers Suggestions for Next Year**

First, the teachers stressed how much they hoped the program returned. Everyone agreed and nodded heads when this was said. They also said they hoped we could do something in the fall, as well. The teachers also felt strongly enough about what the program did with the boys that they expressed a desire for a similar program for girls, which may match up with a female soccer player in our department at Elon who hopes to work with area youth in some capacity, and discussion about that possibility are ongoing.

Another item that came up was that they felt the really serious and skilled soccer players didn't find it competitive enough, and were less enthused about the program as the spring

progressed. This was something I felt as well, and something that we need to think about for next year. Some thoughts and options in this area include the addition of some “official” games with other teams near the program’s conclusion, offering a multi-sport model that would “level the playing field” or perhaps having a “competitive” track and a “participation” track.

### **Summary**

This data, which includes strong support from the participants teachers for the continuation of the program, and numerous observations of improvement in classroom behavior and interactions, supports the program’s effectiveness in teaching the lessons of the TPSR model, and also indicates some transference. This provides support for both our contention that the model was implemented with fidelity and that there some immediate impacts on the participants.

## **APPENDIX H**

### **PROGRAM NARRATIVE – CHRONOLOGICAL**

It began with a series of e-mails with the principal. “Can I come see you? I’d like to run a program for some kids at your school.” After a series of very positive meetings with a “can-do” principal, the leadership, faculty and staff of a local middle school and I embarked together on a journey we hoped would improve the lives of a handful of young men. Not coincidentally, the goals for the program included producing a doctoral dissertation for myself as the program director and primary researcher. But, as is the accepted standard in youth development, the kids came first!

The program’s launch was an example of many of the benefits and pitfalls of community partnerships. In particular, several of the lessons the “Linking Universities and Communities) played out much as they are described in that text. In the interest of disclosure, it’s important to note that I had a connection with the staff at the school where the program was run, born out of many years in the community and building networks through work, family and friends. My wife is a teacher at nearby elementary school, but she started her teaching career at this particular middle school about six years earlier and worked at that school for three years before making the move to teaching elementary age children. She had generated a reservoir of goodwill during her time there, and she was a known quantity to the current principal, who had been an assistant principal there during her years at the middle school. I also was fortunate that my professional experience

running athletics for a neighboring town and my position as a faculty member at Elon University gave my proposal a level of credibility that it may have lacked if it was spearheaded by a younger person without similar professional experience and grounding in the community.

### **PHASE ONE - PILOT SESSIONS**

#### **3-11-13 - Monday**

This was our first day. We have not yet received IRB approval, so we are running these early sessions as “pilot” sessions; we were not discussing TPSR concepts yet, and we are focusing on just playing soccer, learning the kids names, and getting my student staffers comfortable with interacting with the kids.

We had a very positive session, with LOTS of kids; 26 of those registered showed up. We had enough staff to break into two games once we started. A group of this size is certainly both good and bad; it shows good interest and is a better problem to have than not enough kids showing up to play. The space we have to use is the front lawn of the school, which has a couple of relatively flat areas, although the “lower field” area is often damp, and not as big as the “upper” space.

During our opening gathering, we did name tags for this first day, and it helped a lot. You can see such a different level of reaction in the kids faces when you call them by name, even if they know they are wearing a name tag.

Our session consisted of doing name tags, introductions of staff and then we divided up and started right in playing soccer.

Today's session was very problem free. Is this a "honeymoon" effect? It seems likely, since the kids were recommended to the program based on their teachers' opinion that they needed some additional attention. But, the kids were engaged, positive and eager to play soccer today. They also seemed to take right away to our student "coaches"; NS, AS, RH, CF, and BD.

Looking forward to Wednesday!

### **3-13-13 – Wednesday**

Perhaps our "honeymoon" was only destined to last one day? We had well-planned session today, with circle time focused on the "Name Game." (I had realized that during our session on Monday that there were many of the kids that didn't know each other. They are in different classes or "teams" within the school, and many game from different elementary schools.) We moved on to some basic soccer drills, like "gates," and a "sharks and minnows" type of game. Then, we split into to two groups, with an

7v7 game on the larger field, and a 5v5 game on the smaller, lower field. Coaches fill in to even the numbers or to spell a kid who wants to go to the bathroom.

22 kids attended today, which is slight drop, but there are some kids who receive tutoring on Wednesdays, and this likely accounted for a few of those absent. We also ran into our first problems today, including one that would linger for some time.

First, we had little scuffle between two kids that had apparently carried a “beef” from the school day out onto the soccer field. This involved Mickey, a big, physically talented African-American boy who can be something of a bully, and Giovanni, a small, not very athletic Latino boy. We were playing our scrimmage game, and a couple kids had complained about Mickey’s use of his elbows and his superior size to muscle other kids off the ball. Gio was the loudest complainer, and Mickey took exception to this and confronted Gio at a deadball. Gio did not back down one bit despite his smaller stature, and the two exchanged a few shoves before I was able to get in between them.

I talked, in turn, with each of the boys individually, and Mickey claimed that Gio had “called him the N-word” in school. Ultimately, it came to light that he had not heard it himself, but had someone tell him that. We discussed the idea that we might not want to take whatever someone says as the truth, particularly if we haven’t heard it ourselves. We also discussed that we let other people control us if we react what they say by getting into a fight. We also discussed different rules for different places (reference???)

Language of poverty articles??) Mickey calmed down some. Gio insisted to me that he had NOT said the “N-word” in school or any other time, and that he was just mad the Mickey was pushing him around. We discussed solving conflicts with words rather than reacting with violence. He calmed down some as well. The boys shook hands and apologized to one another and returned to the game.

Fortunately, we were well-staffed, with myself, NS, AS, RH, BD and CF all present, so the games went on uninterrupted while I dealt with this conflict.

We continued the session with no other problems, although I re-shuffled the teams to put Gio and Mike on the same team. This would naturally avoid the two of them fighting over the ball, and it seemed to work.

At the close of the session, we had a problem that served as a lesson for me as a program manager, and an ongoing frustration for me and for one of our participants. Near the end of the session, the kids rides begin to arrive, and we start to dwindle down. One of our kids, Manny, was picked up fairly early. When another student, Angel, began to leave, he got very agitated about his backpack being missing. He began yelling about someone “stealing” his backpack. After we searched around where the backpacks were stacked up near a tree on the front lawn, we determined that there was another identical backpack that wasn’t his, but that his wasn’t there. He took off across the school lawn, apparently leaving to walk home in a huff. I caught up to him at the far end of the property, and encouraged to him to come back, and told him we’d look and see who the

identical backpack belonged to. His eyes lit up and he took off running back to the backpacks, and by the time I got there, he had all but emptied that other backpack with several of the kids standing around him, including Clemente, Charles and Brian. I told him to gather that stuff back up, and put it back in the bag, and several of the kids said that it was Manny backpack. Just a few second later, Manny' mom pulled up and he got out with Angel's backpack. Angel grabbed his backpack from Manny and took off for home. (As it turns out, Angel would never attend a soccer program session again.) Shortly after he left, Manny came up to me and told me that his iPod was missing. We looked all through his backpack, on the ground, and several of the boy who had been standing around voluntarily turned out their pockets, and everyone claimed to not have seen it.

I have personally seen many instances where kids were sure something was “stolen” and it turned up at home, in the car, etc, so I encouraged Manny to look at home, in his locker at school, etc, and see if his iPod didn't turn up. It never did.

Manny told me the following week that Clemente and Angel each told him the other one had his iPod. In follow-up, I tried to talk to both Clemente and Angel, but Angel never again showed his face at soccer. I also spoke to both boy's parents, and each insisted that their boys didn't have the iPod. Manny and his mother asked me about the iPod every day, and I felt terrible and at least partially responsible. After my unsuccessful attempt to resolve the situation, I filled in the principal on what had happened, and later discussed it with the school resource officer. Both expressed that



there was essentially nothing they could do, except for the office stating that the parents could go fill out a police report, but it would simply be her statement of the incident, and would not allow them to search for the missing item or do any other real follow-up.

The incident certainly didn't derail the program, but it put a bad taste in the mouths of Manny and his mother. Ultimately, I apologized to them, but expressed that there was not really anything else I could do. I have replayed the situation many times, and certainly, if there was some way to secure the kids bags, that would be ideal, but it's not feasible. Of course, one could also ask why a 12 year old has a \$300 toy at school, but I prefer to figure out how to avoid this type of problem in the future rather than blame the kid.

Certainly, in the future, I will have discussion with the kids about leaving their electronics at home on days we are running the program, and perhaps offering to lock any valuables in my car, which is parked near where we play soccer.

Ultimately, Manny family moved late in the school year, and he went to another middle school, but the "ghost of Manny iPod" hung over me for many weeks, and I still feel bad that he lost his gadget and that I couldn't do anything to get it back. (see dodgeball day, expand here?).

This was also the first day that Charles Parra attended. Charles is a Latino boy who began negotiating the second we got outside. "The field should be bigger," "I should be on the other team," etc. It's important to give the kids a voice, though, and I

suggested that he show us how we could make the field bigger. After examining the way we limited by the slope of the land and the placement of trees, he agreed that we couldn't make the field any bigger, so he then wanted to know why we weren't playing on the school's soccer field. That is being used by the actual soccer team at the time. None of these realities satisfied Charles, and he always looked at me and the other staff with a squinty, skeptical look on his face. He was always negotiating, always pushing for something different than what we were doing. He also clearly didn't like Mike; he peered at him with obvious hostility. There was an element of tension present from this day on whenever Mickey and Charles were both present.

## **PHASE TWO; TPSR UNDERWAY**

### **Session Notes from 4/10/13**

Today's session had about 14 kids. It was a good workable group size.

At the start of the session, we had Mark, NS, AS, and RH. CF showed up about 4:00, and NS and AS had to leave at about 4:45 PM.

Today, we completed lots of paperwork, including getting assent/consent forms signed and the pre-test administration of the PSRQ. This was the second day we met since I got IRB approval, and the first chance we got to complete consent/assent and the pre-test PSRQ.

We had two weeks of sessions prior to completion of IRB, so during that time we used the sessions simply to get familiar with the kids, let the coaches get to know each other and work out procedures with the school administration. The school staff has been very helpful, including particularly Ron Villines the principal, and Stephanie, the office manager.

After the paperwork was completed, we headed out to the field at about 3:45 and let the kids just kick the ball around for about 10 minutes. We then gathered for the opening reflection. We began with the name game, which was showed a lack of respect and cooperation, with the kids, beginning with Mickey, making a joke of it by walking around and putting his hands on each person as he said their name. Ronnie then called everyone by a feminized version of their name, and it didn't get much better from there.

When we finished, I told the kids that my plan that day had been for the theme to be teamwork, but that clearly we needed to work on respect. I asked for a thumbs up/sideways/down on whether they felt they had been respectful thus far, and most thumbs were pointed down. The group dynamic was noticeably affected by the presence of Charlie, who had missed the last several sessions. It began with his iPod, which he held in his hand playing music during the warmup and would not put away. I let him keep it in his pocket, but he spend the entire day running with one hand in his pocket. I addressed this later when I walked him into the gym to get a drink, and he promised me he would leave it at home on Monday and Wed next week.

Charlie is going to be a challenge. He is a medium sized Latino boy who is relatively athletic, but always on edge, and clearly very smart. He looks at everyone with appraising eyes, constantly evaluating, assessing how he can manipulate each person or situation to his advantage. He is constantly negotiating, pushing for his way, with no regard for how it impacts the group. He interrupts regularly, wants to “make the field bigger” even though there is no way to make it any bigger, and spent a good part of today’s session trying to get under the skin of Mickey.

Mickey is his own challenge as well. He is an African-American, larger, stronger and more athletic than any of the other boys. He is used to getting his way, and pushes and shoves during the games. He is also very loud, and I have had to correct him frequently on issues of talking trash at the other kids. He has natural leadership potential, but he had not learned how to lead in a positive way, and instead resorts to getting his way through bullying behaviors. Even during warm-ups, he’s either in goal challenging everyone, saying no one can score on him, or he’s roaming the field, booming powerful kicks with no regard for where they go or who they hit.

During the break, Charlie and Brian were complaining to Mickey about his pushing, and this devolved into trash talk about who was going to get cut from the soccer team next year. Charlie was shooting daggers with his eyes, and Mickey was bowing up, and I had to forcefully tell them both to cool it, and defused the immediate situation by sending Mickey to rearrange some cones for me.

This was a temporary fix, though, as late in the scrimmage portion of the session, the two of them had a brief scuffle while I was talking to some parents who had arrived to pick up their kids. Two of my student staff (CF and RH) separated them, got them to calm down, and the game was resume. CF had arrived a bit late, his class having run long. BD was not at the session today due to academic commitment.

I reminded each of the staff about building relationships, move around the field, talk to kids (names are KEY!!). I reminded them that kids “Don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” (thanks to Herb Hand). At the end of the session, we discussed the scuffle and our two challenges, Charles and Mickey. We discussed trying to get ahead of the curve by connecting with each of them early in each session, assigning them tasks, asking them how their day was, and other ways of building a relationship. We discussed addressing conflicts by taking the child to the “talking tree” and discussing self-control in the context of “are you going to let someone else control you by pushing your buttons?”

Next week, we will get heavy on the levels of TPSR and weave this into the activities more distinctly and emphasize it more in our opening and closing reflections.

## **Notes from 4/15 session**

### **Numbers**

Today, we had 11 boys. I have some concerns about our numbers dwindling; the number we had is ideal, and we had a very good session, but if we continue to shed participants, we may wind up without enough kids to continue. We are waiting by the main entrance, but I think some of our students are forgetting, and they must be leaving through other doors. I need to speak with Mr. Villines about this. Dale may also be able to shed some light on it.

### **School happenings; field trip**

Today, several of the kids were dressed up; a couple of the students were in a team that had done an outing to Greensboro. They visited a park, had lunch at the Green Valley Grill (which is very swanky), and then visited UNCG's campus (not swanky). They seemed to have had a good time.

### **The Ghost of Manny's iPod**

The issue of Manny's iPod continues to linger. This was taken during one of our first sessions when there was a mixup with identical backpacks. It seems very likely that Arthur or Cesar have it, since they were the ones who went into Manny's backpack after the mixup, but both sets of parents have vigorously denied the kids have it. I informed the principal of the situation when it first happened, but I think that Manny's parents are

going to go to the police, and I just want the principal to be aware. I may need to talk to the resource officer if I can't catch up with him.

### **Today's Session; Yeah!**

With the group we had, it was a great session. Everyone was respectful during the opening reflection. We talked about the levels of TPSR, running through each of them briefly, but focusing on Levels 1 and 4, Respect and Helping Others, respectively. The students had heard a bit about respect at the end of last session, prompted by their general lack of same. Today, they were quiet and positive during the opening reflection. It may have had to do with group size, and perhaps with the students who were there. Charles was not there, Mickey was positive. I sought him out right away and engaged him, and was in a positive frame of mind, which is big factor in the tone of our sessions. The lack of the tension that is generated when Charles is there was also a big factor.

### **Incorporating TPSR Lessons into the activity.**

Since we were working on Level 4, helping others, we extended that theme to teamwork and cooperation. We used a few of the games we had been playing, but modified them to add teamwork as a theme. Our first warm-up activity was a passing exercise; pick a partner, and stay at least 15 feet apart, and see how many passes you can make back and forth during a five minute session, while staying in the field and moving around. We did this three times and it went well. We then divided into two groups and did "World Cup," a half-field game where teams of two people represent countries, and

play against one another. The teamwork twist was to require two passes before a shot could be taken. The kids embraced this and engaged in excellent passing and cooperation. Scoring was way down, but teamwork and passing were way up.

We finished with a scrimmage where at least three passes had to be made before a team could shoot. We also divided up the World Cup teams down the middle, mixing kids who hadn't normally chosen one another as teammates and we had very even teams and a good game.

### **Wrap up**

We had a closing reflection as the first of the parents began to arrive and we discussed Level 1 and 4. We were unanimous that we had done well in both areas, although I was too excited and put my own judgment out there before I let the kids give their "thumbs up-down-sideways."

We also had a couple disputed calls that we resolved quickly and easily with Rock-Paper-Scissors. Overall, it was our best session yet, and one that included strong TPSR themes throughout.

**Staff;** RH, NS, AS and JW were there from the start, and CF arrived a little late, as his class schedule dictates. The guys did a good job, although I'm still having to push them to go mingle with the kids during warm-ups and other good times. May need to do some "remedial training." The kids like them, and they always get particularly excited



about CF arriving. I think his upbeat personality, his long, lanky frame, and his British accent make him an exotic character to the kids.

BD was AWOL, all other staff present.

Other notes; Isaac's parents are consistently late picking him up, arriving at 5:45 again today. Our official end-time is 5 PM.

There are a couple kids who have been hanging around who seem like they would like to join the program, and two are sixth-graders. One is Jacquez Wade, and the other is Reign Barnes. I need to talk with Ron about them. It may be particularly worthwhile to consider adding them if our numbers keep shrinking, although I need to get them informed consent and pre-test as soon as possible.

#### **4/22 Notes – Dodgeball!**

On Monday, April 22, there was a dodgeball tournament that had been re-scheduled from Friday. We had been asked by the teachers organizing the event to participate, so when it was re-scheduled, we wanted to help out.

Many of our program participants had signed up to play, and we pulled the handful that hadn't signed up and created a team of five kids. We had Kelvin, Jamar, Victor, Edgar, and one of Jamar's friends.

Almost all the other kids in the program were there, participating. It was a positive opportunity to spend some time with the kids on our "team," who tend to be

quieter and less forward than some of the others. That was a positive, although they got knocked out quick, they seemed to be glad to have had a chance to be in it.

Kelvin got bopped on the mouth, and had a tear pop out, but he toughed it out.

I also finally got a chance to talk with Angel; it was the first time I had seen him since the great "iPod Caper." I told him that it still hadn't shown up, and that I thought he could help me locate it. He agreed to try. I promised him that there were no repercussions if he could bring it to me. We'll see.

I had spoken with the resource officer, and he said there wasn't much we could do....

We saw some the other kids compete, cheered them on, helped with managing the crowd.

It was a very well-attended event, and the teachers seemed very appreciative of some additional adult help.

The one staff note continues to be my Elon students "clustering" rather than interacting with the kids. I will talk with them.

Staff; AS, NS, RH, and me.

#### **4/24 Session Notes:**

Light attendance today, but we had a very good session despite this. In general, it seems that on days when the principal is not in the building and including our program in the end of day announcements, we always get fewer kids attending. From personal experience as a sixth-grade and as the father of a middle schooler, I know that boys this

age are very forgetful. This is something we'll need to work on for next year; being sure the kids are reminded. We try to be stationed at the front door, but it was only recently we learned that kids exit out of several different doors, so we need to station ourselves more strategically.

This was a day when the staff participated in the soccer, and this helps us show our fallability (citation, Martinek?), particularly myself, since my soccer skills are weak. We introduced a new passing drill today, a sort of "give-and-go" drill proposed by NS and JW, and they led that portion of the practice. This drill was designed to focus the students on self-direction and effort, since with coach playing defense, they needed to really hustle to move the ball to their teammate and get a clean shot off before the coach could get in their way. The kids did a good job, and took it seriously.

When we moved to scrimmage, the kids had fun with having the staff as teammates, and our passing rules encouraged teamwork. In regards to staffing, we started the day with two of our coaches home sick (RH & AS). Near the end of the session, JW and NS needed to leave to get to an evening class, which they do most Wednesdays. This left just myself and BD, and unfortunately, we almost immediately had an issue pop up. "Blake" hurt "Isaac" with a hard kick of the ball that hit him in the head. "Blake" said it was an accident, but "Isaac" felt it was on purpose. "Isaac" confronted "Blake" and then "Blake" became angry, and I had to intervene. This was a point at which we would have been well-served to have multiple coaches, since we really needed one coach each to deal with each kid, and ideally, we would have had another

coach or two to keep the game moving. This is what has happened in the past if we've had a confrontation, but with a couple staff home sick, we learned the value of being well-staffed. Ultimately, I was able get each of them to calm down enough that I could talk to them individually.

This was an opportunity to discuss several of our themes, including respect and self-control, and goal-setting. I reminded each of them about how important it was to be in control of yourself if you wanted to succeed in life. "Someday when you have a job, do you think you can you try and fight someone every time you get mad?" "Well, no." "OK, start working on this now." Also, both boys said something along the lines of "nobody says/does that to me" and we discussed how that kind of thinking put other people in control of your behavior by allowing them to "push your buttons." Both boys seemed to understand what we were talking about and were back to playing within a few minute.

"Gio" also got mad about a push during a play, and he and I had a talk about not stirring the pot unnecessarily. "Gio" can be very stubborn, and did not want to let the issue go, but he finally did.

Our closing reflection today focused on self-control and without directly referencing the two boys who got into a confrontation, everyone seemed to understand the benefits to the group and to themselves individually that we discussed.

This was also the session during which we allowed two neighborhood boys to join in the activities. These youngsters are both sixth-graders at Graham Middle School, but had not been recommended for the program. They had spent many of the previous Mondays and Wednesdays hanging around while we played, and had asked if they could participate. They both seemed in need of positive activities as evidenced by the fact that they were regularly hanging around our practices, and I leaned on one of the principles of youth development. Namely, the kids have to come first (Martinek, find citation...). In this case, for research and program purposes, we would be best off not including these two boys, but if we put underserved kids first, excluding them would not be consistent with the principals of why do youth development and specifically, why we were running the program at GMS.

These two boys, “Rasheem” and “Johnquez,” were not included in any of the research elements of the program, and as such, did not take a pre- or post-test PSRQ or fill out a TARE. Nonetheless, they participated regularly from that point on, and were willing to take direction, and adhered to the things the kids agreed on, like two passes before a shot or resolving out of bounds calls by Rock, Paper Scissors.

**Mon 4/29 – Rained out**

**Wed 5/1 – Session Notes**

At the beginning of this day's session, I spoke with both "Isaac" and "Blake" about their confrontation, and both told me that they didn't want someone else to control them, and that they were fine. This was positive; they learned a lesson of self-control.

Our opening reflection focused on helping, and we asked the kids to give examples. We were looking for both understanding of helping behaviors, but also addressing transfer and hoping to help the students bridge the gap from the field to home and school. Several offered good examples of helping their parents, siblings, or helping each other with things in school.

During today's session, we tried to introduce some new activities to keep it fresh for the kids. We used a few standard team-building and cooperation exercises that the students or myself had seen in the past.

The first was an exercise where pairs of boys tried to pick up a soccer ball between their backs without touching it with their hands. This sounds easy, but it is not! The kids struggled with this. It takes really excellent coordination and balance, and only one team was able to successfully do it without using their hands. There was much encouragement, though, and much laughter, as well as some frustration. We moved to a much simpler exercise then, with the same pairs putting their palms together and slowly walking their feet away from each other, until they form a pyramid that can't stand unless they each stay strong and hold the other one up. This also created much laughter and positive talk, but the students encountered much more success in this activity.

Finally, we did a “blindfolded minefield” exercise, where, again in pairs, one participant was blindfolded and the other had to walk him through a “minefield” made up of soccer balls, pinnies and other obstacles. The kids enjoyed this, although there were varying levels of success. A couple of the pairs gave each other lots of directions like “go that way” while pointing or “come this way” or failed to tell their partners to stop before they bumped into a cone or ball. We also had a few who just wanted to peek under the blindfold, particularly our new pair, “Rasheem” and “Johnquez,” so we talked about what we were trying to accomplish and whether peeking really made sense.

We also had a few pairs where one participant ran their teammate into things as a joke. This seemed to be meant in good fun, but it provided a good opening to talk about trust.

We worked to give the kids a voice in the activities today by allowing them to vote on the activity after we finished our teamwork exercises. The kids voted to do a full scrimmage. We had a very good game, although “Johnquez” pushiness generated some complaints from the other kids. I spoke with him, and he toned it down.

Strange dynamic emerged with “Justin” partnered with “Mickey”. None of “Mickey”’s usual buddies were there, so wound up working with “Justin,” which seemed to thrill J but M was not enthused. In fact, he quit playing several times during the scrimmage and I had a chance to talk with him individually. It turns out he had been in an AAU basketball tournament the prior week in Alabama. He missed two day of school

for this event which spanned five days, and he was clearly exhausted. I was actually very pleased with Mickey, though, since the times he took himself out of the game were each instances where a play had gone against him, and instead resorting to pushing and shoving or trash talk to resolve his frustration, he simply took a break. This showed good self-control and respect for others from a young man who had exhibited some very self-centered behaviors early in the program.

The kids were very friendly today, and “Blake” was a bit hyper. There were a few girls hanging around watching the program. There are normally a few kids waiting for rides, and such, at the school after classes, but in this case, one of the girls was apparently “Blake”’s girlfriend, and he was showing off a bit, but nothing that really disrupted the game or that was worth addressing.

Staffing: RH, NS, JW, AS, and BD; Full House!

### **Wed 5/8 – Session Notes LAST SESSION!**

We wrapped up the program today, and had relatively small numbers. I think this was in part due to the principal’s announcement, where he was attempting to make a joke, but in fact I think he confused kids about whether the program was actually meeting. Some students I talked to later said they were unsure what to do based on the announcement.



The kids that were there were some of our most regular attendees. They expressed sadness that it was over. “Jamar” and “Chase,” particularly, said “No, don’t let it be the last one, we want to keep going!”

We had an opening reflection that focused on how much we, as staff, had enjoyed getting to know the kids, and we talked about remembering what we had learned. We also did post-tests with the kids that were there (several student completed their post-tests the following week, when I went to the school on Monday during the day.

We also had one tremendous moment of self-direction, when we allowed the kids to vote on what we’d do (they selected a full-field scrimmage) and then insisted on strong team-work rules (“Two passes... no, THREE!) for the scrimmage. We had great fun playing one last soccer game, and then had some pizza before the kids started getting picked up.