Positive Youth Development and Resilience amongst Early School Leavers

Daniel O'Sullivan

Master of Education (Hons)

Graduate Diploma in Adult Education (Hons)

Bachelor of Business Studies (Hons)

Submitted for the award of PhD

Student number: 0248495

Supervisor:

Dr Ailbhe Kenny

Submitted for the award of a PhD in Education to Mary Immaculate College, the University of Limerick in fulfilment of the requirements for the PhD in Education 2019

Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

Chapter 4 Research Findings

Chapter 5 Conclusion

Figures

Tables

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted, in whole or any other part, by me or another person for the purpose of obtaining any other qualification.

Signed:

Date:

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Early School Leaving (ESL) represents a massive loss of potential to individuals who leave school and can have a much wider social and economic cost. This study examines Early School Leaving (ESL) and resilience among young people aged 15 – 20 in the Republic of Ireland. The research explores negative internalised stereotypes and how they affect Early School Leavers (ESLs). Three Positive Youth Development (PYD) programmes were used to challenge these stereotypes.

Youth Participatory Action Research was used as a methodology to identify the problems faced by ESLs and to take action on the issues identified. 19 participants were recruited from a Youthreach centre and they participated in three PYD Programmes including; Research Action Project (RAP), GAISCE, and Canoeing Skills. Qualitative data were collected through notes taken on informal conversations with participants, and the reflections of the participants. Quantitative data were collected through the Child and Youth Resilience Measure before and after their participation in the programmes. A regional survey of forty Youthreach centres was used to identify issues relating to ESL.

A cycle of discrimination, depression and drug use were important issues affecting the lives of ESLs. Mentorship was determined to be important in combating internalised stereotypes. The evidence suggests that PYD programmes can increase resilience in ESLs.

Keywords: Early School Leaving, Resilience, Positive Youth Development, Youthreach.

Anthem

The birds they sing

At the break of day

Start again

I heard them say

Don't dwell on what

Has passed away

Or what is yet to be

Yeah the wars they will

Be fought again

The holy dove

She will be caught again

Bought and sold

And bought again

The dove is never free

Ring the bells that still can ring

Forget your perfect offering

There is a crack in everything

That's how the light gets in.

Cohen, L. (1993) Anthem, The Future, Montreal: Columbia Records.

This thesis is dedicated to all those who need a second chance.

Important Terms and Acronyms

1. **ESL – Early School Leaving:** This term refers to anyone who has left school without any formal qualifications. Typically in Ireland, this refers to anyone who has left school without a Leaving Certificate. For the purposes of this thesis, ESL will refer to young people who have left school between the ages of 15 and 20 without any formal qualifications. The use of an acronym to describe this group might be considered dehumanising by some but a term is necessary to identify the group being studied. Labels can be offensive but the acronym is only used to identify the group being studied. I can find no record of the term being considered derogatory.

2. **Neo-liberalism:** This term refers to a political ideology that seeks to reduce the power of the state and increase the freedom of corporate interests. It is associated with the Thatcherism and Reaganism that became popular in the late seventies and eighties. It differs from liberal politics which seek to decrease the power of the state and increase the power of the individual.

3. **Youthreach:** This term refers to second chance education centres in Ireland, which were established to meet the needs of Early School Leavers (ESLs) in Ireland.

4. **PYD – Positive Youth Development:** This term refers to a system of strengths-based youth development which seeks to focus on and promote the positive aspects of a young person's personality rather than to correct the perceived deficits in their personality. It uses a strength based rather than a deficits based approach to youth development.

5. **YPAR – Youth Participatory Action Research:** This term refers to a research methodology that is practice-based and participatory. It is used to empower young people to research a problem or problems affecting their own lives, and to take action on the issue(s).

6. **GAISCE:** This is the Irish word for achievement. In this thesis, it refers to the President's Award which is operated by the office of the President in Ireland. It is similar to the Joint Award offered in Northern Ireland and the Duke of Edinburgh Award offered in Britain. In this thesis, research was conducted into the Bronze GAISCE Award. In order to earn this award young people must meet the following requirements; thirteen hours community engagement, thirteen hours physical recreation, thirteen hours developing a special skill, a further thirteen hours of any of the previously mentioned activities and a two day self-catering overnight adventure journey in which a distance of at least thirty kilometres must be covered.

7. **RAP – Research Action Project:** This term refers to a PYD programme designed by the researcher using YPAR methodology, which seeks to challenge participants to research and take action on problems affecting their own lives.

8. **QQI – Quality Qualifications Ireland:** This term refers to the national body in Ireland which provides quality assurance and accreditation to educational institutions in Ireland.

9. **ETB – Education & Training Board:** This term refers to the national body responsible for education and training in Ireland.

10. **LCA – Leaving Certificate Applied:** This term refers to an alternative qualification to the Leaving Certificate, which is the standard school leaving certificate in Ireland. The LCA has a more vocational focus and is less academic than the Leaving Certificate.

11. **PLC – Post Leaving Certificate Course:** This term refers to training and certification provided by Colleges of Further Education. The QQI rate the Leaving Certificate as a Level 5 Certificate and the LCA as a Level 4 Certificate. Colleges of Further Education typically offer courses

between levels 5 and 6. Learners who complete the LCA often progress to Colleges of Further Education rather than Universities or Institutes of Technology.

12. **Mainstream:** This term refers to the most typical schools in Ireland under the patronage of the Catholic Church.

13. **Adult ally:** Adult allies are used by young people to assist them with problems they cannot deal with alone. The adult ally works within a YPAR community of practice to facilitate and encourage young people to achieve their research goals and activities. The adult ally acts as a mentor.

Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí.[1]

---

[1] Old Irish Saying meaning; praise the youth and she will come

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the rationale behind the research project and seeks to introduce the notion that systems play a role in the decision of many young people to leave school. Working with Early School Leavers (ESLs) for nearly ten years has allowed this researcher to gain a better understanding of the causes and effects of ESL. During this time, a tendency among some ESLs to conform to certain stereotypes was observed. Many seemed to have a warped sense of identity, which accentuated the negative. They lacked hope for the future, and so took no action to improve their situation or prospects. Brown (2005) comments, "trainees often present with a profound sense of rejection, alienation, low self-esteem and behavioural problems".[2] When stereotypes are internalised, they may cause people to behave as if the stereotypes were true, regardless of whether or not, this is in fact, the case. At the beginning of every year, when meeting my new learners for the first time, I ask, "why is it you are all in this room here today having left school, what, is it you all have in common?". The inevitable answer provided is "we are scumbags". Changing this perception is a challenge for ESL educators and so this research aims to establish a methodology for doing so. ESLs may believe that they have failed as a result of flaws in their character and because they are unworthy or bad. Fanon (1952) discusses how an inferiority complex in oppressed people manifests with belief that the oppression is justified and the dominant narrative is correct. Stokes (2003) refers to this phenomenon as a "morbid stereotype", while Lamount (2000) refers to this as the narrative of the "working class loser". Durkheim (1893) refers to it as "anomie".

ESLs are likely to come from at-risk groups within society and have experienced significant adversity. O'Mahony (1997) and Leonard and Walsh (1998) suggest that there is a strong correlation between ESL and criminality in later life, though O'Mahony points out that this correlation skews the picture and that those in prison make up only a fraction of the criminal fraternity, (a) those who were caught and convicted and (b) crimes for which prison is the normal punishment. Haase (2010), Comiskey (2003) and the HSA (2008) suggest a correlation between ESL and substance misuse. Mc Garr (2010), NACD (2014), NESF (2002) and Barnados (2009) suggest a correlation between anxiety, depression, and lower level of mental health and well-being and ESL. ESLs that experience these difficulties need to develop life skills that can help them to deal with and overcome these issues. Resilience, which might be defined as the ability to adapt to adversity, is a key trait that can help young people from entering into a cycle of negative psychology and avoid internalising the negative stereotypes that they are subjected to. This research seeks to develop strategies for developing resilience in ESLs which should enable them to deal more effectively with the high levels of adversity that they face.

---

[2] ESLs are often referred to as trainees in ESL centres.

The European Commission presents a profile of the type of learner who is susceptible to ESL.

Early school leavers … are in general more likely to: come from poor socially disadvantaged and low education backgrounds, come from disadvantaged minorities … or migrant backgrounds, belong to vulnerable groups as youth from a public care background, … take adult responsibilities, such as parenthood or caring for family members, … have achieved poorly in school and lack sufficient educational resilience, have often changed their place of residence or school.

(Network of Experts in Social Sciences of Education and Training, 2010 p.15)

Marginalisation, poverty and vulnerability are common traits in ESLs. Membership of vulnerable groups is also a common theme associated with ESL. Given the level of adversity associated with ESL, there is a need for ESLs to develop resilience in order to cope. Educational resilience means that learners can still perform well at school despite adversity. After a decade of working with ESLs, the need to develop educational programmes for ESLs that foster resilience and overcome marginalisation was observed. Forming a connection and teaching resilience behaviours were identified as being fundamental to the work of Youthreach centres by Gordon (2017). Positive Youth Development (PYD) is an educational philosophy that seeks to achieve this goal. PYD was chosen as a strategy to develop resilience in ESLs and to integrate these learners into their communities, and in so doing, to challenge the observed phenomenon of internalised negative stereotypes. This research will employ a series of PYD interventions to expand the positive social interactions of ESLs to develop resilience, and expand the social ecology of ESLs in order to combat the effects of marginalisation. The research will seek to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the issues affecting the lives of ESLs?
2. How can research into problems affecting their own lives lead to positive actions and problem solving in ESLs?
3. How can PYD be integrated into existing programmes for ESLs?
4. Can PYD programmes be effective in overcoming marginalisation in ESLs?
5. Can PYD cause any alteration in the levels of resilience recorded by ESLs using the CYRM?

1.2 Positive Youth Development Programmes
PYD programmes seek to develop the interests, skills, and abilities, of young people. PYD differs from other programmes designed for young people, in that it takes a strength-based approach rather than

using a deficit model.[3] The concept of positive psychology originated with Maslow (1954) as he suggested a proactive approach to developing mental health rather than a focus on treating mental disorders. This view is supported by Seligman, "I do not believe that you should devote overly much effort to correcting weaknesses. Rather, I believe that the highest success in living and the deepest emotional satisfaction comes from building and using your signature strengths" (Seligman 2002, p. 13). This research takes a PYD approach and seeks to move away from the viewpoint that ESLs have done something wrong by leaving the mainstream. This is a value that has been at the core of Youthreach practice since the programme began, Youthreach might be viewed as a PYD programme however the phenomenon of negative internalised stereotypes is still present within ESLs in Youthreach. This research seeks to use three different interventions and discover what factors in these interventions are useful in challenging these negative stereotypes.

Positive Youth Development programmes generally incorporate an element of physical recreation. According to Cherubini (2013, pp. 42-51) "physical educators are clearly in a unique position to contribute to and promote this movement of positive psychology. Authentic happiness through physical education is possible when educators and students practice and experience pleasant, engaged, and meaningful lives". The importance of physical exercise is generally accepted in terms of physical health: however, it is often overlooked in reference to mental health and happiness. Sporting life is often seen as a focal point of the community for young people in Ireland. Being part of clubs keeps young people active through sports where they can make friends and interact with adult allies who are interested in their development.

PYD programmes seek to encourage young people to have positive relationships and interactions within their schools, communities and peer groups. It encourages positive relationships between young people and the people they interact with within their social ecology. According to Guerra and Bradshaw (2008) "a programmatic emphasis on youth at risk has been criticized for emphasizing what goes wrong rather than what goes right; this perspective portrays youth as problems to be fixed and development as a process of overcoming deficits and risk". A PYD focuses not on what is wrong with a young person but rather encourages the development of positive characteristics. This is recognition of the fact, that as youths, they have already accumulated a wealth of experiences in different areas and have already formed belief and value systems of their own. As such, they have concrete ideas about who they are and how best they can learn.

---

[3] In a deficits based approach, teachers try to figure out what is wrong with ESLs and catch them misbehaving and take steps to rectify the behaviour. Positive Youth Development seeks to spot positive behaviour and acknowledge it.

PYD has its roots in the social ecology theories of Bronfenbrenner (1979) which are discussed by Dotterweich, who comments, "Bronfenbrenner also stated that the interaction between young people and their environment is reciprocal. This means that development does not just happen to children and adolescents. They are actively involved in shaping their own development. Youth are participants, not just recipients" (Dotterweich 2015, p. 11). This is in keeping with the best andragogic concepts as outlined by Knowles (1973), wherein adult learners are identified as needing to have a certain level of autonomy and control over their learning. Adult learners are inclined to self-direction in their learning and are particularly motivated towards solving problems affecting their own lives.

The Inspectorate is a division at the Irish Department for Education and Skills that has responsibility for the valuation of primary and secondary schools as well as Youthreach centres. The Inspectorate reported, "policies encountered only rarely included those dealing with social, personal and health education (SPHE) and health promotion, as well as staff and learner induction, internet safety and acceptable use, outdoor pursuits, smoking, and work experience" (The Inspectorate, 2010 p. 30). Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) and Positive Youth Development (PYD) programmes are useful in the promotion of health, to get young people involved in community projects and challenge-based outdoor pursuits. PYD is useful to get young people to identify goals and commit to them.

Dale remarks on the need for resilience to be developed in ESLs, "a more student focussed set of preventative strategies have in common an aim to build resistance, especially at an individual level, to factors known to affect ESL. These strategies are most commonly expressed through the term resilience" (Dale 2010, p. 38). Multiple studies confirm that outdoor activities build resilience, autonomy, connectedness and physical and mental well-being in young people (Crisp 1998, Pryor et al. 2005, Bell et al. 2014, Daniel et al 2014, Mackenzie et al. 2014, Lynn Norton et al. 2014) and should therefore be included as part of Positive Youth Development Programmes.

Bowers et al (2010) suggest the 5 Cs of PYD are competence, confidence, connection, caring and character. Competence conveys the ability to master the other domains. Confidence relates to self-worth and self- efficacy. Connection relates to positive proximal relationships so that family supports, peer groups and school and community groups provide a sense of belonging. Caring relates to compassion, empathy and concern for others. Character concerns a moral dimension in which the young person demonstrates a moral code that is suited to membership of their social ecology so that they can determine the difference between right and wrong subject to the accepted social norms. The programmes discussed in the next section were designed to promote these traits

in ESLs and to measure any resulting improvement in resilience as a result of their participation in the programmes.

Kurt Hahn founded the Outward Bound movement and the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Hahn established the Salem schools in Germany and after his arrest, for speaking out against Nazism in 1930s Germany was exiled to Britain and founded the Gordonstoun public school in the UK and later went on to found the Atlantic Colleges.[4] Hahn sought to challenge young people to undergo expeditions and develop the requisite skills to do so. He was an early pioneer of PYD. He began the Duke of Edinburgh award, the British equivalent of the GAISCE programme, which is one of three PYD programmes included as interventions in this thesis. The PYD approach suggests that young people should be exposed to risk and to the risk of failure and though success might be required to break a cycle of negative psychology these successes should be framed within the context of the hundreds of failures, mistakes and setbacks that lead to the eventual success of an overall endeavour. Developing the PYD approach so that it integrates with existing programmes for ESLs in Ireland is a challenge. Youthreach is the main programme in Ireland set up to provide educational services to ESLs. The research was carried out with 19 participants, aged between 15 and 20 years old, in a Youthreach centre in the Munster area.

1.3 Resilience

Evidence suggests that resilience is among the most important factors that allow individuals to successfully deal with adversity. Liebenberg suggests that schools play a pivotal role in the development of resilience in learners and that in the most marginalised communities, schools often exist as the only source of service provision, "schools are often the only formal source of service provision for young people living in socio-economically marginalized communities" (Liebenberg *et al* 2016, p. 141). The marginalisation that ESLs experience is a major source of adversity in their lives, Ungar identifies resilience as an important trait that allows young people to cope with stress that results from adversity. "Resilience is understood as more than a set of individual competencies under stress: the higher the level of adversity children experience, the more they benefit from resources that facilitate successful pro-social forms of coping such as an empowering relationship with a caring adult" (Ungar 2013, p. 330). Simply having the physical infrastructure of the school building does not provide services, rather these services are provided by individuals through a network of complex relations within the community. In the case of the schools or ESL centres it is the relationships that are fostered between teachers and learners that allow for the provision of the

---

[4] Atlantic Colleges was an international school founded by Kurt Hahn as a means of promoting international unity through endeavour.

service. The adult ally or supportive teacher is important to the development of resilience in young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Bookchin (1982) takes a holistic view of society and the individuals within. Social problems like ESL are best understood through the relationships within communities, as individuals within social ecologies are interdependent. Bookchin is responsible for the development of the science of social ecology within the field of social science. Social ecology recognises the importance of interdependent relationships within the community to understand complex social problems like ESL. The network of complex relations within the community and the interdependence of the people in it, on each other, and the environment in which the community is based, is referred to as social ecology. In the natural sciences, the term is more commonly applied to describe the environment in which an organism develops. In social science the term ecology can also be used to describe the environments in which a person grows up, however, because human beings are highly complex organisms with highly complex social systems and interactions the term social ecology is applied to describe the interdependent social relationships in which a young person develops. The ESL as an individual grows up in a community where the resources available within that environment are determinants of future success.

Collie *et al.* (2016) suggest that a healthy socio-ecological system is one in which the members of the community are supportive of each other. Within social ecologies where young people feel safe and supported by their families and the wider community, they are more resilient. Central to the entire field of resilience is the concept of social ecology. The social ecology in which a young person develops plays a crucial role in their capacity for resilience, "a social-ecological perspective of resilience would thus entail consideration of how the environment supports or hinders resilience-related processes leading to well-being across various domains of a young person's life" (Lal *et al* 2015, p. 2). The social ecology of a young person also plays a major role in their general health and wellbeing. Schools make up part of a young person's social ecology and therefore play a valuable role in developing resilience, "if school experiences and teacher-pupil interactions can boost resilience, schools become a key site to compensate for resilience resources that are missing in students' lives'" (Liebenberg et al. 2016, p. 142). The school is important for young people to develop resilience, therefore, the teachers who work in the school and the relationships they cultivate with their students are also useful in developing resilience, "the value of transformative youth-adult relationships is that they offer the most vulnerable youth a resource for well-being. When these relationships facilitate access to pro-social expressions of personal talents, the result is likely to be adaptive behaviour among youth who face multiple risk factors" (Ungar 2013, p. 334).

Forging relationships of trust is important when dealing with at-risk youth, trust and respect help young people believe in their own self-efficacy.

1.4 Youthreach

Youthreach is a second chance at education, which serves the needs of early school leavers within the Irish educational system. Youthreach was founded in 1988 by the then Ministers for Labour and Education, Bertie Ahern and Mary O'Rourke, respectively. The programme targets young people who have left school with no formal qualifications. There are over 100 Youthreach centres in the Republic of Ireland. The learners come from a diverse range of backgrounds and have left the traditional education system for an equally diverse range of reasons. Youthreach learners usually attend a centre for two years but often for longer, sometimes three or even four years, especially when they begin at a centre without a Junior Certificate.[5] The decision is normally left to the discretion of the centre Coordinator when more time is needed. A typical Youthreach centre will offer training and work experience placements to early school leavers. Youthreach caters for early school leavers between the ages of 15 and 20 years old but exceptions have been made for older learners.

Stokes (2000) reports that there are approximately 6,000 students attending Youthreach nationally. Most centres are run by the Educational Training Boards (61%) and the remainder is funded by SOLAS, the National Further Education and Training Authority. For a full list of Youthreach centres see Appendix C. These centres place a strong emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills, personal development and ICT skills. There is a training allowance paid to learners within Youthreach centres, and learners engage in various work experience. Classes in Youthreach centres are much smaller than their mainstream counterparts. Typically, classes in Youthreach have less than 10 learners, this allows more time for teachers to interact with learners individually and get to know them on a personal basis.

Mc Coy et al (2014) suggest that negative relationships between students and teachers can have long-term effects on student outcomes. When young people are allowed greater freedom to be their own person and teachers have more time to get to know this person there is greater feasibility to focus on the strengths of the young person. Youthreach generally offers courses through Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and in some cases the Junior or Leaving Certificates. Youthreach centres can choose the courses they offer through the QQI

---

[5] The secondary school system in Ireland is divided into Junior and Senior cycles. The Junior Certificate is normally completed after three years of secondary school.

depending on the needs of their learners. Youthreach teachers and learners generally operate on a first name basis with their teachers. The LCA is similar to the standard Leaving Certificate in that it takes two years to complete with final exams at the end but there is a greater stress placed on continuous assessment it places a strong emphasis on practical and vocational skills. The LCA is sometimes offered as an alternative in mainstream schools. Work experience placements are integrated into the LCA programme to give young people a chance to develop the social and interpersonal skills necessary to enter the labour market confidently.

Personal development and the development of self-esteem are core values in Youthreach as is the development of independent young people who can set goals and commit to them. Youthreach seeks to develop practical and vocational skills. Youthreach could itself be considered a Positive Youth Development Programme. Youthreach centres like mainstream schools serve as community hubs and a resource for their service users which often continues after their completion of the programme. The inspectorate acknowledge the effort made by staff in Youthreach centres to see beyond the confines of their centres and have an understanding of the social ecologies of their learners, "the report praises the positive atmosphere of centres, and the considerable time and effort devoted by Youthreach staff members to getting to know learners individually—their background, their parents and families" (Inspectorate 2010, pg. v). This understanding of the learners' backgrounds has contributed to the continued success of the programme over the last 30 years.

1.5 The Interventions

The intervention took place in a Youthreach centre in the Munster region. Three PYD programmes offered three sets of challenges to the ESLs who participated: the Research Action Project (RAP), GAISCE, and Canoeing Skills. The RAP programme involved participants researching a problem affecting their own lives and taking action on it. The RAP programme was designed by this researcher using YPAR methodology to allow young people to feel empowered to raise consciousness about social issues affecting them. This programme was of 26 weeks duration.

The GAISCE programme involved participants meeting the requirements of the bronze GAISCE award, to commit 13 hours of community involvement, 13 hours of physical recreation, 13 hours of developing a special skill and a further 13 hours of either community involvement, physical recreation, or developing a special skill. The award is completed following an Adventure Journey in which participants complete a 30 kilometre hike over two days. GAISCE is a charity organisation run by the Office of the President of Ireland, the skills the charity seeks to build in young people are; goal

setting and achievement, communication, determination, collaboration as part of a team, positivity in the face of adversity, and leadership. This programme was of 26 weeks duration.

The Canoeing Skills programme challenged the participants to learn the techniques and safety skills to safely navigate moving water as part of a group. Canoeing Skills challenged young people to navigate moving water as part of a team. As part of the Canoeing skills programme participants had to complete 2 certificates; River Safety and Rescue 1 (RSR1) and Level 2 Skills leading to a level four QQI component certificate in Canoeing Skills. This programme was developed by Canoeing Ireland and the Education and Training Board as part of the National Adventure Sports framework. This programme was of 8 weeks duration.

1.6 The importance of this research.

This research seeks to make a contribution to the field of ESL and to challenge the internalised stereotype that causes ESLs to conform to a negative view of themselves, an effect discussed at the start of this chapter. The research seeks to identify issues affecting the lives of ESLs and seek strategies to combat these issues. It is hoped that by identifying issues affecting the lives of ESLs and encouraging these learners to do some research on the problems that they can be empowered to take action. Youthreach might be regarded as a PYD programme but a phenomenon whereby the learners have come to identify with a dismal self-narrative and identify as scumbags has been observed over a decade of practice. Three interventions will be introduced into one centre to examine how this phenomenon may be challenged. ESLs come from marginalised groups and a further ostracised by the fact that they have left school, this research will seek to determine if these interventions can help alleviate this. ESLs suffer from a great deal of adversity in their lives so this research will examine if the interventions can build resilience using the CYRM.

As the interventions seek to forge community links, an examination of external links that may benefit ESL centres and their users will prove useful to ESL educators. This research seeks to establish how an examination of the aspects of PYD is useful in discovering and igniting the passions of ESLs and to discover how to exact a paradigm shift in the mind of the ESL so that negative internalised beliefs are challenged and ESLs are left with a more positive sense of self.

Resilience is key to challenging the internalised stereotypes and ESLs need to develop this trait to overcome the level of adversity they are exposed and to prevent themselves from becoming learned helpless. This research seeks to establish if PYD can cause any alternation in the levels of resilience recorded by ESLs using the Child and Youth Resilience measure.

This research will potentially be of interest to Youthreach staff and Coordinators in the design of their programmes and in the development of their Centre Evaluation and Improvement Plans (CEIP), the National Association of Youthreach Coordinators (NAYC) who implement policy for the Youthreach programme throughout the country. It might also be of interest to Foróige, the Garda Diversion Project, and the Office of the President of Ireland as it manages the GAISCE programme. Youth workers, social workers, drug counsellors and indeed anyone who has a responsibility for, or interest in marginalised youth should benefit from this research.

1.7 Desired Research Outcomes

The desired outcome of this research was to assess how PYD programmes might be used to develop self-efficacy skills and community involvement in ESLs in a Youthreach centre in the province of Munster in Ireland. A central aim of the research is to discover how the internalised stereotype of the "scumbag" can be challenged in ESLs. One aim of the study was to evaluate how PYD programmes might empower ESLs to take action in their communities in collaboration with adults through an understanding of Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) and their participation in the RAP, GAISCE and Canoeing Skills programmes. Other aims of the project were to improve health and well-being of the participants through increased involvement in sporting activities as well as empowering ESLs to feel capable of taking positive actions to influence their lives and their communities.

ESLs have experienced a significant setback in their journey through education. This concept will be explored further in chapter 2. Their reasons for leaving school are diverse but in many cases, they have negative emotions relating to learning and education. There are negative emotions that ESLs develop as a result of their withdrawal from school, experiencing a setback makes it difficult for ESLs to think positively about learning and having been absent from school many ESLs have fallen into bad habits and activities. The rationale behind this research was to provide ESLs in one Youthreach centre with a series of successes, to expose them to risk and to failure so that they learn to persevere and break the cycle of negative psychology. Understanding this cycle of negative psychology is an important aim of this research. This study aims to discover if PYD can be used to break this cycle.

Learners designed their own community action plan so that no learner felt they were being forced into a project that they had no interest in or that was not relevant to them or their lives. Malcolm Knowles (1973) is known as the father of andragogy he is famous for defining the need for adults learners and differentiating them from pedagogy, which refers to the educational need of a child. He

comments on adults need to be self-directed in their learning, "when he finds himself in a situation in which he is not allowed to be self-directing, he experiences a tension between that situation and his self-concept. His reaction is bound to be tainted with resentment and resistance" (Knowles 1973, p. 45). Adult learners like to be self-directed in their learning because as adults being responsible for their own actions they prefer to also be responsible for their learning. With this in mind, it was decided that the community projects the learners participated in would be directed by the learners.

The experience that adult learners have accumulated defines who they are and are meaningful and valuable to them help them to understand their point of view who they are and where they are coming from. Knowles comments on the link between knowledge and identity and why in respecting a person's prior experience you are respecting them, "to a child, experience is something that happens to him, to an adult, his experience is who he is. So in any situation in which an adult's experience is being devalued or ignored, the adult perceives this as not rejecting just his experience, but rejecting him as a person" (Knowles 1973, p. 46). Rejecting the experience of the ESL is a rejection of the ESL as a person. Participants in the study where asked to write reflections about their experiences and one of the research aims were to discover what learning experiences are valued by the ESL. Where there is incongruence between the values and experiences of the learner and the dominant culture of the school there is a tendency to disconnect from school as alienation sets in.

The Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM) was used to measure changes in the learner's bounce-back ability or resilience. Their ability to recover from setbacks after participation in the research was measured by the CYRM. The test was administered before the commencement and after the completion of each programme to determine if there was any improvement in the resilience of the learners resulting from participation in the research. An important goal of the research was to determine if participation in PYD programmes like RAP, GAISCE and Canoeing Skills led to greater resilience in learners. Learning to react positively to setbacks and developing self-efficacy skills should empower young people to take control of their lives and ultimately improve them as they see fit. Participants' awareness of social issues was measured by the work they produced to raise awareness of the issues they take up. A regional survey of Youthreach learners was conducted so that participants conducted research by and for Early School Leavers.

Learning is part of who and what we are, it is an integral part of our existence, "learning is an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice", (Lave and Wenger 1991, p. 31). In our daily lives and interactions with each other, we learn an incalculable amount. Formal classroom learning makes up only a small fraction of what we know and understand about the world. Learning is a part of

almost everything we do, "arguing in favour of a shift away from a theory in which learning is reified as one kind of activity, and toward a theory of social practice in which learning is viewed as an aspect of all activity, has led us to consider how we are to think about our own practice", (Lave and Wenger 1991, p. 37). If learning is to be viewed as a function of all our activity then everything we do has some sort of learning involved. Learning is a function of social practice. Due to the social dynamics of the school, ESLs may have found themselves on the periphery of school life in early adolescence. While all newcomers might enjoy being on the periphery of a community not being able to reach the centre of it may have driven them into new social circles where they found the centre of these new communities more permeable. Di Maggio (1982) argues that teachers communicate more easily with and find students who possess cultural capital than to those who don't.

Vygotsky comments that learning is so intrinsic to our lives that formal education is a man-made process for human development, "education is the artificial mastery of the natural process of development" (Vygotsky 1978, p. 88). As people develop, they will naturally gravitate towards what they are most comfortable with, and gravitate towards groups in which they feel they belong, towards cultural norms, which they recognise as their own. If learning, as Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest, is a social process and largely rooted in social class as Bourdieu (1973a) suggests then building cultural capital in learners is an important factor to consider when developing educational plans designed to help ESLs re-engage with education. Stokes (2000) identified programmes similar to Youthreach that are delivered by other community organisations such as Community Training Workshops (CTWs), ETB Youthreach centres themselves, Senior Traveller Training Centres (STTCs), FÁS/ Justice Workshops as being essential strands in the delivery of the service to ESLs. Crucially he identified other community-based services and voluntary services as a "fifth strand" of Youthreach programmes. The desired outcomes of this research are to build resilience, increase pro-social involvement and responsibility, and promote mental and physical well-being.

Understanding the social fields in which ESLs interact is essential to understanding how they have come to be marginalised. It has previously been observed by Day (2013) that positive involvement in the social ecology of the ESL and increased interaction with the community can yield positive results for ESL programmes. The interventions undertaken as part of this research will attempt to increase community integration as per Day's findings, "second chance schemes have found that having roots in the local community and being able to raise awareness and communicate via social networks is important in this context" (Day *et al* 2013, pg. 3). The social ecology of the ESL might form part of the reason for their rejection of school. This research seeks to make ESLs more active within the social networks that they already inhabit, "tapping into local social networks is critical, and is part

and parcel of becoming part of the local 'community fabric' which is an important element of success" (Day *et al* 2013 pg. 36). This research seeks to assess the effectiveness of PYD programmes to help marginalised ESLs become part of this community fabric through community-based and voluntary services which are recognised by Stokes (2000) as being an essential fifth strand of Youthreach.

There were 3 interventions used as part of this research. PYD programmes that sought to encourage learners to become involved in the following activities were chosen, physical fitness and resilience relate to positive physical and mental health which are identified by Gordon (2017) as lacking in ESLs. Involvement in community organisations and service learning were desirable features of the programmes as they were identified by Stokes (2000) as being the fifth strand of Youthreach and in recognition of the fact that learning is a social process. This research seeks to assess how PYD programmes might be used to develop self-efficacy skills and community involvement in ESLs. As part of the research participants were asked to research a problem affecting their own lives and take some action on the issue within the community. ESLs who describe themselves in disparaging terms are suffering from the effects of internalised stereotypes, this research will investigate this phenomenon and determine what if anything can be done to reduce or eliminate it. The research will determine if participation in PYD interventions can alter levels of resilience in ESLs as measured by the CYRM. This research seeks to assess the effectiveness of PYD programmes to help marginalised ESLs become part of the fabric of their communities.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research rationale and intentions behind the research project and how the ecologies of systems act in ways which affect ESL. The role culture plays in ESL will be examined in greater detail in chapter 2. The next chapter will examine some of the push factors in ESL and build a profile of the ESL. Information about Youthreach and the context and details of how these centres operate in Ireland was provided in this chapter. The research goals of this thesis are to determine to what extent internalised stereotypes play a role in the development of ESLs and to implement a Positive Youth Development Programme to tackle a system of negative psychology borne out of a deficits based approach to the education of ESLs. A description of the key concepts involved in this research project and the desired goals of the project have been outlined. This research investigates the effectiveness of a PYD in the education of ESLs who have returned for a second chance at education.

This chapter introduced the concept of PYD. The importance of physical recreation to the well-being of young people was discussed and the possible effectiveness of outdoor education and expedition with ESLs was explored. The importance of resilience to ESLs was discussed. The phenomenon of ESL in relation to the social ecology of the ESL was examined. Youthreach was identified as the primary second chance education programme in Ireland and the one in which ESLs are most likely to participate. Through the use of three PYD programmes, this research project has a certain amount of scope for experimentation of approach to PYD and how it might be best integrated into existing programmes and curricula in ESL centres. An important feature of PYD is that learners have an impact on the delivery of the programme and a strong level of influence over the development of the programme. Learners were also free to opt out of the programmes as they saw fit while remaining free to re-engage later where possible. The desired benefits to the learners included an increased awareness of their potential to have a positive effect on their communities and their lives within them. An increased involvement in sporting activity among participants was a goal of this research project and the development of self- efficacy and leadership skills through participation in adventures and endeavour.

This research sought an increased diversification of learning ecosystems for young people who had either rejected or been rejected by the mainstream schooling and traditional classroom environment. The National Advisory Committee on Drugs and Alcohol report on the benefits of exposing young people to a range of learning ecologies, "participation in different kinds of learning environments (both school and non-school) exposes them to new influences, particularly those associated with peers, teachers, the learning institution itself and the local community" (NACDA 2014, p. 20). Positive Youth Development programmes should expose young people to new experiences and learning ecologies. PYD seeks to introduce young people to new activities and potential adult allies who can open the doors to new opportunities and help them find a spark, which ignites a previously undiscovered passion that will keep them active and engaged with their community.

What type of educational programmes can be implemented to overcome marginalisation in ESLs? This research seeks to use PYD to better understand the features of educational programmes that help ESLs overcome marginalisation and reintegrate with their peers and communities. The RAP programme has been implemented to determine if through awareness and research into problems affecting their own lives can lead to positive actions and problem-solving in ESLs. The GAISCE programme is a complementary programme that integrates well with the RAP programme as discussed further in chapter 3. The GAISCE programme was implemented as part of this research to

determine how ESLs respond to goals and determine how it might influence ESLs confidence and perceptions about themselves. The Canoeing Skills programme was implemented to determine how ESLs would respond to outdoor education. All three programmes were used to determine if PYD programmes would affect the resilience scores of ESLs as measured by the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM) discussed further in chapter 3.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the cultural factors influencing Early School Leaving (ESL) including the identity and "habitus" of the ESL and theorises about how cultural norms impact upon ESL and lead to alienation and disconnection from community. Bourdieu (1984, p. 170) defines habitus as "not only a structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices but also a structured structure: the principle of division into logical classes which organizes the perception of the social world is itself the product of internalization of the division into social classes". Habitus relates to how our beliefs about the world, our preferences, are determined by; external structures such as family, work and peer group are internalised. Bourdieu's theories on habitus, social capital and social reproduction and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theories of social ecology are examined as they apply to Early School Leaving (ESL) in this chapter. This chapter explores some of the risk factors in relation to ESL including; parents, class, cultural values, criminality, substance misuse, neo-liberalism, and ESL centres.

Cultural and critical theory will be used to examine why ESL occurs and why ESLs break from mainstream schooling. The social capital available to ESLs will be examined and the habitus and identity of the ESL are explored through the theories of Bourdieu and Bronfenbrenner. Culture and the social systems it produces act upon the ESL and can create a mind-set of alienation from mainstream schooling. A culture that values material wealth can alienate those who are poor. Young people from demonised neighbourhoods can begin to believe the stigmatization. Blackett (2016, p 49) refers to the neighbourhood effect, "the theory of neighbourhood effects posits that living in poor neighbourhoods makes people poorer and limits and erodes their life chances". ESLs that come from stigmatized areas can come to internalise the poor image of their area. Blackett describes how the neighbourhood effect impacted communities in Limerick, (2016, p 94) "the brand image of Limerick city has however undoubtedly impacted negatively on the city's reputation and its economic and social development. It has also led to the stigmatisation, marginalisation and exclusion of certain areas within the city".

The internalisation of negative self-beliefs in ESLs is examined in this chapter as they act upon ESLs and others, "oppressive beliefs are internalised by victims as well as benefactors" (Adams *et al.* 1997, p. 5). In the context of social justice advocacy, it is often asserted that the oppressed become complicit in their oppression and that members of the oppressing group also internalise their belief in their superiority.

Seligman's *et al.* (1968 pp. 256-262) theories of learned helplessness are explored as a means of understanding ESLs behaviour. Curricula and high pressure assessment techniques that are not

always in the interest of the ESL are explored. Finally approaches in andragogy, mentoring and adult allies are explored as methods of building resilience and efficacy in the ESL classroom. Theories of learned helplessness, self-efficacy and resilience are introduced to lay the foundation for the research methodology and for analysis and interpretation of findings presented in chapters 3, 4 and 5.

2.2 Social Capital and Ecological Development

This section examines the theories of Bourdieu (1984) and Bronfenbrenner (1979) and how they relate to ESL. Bourdieu's (1984) concept of habitus suggests that the learner internalises the structure in which he grows up and was not aware of it and therefore is uncritical of a system which did not satisfy them. This might on the surface seem to suggest that their school leaving was predetermined by their social standing at birth. ESLs might then be compared to fish struggling to swim upstream against a system and meeting a weir. For many ESLs the weir is the Leaving Certificate or Junior Certificate and the point at which their consciousness of social stratification begins, often as the resources of their parents begin to wane in terms of helping with school work, perhaps not having attained that level of education themselves. This is further exacerbated by the pressure to leave school and the questions are raised as to why they continue with school since they are not going to college? Why continue when there is no job to take up when you finish? Somehow aware that this social stratification process may be unfavourable to them the fish leaps from the water, leaves school and the ESL, the fish out of water is born.

Reay (in Silva and Warde 2010, p. 80) uses the same metaphor of fish out of water to describe the lack of a feeling of connection or belonging that working class young people feel in élite universities as she describes the progress of two students, Fiona and Shaun, "working-class students like Fiona and Shaun are characterized by conscious deliberation and awareness; they – unlike their middle-class counterparts – are engaged in acts of invention or, more accurately, reinvention." Finding themselves immersed in a middle class culture that is alien to them, these students are forced to reinvent themselves in order to fit in and find some sense of belonging within their new surroundings. Critical theory provides a post Marxist understanding of how market and class forces impact upon identity and culture and can lead to alienation in ESLs. It provides a theoretical underpinning which can help us understand how internalised stereotypes can assume residency in the minds of ESLs and influence their behaviour.

The fish out of water has begun to become critical and has become aware of the symbolic power of the social stratification on her, so she is then complicit in this symbolic power exercised on her as

social agents through her continued participation in the education system. As she leaves the water she leaves school and becomes a fish out of water separated from the school and with nothing to do. Austerity and deindustrialisation across the western world following the global financial crisis have contributed to an increased dissatisfaction with schooling that prepares learners for work in factories and this contributes to the alienation of working class learners. The fall in the availability of low skilled factory employment has an effect on the social reproduction of the working class, "the sharp fall in factory employment has provoked simultaneously an intensified struggle for educational qualifications and a perception of the failure of the school in meeting the educational needs of the working class children bringing about a crisis of reproduction" (Fowler 1997, p. 38). While the economic conditions determine that there are few employment opportunities for working class learners, their participation in school is questioned.

Bourdieu (1973a) suggests that the individual exists in a multidimensional space called society, which consists of a number of subspaces called fields. When entering different fields the individual carries with her a unique set of resources or capital. The capital contained within an individual's habitus might be social, financial or cultural. The social rules within each field are known as doxa and an individual will be evaluated upon arrival into each field by their ability to conform to the doxa within the field. PYD is a form of mentoring which allows for the transmission of social capital within a field.

Social capital as described by Bourdieu, can be determined by a network of relationships. The network of relationships that a person has would therefore depend on where they live and can be considered as being derived from their community. The social capital held by an individual relates to their geographically determined community where they are from and who they know as a result. ESLs coming from areas of high unemployment may not possess the social capital necessary to get a job. Indeed if it is not the norm where they come from to have a job they may not be expected to seek employment. In areas of high unemployment there is often an alternative employment available in the black economy if it is the norm within the area the ESL may be expected to work in the black economy. The cultural capital of an individual might relate to the knowledge, the skills or the education they possess as a result of being immersed in the culture in which they exist. Symbolic capital refers to honour or how likely a person is to keep their word or repay a debt, how likely they are to fulfil their social obligations. Bourdieu (1973a) explains that symbolic capital to the ESL might mean non-cooperation with the civil authority or police and through this non-cooperation be deemed honourable. These are examples of how internalised stereotypes might manifest and are not intended to further the "morbid stereotype" but merely serve as an example for how an ESL may

become alienated from the world of work. Alienation of young people is recognised by Bronfenbrenner as a mesosystem phenomenon.

> The alienation of children and youth and its destructive developmental sequelae are mesosystem phenomena. They reflect a breakdown of the interconnections between various segments of the child's life – family, school, peer group, neighbourhood, and the beckoning, or all too often indifferent or rejecting, world of work.

> (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 231)

The effects of alienation can lead to learned helplessness on the individual level, and the breakdown of community in the mesosystem. The Central Statistics Office (2006) reported that people most likely to be involved in their communities were not from lone parent families, had not moved home in the previous year, lived in owner occupier homes, have higher levels of education, and are employed. This seems to be the direct opposite of the regular profile of ESLs suggesting that some kind of intervention is required if ESLs are to be included in society and have any chance of earning social capital. If we were to imagine an ESL as a node on a network within her social ecology and the people she is connected to as other nodes, and then imagine that each node or person on the network she is connected to as having either a neutral, pro-social or anti-social influence on her we can construct a mental picture of her social ecology. ESLs are not always likely to be pro-social nodes. Through community involvement young people can build social capital in positive ways and in doing so create social connections that might lead to enhanced employment opportunities while simultaneously developing social skills. Expanding the number of positive nodes that connect to the ESL provides the ESL with greater social capital and new opportunities and experiences.

Habitus according to Bourdieu (1973a) describes a social property of humanity that influences behaviour without strictly determining it. Human development does not happen in isolation. Social structures influence our development. "Human development is the process through which the growing person acquires a more extended differentiated and valid conception of the ecological environment, and becomes motivated and able to engage in activities that reveal the properties of, sustain or restructure that environment at levels of similar or greater complexity in form and content" (Bronfenbrenner 1979 p. 27). Our experiences shape us as we develop and social structures influence the type of experiences that we have. There is a dynamic interplay between the developing person and the ecological sphere that they inhabit, PYD encourages young people to become engaged in activities that can alter their ecological spheres. Social reality and an individual's sense of reality are related in the development of young people, "Bourdieu's theory of knowledge targeted the exact philosophical relationship between the individual and social reality which

surrounds them" (Grenfell 2004, p. 165). The social reality which surrounds an individual shapes her habitus.

Social reproduction can be expressed simply by the old adage the apple does not fall far from the tree. In regards to cultural theory this does not relate to a set of genetic predispositions but rather to the ability of society to reproduce class inequalities. It is worth noting that social reproduction does not always occur even where there is systematic predisposition to it.

ESLs are often from backgrounds of social disadvantage and their ability to achieve academically can be undermined by this. Feelings of inferiority are common in the long term unemployed and those who come from generations of unemployment have had these feelings reinforced for generations. They are perhaps under the illusion that they are not as smart, as talented, as capable and that they do not have the same potential as their middle class peers in mainstream schools. A feature of PYD is to establish relationships and engage in activities that build on the strengths of the young person and to assert that they are expected to achieve. Through the development of interpersonal relationships with young people ESL educators can alter the role expectations of young people whose perception of what is expected of them is dismally low due to their membership of a working class sub culture or marginalised group. The Neighbourhood Effect can impact the role expectations of young people who may have very low expectations for themselves and their communities may have low expectations for them too.

> The tendency to evoke perceptions, activities, and patterns of interpersonal relation consistent with role expectations is enhanced when when the role is well established in the institutional structure of society and there exists a broad consensus in the culture or subculture about the expectations as they pertain to the behaviour both of the person occupying the role and of others with respect to that role.

> (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 92)

Supportive adults have a role to play in redefining the role expectations of ESLs. Community engagement provides an opportunity for young people to redefine the community's role expectations of them. To the alienated youth, beliefs about themselves are shaped by the collection of deceptions that they have been exposed to. Adult learners in Youthreach may suffer from these deceptions which potentially affect their sense of self. Some learners may believe they are stupid or unsuited to learning. A system that struggles to contain the anger of a learner that finds her-self being gentrified might react by blaming and excluding the learner rather than address the problems that lie within it.

Agents vying for power within social fields, agents within the field who do not conform to the doxa within the field will be pushed out by other agents in the field. Agents who enter a field and lack the social capital to be allocated a space within the field will exit the field of their own accord or be pushed out. Many ESLs lack the cultural knowledge or cultural currency to navigate the social space within the school effectively and either leave of their own accord or are forced out. Social capital or the lack of it can cause social inequality. Education itself is an important type of social capital and educational credentials such as certificates and degrees are important forms of social capital. Learners from lower social classes tend to have less of these forms of cultural capital.

Forming a profile of the typical ESL is a difficult task because the ESL classroom is diverse. Perhaps this could be understood better by understanding who is absent from the ESL classroom. Multiple studies (Stokes 2003, Dale 2010, Brown 2005, Downes 2011, Gordon 2017) suggest that ESLs come from socially disadvantaged areas, middle and upper class young people are not typically in the ESL classroom. Learners need to feel that what they are learning is relevant to them and that the cultural knowledge they possess is valid where this does not happen learners are alienated from school.

2.3 Home, Class and Cultural Values

There is an intergenerational cyclical nature to ESL, hooks comments on how the children's experiences at home are taken with them into the classroom, "it (the home) is a training ground for the community, it is a place where we are first given a sense of the meaning and power of education" (hooks 1984, p .68).[6] The home is where the child first begins interacting with other human beings. The child learns primarily from its parents during its formative years. Ignoring the importance of the home ignores all the child is when beginning school. Mc Coy *et al.* (2014) suggest that parental support is crucial for working-class children progressing to higher education though they often lack "insider knowledge" of the higher education system that would enable them to help their children make choices regarding their progression. Mc Coy *et al.* (2014) suggest that for working-class children career guidance counselling is more important. Partnership between the school and the parents recognises the child's identity and values even though the latter may be as yet unable to communicate them as the parents can speak on behalf of the child. NALA (2016) report on the effectiveness of family literacy programmes. Through a partnership with the parents, the importance of education can be fostered as a value the child may retain for the rest of her life. Kellaghan comments on the mismatch between values developed in the home and the school having a negative impact on learning, "when the characteristics developed at home do not support school

---

[6] The author being quoted, bell hooks, does not capitalise her initials.

learning, it seems reasonable to conclude that the resultant discontinuity experienced by the children when they go to school will affect their scholastic performance" (Kellaghan 1993, p 18).

In some cases, the ability of the parents to help their children can be impeded by the educational disadvantages experienced by the parents. Where this occurs there can be a discontinuity between the expectations placed upon the student by the school and those placed on them by the parents, especially if there are very low expectations in the home. In this event, the student's performance will be determined by the expectations placed on them at home, as the home is the primary ground for the development of the student from which they develop social skills and where their need to belong to a group is first met in most cases. The student belongs first to the home and the family and second to the school and the community. In some cases, however, the school and the community also have different cultural values which result in a similar discontinuity, especially where there is class disparity, "the school system typically affirms the language and culture of the middle and upper classes" (Henry 1996, p. 99). The factors influencing ESL may have been in play before the child even begins school, "in very many cases the route to ESL begins before the child goes to school" (Dale 2010, p. 10).

The cultural values of the learner act upon the dynamic of the classroom and the cultural background of the learner may have a significant impact upon their academic success but the classroom also has a culture of its own which acts upon the learner and within the school community. Kendall and Wickham comment on the cultural significance of schools, as sites were culture is transferred in a living way rather than merely being a site for the transmission of facts, "the intention is not to deny children access to the truth about themselves, but to produce them as functioning, maximised citizens, to produce the truth about themselves. Culture actively works at producing citizens by management; it is not merely a repository of meanings" (Kendall and Wickham 1999). Culture is important to understanding ESL the cultural backgrounds of learners, and should be understood within the ESL classroom. Cultural diversity is important to the ESL classroom which must be ready to assimilate and adapt to the diversity of ESLs. Mezirow comments on the difficulties in establishing relationships of trust between different cultures, "when group members come from different sexes, races or classes, it is often much more difficult to reach the shared sense of trust necessary to permit intimate self-disclosure, to generate a fund of vital information, and to develop a shared sense of interest in liberation" (Mezirow 1991, p.187). An adaptable organisational culture may overcome the difficulty in establishing the trust necessary to develop a shared interest in liberation and a common identity and culture focused on ESL and Adult Learners. Positive Youth Development (PYD) interventions should therefore be adaptable and allow some degree of

customisation by the learner to allow them to focus on their own strengths. If there is some degree of class oppression acting upon the learner then PYD interventions should also seek to expose and take steps to limit the oppression.

The school affirms the culture of the middle and upper classes as the teachers and curriculum designers are likely to be college educated members of the middle and upper classes. Reay (2017, p 165) refers to the "psychic cost" of this disparity in the British school system uncovered in her research, "everyone is damaged by the social class inequalities that continue to haunt the educational system, it is … the working-class who suffer most." In this event, the student may feel that school is not relevant to the culture and class to which she belongs and feels further alienated by the schooling process. It is important for the teacher to understand the community that the student lives in order to make school work relevant to the world in which the student resides. Schaffer comments on the importance of the home life in the development of a child and from here their cultural identities will be formed "the home is a key site for child development, it is the basic setting within which children are introduced to social living" (Schaffer 2004, p. 96). The home is where children learn how to socialise. The behaviour they learn in the home ecology will be repeated in the school ecology. If negative attitudes to schooling are developed here, then they will be repeated in the school ecology. In cases where the parents feel they have failed with their schooling, these sentiments may be transmitted to the child.

2.4 Criminality and Substance Misuse

ESLs are also at greater risk of becoming involved in crime and O'Mahony (1997) indicated that in a survey of prisoners in Mountjoy prison, eighty per cent of prisoners had left school before the age of sixteen, the Inspector of Prisons reports "in 2008, of the 520 prisoners who enrolled in the school at Mountjoy Prison, 20% could not read or write and 30% could only sign their names". This would suggest a correlation between ESL and criminality. Many of those in prison are ESLs but most ESLs do not end up in prison. A pragmatic view that the cost of ESL can be linked to the expense of tackling criminal gangs and imprisoning them in the country's prisons as well as the welfare payments made to whole communities that are excluded from the labour market, early intervention is through investment in ESL centres might help alleviate social exclusion. Substance abuse and some of the behavioural difficulties associated with it are common among ESLs. An ESL may leave school because of various issues and adopt certain behaviours as a result of becoming marginalised and leaving school. ESLs may deal with their issues through drug use which can lead to interactions with the criminal fraternity. As the HSA claims:

There is a strong correlation between early school leaving and the problem of substance misuse. Conversely, educational attainment is significantly associated with self-reported levels of perceived health, being free from long-term illness, satisfaction with one's health and quality of life. However, young people aged between 16-18 years old who are outside education and employment during this time are reported as being particularly vulnerable to continuing disadvantage in adulthood as well as subject to and experiencing sub-optimal health.

(HSA 2008, p.28)

A correlation between drug use and ESL compounded by a correlation with criminality and ESL might suggest that the social cost of ESL is much higher than one might initially assume. Long-term health care costs due to suboptimal health are likely to cause a further burden on the limited resources available to state services. The combined cost of ESL to the health and justice systems might indicate that pragmatic investment in the country's youth might result in long-term savings for the state as well as greater happiness and fulfilment for young people and greater enjoyment of the lives of those who might end up otherwise being the victims of crime. O'Higgins indicates that "drug problems" are not randomly distributed geographically and "tend to cluster in neighbourhoods characterised by poverty and general disadvantage" (O'Higgins 1998, p. 46). This does not mean that drug use is confined to working class areas but that in working class areas problematic use as opposed to recreational use is more common than in areas of greater affluence. Criminality, substance abuse and ESL are closely correlated but also geographically concentrated in areas of low employment and high levels of social disadvantage. This depicts the criminality and substance abuse issues that are present within the social ecology of the ESL.

2.5 Neoliberalism

In this section neoliberal politics are discussed as a contributory factor in Early School Leaving (ESL) pushing some young people out of mainstream schooling. The suggestion being that neoliberalism forwards the belief that having money and being of worth are closely correlated in the value systems of western society and their schools. Neoliberalism is as an economic ideology that transfers control of economic power to the private sector from the public sector. Under this ideology, services exist as commodities which are sold at the highest price to maximise shareholder value regardless of the human cost. In a competitive capitalist system where money is a measure of success, if a young person does not come from money, they might believe themselves worthless and internalise this belief.

After a systemic crash affects an economic system there is pressure placed on all state services to provide value for money. Neoliberalism is distinct from traditional liberal politics which focus on the freedom of the individual, neoliberal ideology focuses on freedom for corporations and reducing the power and influence of governments in favour of corporations. Social reproduction is also a cause of the perpetuation of poverty and disadvantage, and sadly schools are often a site in which social reproduction occurs. "We argue that the neoliberal education system will continue to disproportionately benefit those at the top end of the social ladder, while the existence of strong levels of meritocratic ideology masks the perpetuation of privilege" (Power *et al.* 2013, p.24).

Institutions are repositories of social capital and can have an oppressive influence upon individuals, institutions are made up of the employees and service users within. They can often act to focus collective action in order to achieve a purpose or goal, however they can also act to focus collective biases "institutions are fairly stable social arrangements and practices through which collective actions are taken … institutional oppression is the systematic mistreatment of people within a social identity group, supported and enforced by the society and its institutions, solely based on the person's membership in the social identity group" (Cheney *et al.* 2006, p 1). The dominant political ideology will influence how institutions practice and define who the targets of institutional oppression will be.

Reay (2017, p 165) comments on how oppression within an educational setting can have serious psychological implications, "Freud argued that when faced with a traumatic situation that calls into question one's integrity, the ego often deals with what appears to be an inconceivable dilemma through processes of disavowal that lead to the splitting of the ego". A wish to be outside the class system brought about by a belief in fairness, activates defences that cause many to identify as middle class. Reay (2017, p 166) explains, "by claiming to be in the middle people can talk about inequalities without feeling personally implicated either as those who, in lacking resources, are seen as intrinsically lacking or as those with resources can be seen as selfish and greedy."

Targets of institutional oppression will become desensitized to oppression over time and eventually begin to accept it and believe it is in their best interests as they begin to internalise their oppression. Reay (2017) suggests that all students suffer from a hyper competitive education system that inflicts emotional and educational damage but that working class children are disproportionately affected. The importance of suggesting alternatives to policies that will unduly affect working class children is recognised by Connolly.

We must defend the priorities of the learners rather than passively accepting the conditions of the funders. We must continue to develop ourselves, to develop our skills and knowledge to strengthen the field, rather than allow it to be submitted into the prevailing neoliberal discourses widespread in Europe. The main work of adult educators is to provide alternative analysis of the inequality that emanates from the neoliberal discourses.

(Connolly 2013, p 16)

Providing an alternative analysis challenges dominant narratives in which everything is done in the name of the gross domestic product is an important function of adult educators. An overarching neoliberal narrative can be internalised by individuals. Connolly (2003, p. 17) states "the economy is part of society, self-evidently, but work and employment are not the only indicators of participation and inclusion". Though neoliberal capitalism might be seen as an easy target for vilification, it is a system suited to mass production which is needed to sustain the consumer culture of western democracies. Capitalism and its class systems affect the individual psyche "we term this notion, capital identity projection, describing this concept as a psychosocial malady which occurs when the projection of socio-economic achievement is pursued in lieu of personal well-being" (Wood *et al.* 2012, p 985).

Alexander (2001) suggests the psychological effects of capitalism act as a driver of drug addiction. Those who find themselves as have nots develop "dislocation" which is state brought about by insufficient psychosocial integration. Psychosocial integration is a state in which people are able to maintain close social bonds within their communities. Alexander (2001) argues that dislocation is endemic in free market societies. In any case, the effects of capitalism and the neoliberal policies that become popular following inevitable economic crashes have a human cost. Hall and Lamont (2012, p 15) "this redistribution of opportunity has been reflected in rising levels of income inequality in both developed and developing countries. Thus, neoliberal reform has posed stringent challenges to specific social groups". Challenges relating to neoliberal doctrine generally affect those at the lower end of the economic system both economically and psychologically.

Hall and Lamont (2012) suggest that neoliberal ideology serves to undermine trust in public authorities and redefine how people assess the worth of individuals.

> A discourse that elevates market criteria of worth tends to classify people who are affluent into a bounded community and to marginalize those with fewer economic resources. Corresponding ideas about productivity are often used to draw rigid moral boundaries around people who are unemployed, low-skilled or low-paid, thereby narrowing the circle of people to whom citizens feel a sense of responsibility. Moreover, by defining worth in terms of levels of income or productivity they can never attain neoliberal schemata can be disabling for people with low levels of income or skill.

> (Hall & Lamont, 2012, p. 19)

The public discourse surrounding how people assess the worth of individuals is shaped by the level of income a person generates. Lamont (2009, p. 19) explains "they come to be defined (and often self-define) as 'losers' – especially in societies that do not support varied matrices of worth, based on morality, solidarity or other attributes unrelated to income". Stereotypes about the working class are internalised and act as a means of oppression on working class people in a way that they are not necessarily even aware of.

Neoliberalism suggests that a rising tide lifts all boats and that better societies have low taxation and low levels of public services, however, this trickle-down approach to economics preserves social inequality. Economic equality is more likely to benefit society as a whole as recognised by O'Connor and Stauton (2015, p. 14), "Addressing economic inequality is important because we know that more equal societies perform better on a whole range of social indicators such as crime, health and educational attainment. More equal societies are also more stable and have better chances of stronger and more sustained economic growth". The job of the critical theorist is to expose cultural norms embedded in society that contribute to inequality and raise consciousness about them so that the harm they cause can be reduced. As part of this research youth researchers undertaking the RAP programme went through a series of critical theory workshops in order to equip them with the skills to do just that.

Many ESLs have internalised negative beliefs about themselves. Lamount (2000) refers to these beliefs as internalising the belief that the working class are "losers", Stokes (2003) refers to the internalisation of a "morbid stereotype", in this section Wood *et al.* (2012) suggest capital identity projection has a similar effect on the psyche of the indivual. Reay (2017) through a series of interviews with working class students discovered that the interviewees had interalised the neoliberal ideology and were as she termed, " good neoliberal subjects", they had rationalised their low status and were heavily invested in notions of responsibility for any future outcomes.

We glimpse the ways in which symbolic domination works by making the individual responsible for their own success or failure, rather than recognising that some things are just not possible if you have virtually none of the necessary resources.

(Reay 2017, p. 96)

The interviewees had internalised the dominant ideology that made them responsible for their own future outcomes while at the same time they were concious that the chioce of secondary school options to them severely limited their options upon completion of their education. There is potential for cognative dissonance in such situations as learners are conditioned by a dominant neoliberal ideology that they can achieve based on their own merit and through hard work while at the same time they are aware that the only options available to them are not likely to result in a successful outcome.

2.6 Youth Participatory Action Research in Educational Research

This section gives a brief outline of some other YPAR projects. YPAR is used as an approach to positive youth development that has its roots in social justice, it seeks to encourage young people to conduct research, and take positive actions that will improve the lives of the young people and their communities. Youth Action Research for Prevention (YARP) is a similar research model to YPAR, YARP has many of the characteristics of YPAR, it seeks to use data to empower young people to increase participation in the community and reduce marginalisation however, it differs slightly from YPAR in that it is designed to prevent behaviours such as sex or drug taking.

The value of shared experiences in a PAR community is important, "participatory action research (PAR) is based on the epistemological and political value of local knowledge" (London, Zimmerman *et al.* 2003, p. 37). PAR is based within communities and it is a form of community research which acknowledges the importance of local knowledge. The value placed on local knowledge by PAR acknowledges the culture and values of that community rather than trying to superimpose middle-class values onto its young people who will resent the imposition of values that are not their own feel aggrieved by the implied suggestion that their existing values should be replaced by "better" middle-class values. Berg *et al.* (2009) used this model to challenge the risky behaviour of urban youth in Connecticut.

> The strategy used in YARP begins with individuals, forges group identity and cohesion, trains youth as a group to use research to understand their community better (formative community ethnography), and then engages them in using the research for social action at multiple levels in community settings (policy, school-based, parental etc.) Engagement in community activism has, in turn, an effect on individual and collective efficacy and individual behavioural change.

<div align="right">(Berg, et al. 2009, pp. 345–359)</div>

Berg *et al.* (2009) study improved the participant's overall attitude towards education, developed socially critical analytic skills and reduced negative risk-taking activity in the participants such as risky sexual behaviour and drug taking. Most importantly participants in the Connecticut study found the research had instilled self-efficacy in them and had given them a sense of hope for the future.

Research carried out in the United States, the lower East side of New York, into lack of educational resources and how they affect stereotypes of young black women, (Rios-Moore *et al.* 2004) found that stereotypes that were reinforced by in the community limited not only the women but also led to an oversimplification of the problem which led to a "culture of poverty". Participant observers found that the stereotyping of young women in their community became internalised and reduced the expectations of these young women of themselves.

> The stereotype of young urban womyn being uneducated is often predicated by the fact that many urban schools that are populated by 'minorities' are under-servicing their population, with little resources to facilitate the learning of urban youth. Often, the depressive school environment leads some urban youth to drop out in an effort towards self-preservation.[7]

<div align="right">(Rios-Moore et al. 2004, p. 6)</div>

Culturally embedded stereotypes about young black women present even in the schools they attended acted as a push factor for urban youth and became a self-fulfilling prophecy. Through their research, these women were able to break the stereotypes acting upon them and identify community building needs or social capital deficits in their community and quash the illusory beliefs that were oppressing them. The participants rejected the dominant stereotypes of themselves and were able to challenge assumptions made about them by themselves and others and were empowered to advocate for positive change in their communities. Research carried out by Anyon and Naughton (2003) in West Oakland California found;

---

[7] Womyn – a word used to describe women without being a derivative of the word man suggesting that a woman is more than a derivative of a man and is a being in her own right without the need of a man to help define her.

The participants in West Oakland increased their ability to manage their time, speak in public, present information, facilitate meetings, work in groups, resolve conflicts, and think critically. They also developed greater self-confidence and community awareness as well as a sense of civic responsibility and a stronger belief in their ability to make needed changes in their community.

(Anyon and Naughton 2003, p. 2)

The research process was of benefit to these young people when the primary focus of the project shifted from preparing the young people for labour market integration to preparing them to take active leadership roles within their community which most likely increases their employability at the same time. Youth Engaged in Leadership and Learning (YELL) participants engaged in ethnographic research with a view towards improving their schools. Participant researchers held a forum after one of year research and invited teachers, local people and policy makers to discuss the focus of their research the following year. Rather than researching problems affecting their own lives they sought advice from their communities about issues affecting them which in some way also affects their lives. Young people who seek to improve their communities should in theory benefit indirectly by having nicer communities to live in.

Participant researchers in the YELL programme from the first year returned to act as mentors to new participants. In this way, new participants were able to learn from their peers. Community links were forged through their forum. Some participants grades suffered initially and some participants were forbidden from return by their parents, due to an unclear set of expectations being given to participants at the beginning of the programme. Participants were given after-school classes facilitated by adults but with a focus on peer learning. Peer learning may yield superior learning outcomes for young people. Barkley, Cross *et al.* (2005, p. 17) acknowledge benefits of peer learning which relate to social learning, "in extensive meta-analyses across hundreds of studies, cooperative arrangements were found superior to either competitive or individualistic structures on a variety of outcome measures, generally showing higher achievement, higher- level reasoning, more frequent generation of ideas and solutions, and a greater transfer of what is learned in one situation to another". Adults are sometimes less credible than young people in their peer groups, having strong mentors to participate in the study and act as role models for younger participants was a way of increasing the credibility of the mentors. In the YELL study learners critically examined their place in society and how institutions acted upon them. They were empowered to take action, young people were able to reach beyond their traditional sphere of power and exercise their personal efficacy on the wider community and their school.

In Redwood City California a Community Youth Researchers (CYRs) were challenged to evaluate procedures at a new family centre in their school. There were tensions relating to the interaction of CYRs and adults, relating to the expectations about what the project would do and when presenting to adults the CYRs often had misconceptions as to the influence wielded by their audiences. Fernández (2002, p 8) comments that the benefits of young people acting for the benefit of their communities creates greater opportunities for them and other young people in their communities, "the results are showing not only in greater resources and services but also in the number of opportunities that are surfacing for young people and that youth themselves are creating in playing a more active role in shaping their community". The CYRs surprised adult allies in that they wanted to be not only involved in projects that they had started but in other projects in which they felt they could make a positive contribution. When they began to apply their research skills to issues in their communities they began to envision for themselves other projects which could benefit from their skills and in doing so showed that they had achieved an extended abstract level of thinking about how they used their skills to the benefits of their communities and that they could evaluate and create new projects within their communities. Not only is youth involvement in the tackling of social issues necessary but that without it community projects can suffer as young people are the often the most reactive to community issues.

> Separated from youth involvement, community development initiatives also suffer. In the absence of youth leadership, programmes, organizations, and communities fail to reflect young people's needs and aspirations, and development processes lose young people's energy and knowledge. Young people's needs are often indicators of the most critical issues facing the community at large.

(London *et al.* 2003, pp. 33-47)

Young people who are involved in social projects have an important contribution to make and their voice though often easy to dismiss as important because if we refuse to listen to our young people our communities will suffer. Alienated youth will look for alternative outlets for their energies which may be to the detriment of their communities. Service learning is an idea that learners should learn while in the service of their communities and for the service of their communities. Service learning seeks to cover the material on the curriculum while simultaneously providing a social benefit to the community. It promotes civic engagement, and allows young people to make a contribution to their communities. Service Learning has the power to awaken critical consciousness in the minds of young people while at the same time developing skills to address social disparity, "participatory action research as service-learning highlights critical thinking, research, awareness of power and privilege,

reciprocal relations, and context, and the idea that research processes and results are simultaneously learning and community service" (Schensul and Berg 2004, pp. 76-88).

An initiative by the California Department of Public Health involving seven schools and an average of ten to twenty youth leaders and an adult ally adopted the following process for promoting healthy eating in their schools.

1.   *Identify the issue or problem of greatest interest and relevance to the youth team.*

2.   *Define what is known about that issue or problem.*

3.   *Identify what additional information is needed to understand the issue.*

4.   *Determine what methods and approach will be used to collect information and then work together as a team to accomplish this.*

5.   *Use the information for education, understanding, strategic action, and/or community change.*

(California Department of Health 2012, p.8)

As part of the RAP programme, which was used as one of the interventions in this research, youth researchers were asked to identify the problem that was of greatest relevance to them, to research a problem that affected their own life. Though there was considerable overlap between projects and some learners chose research topics that were the same they were not all researching the same problem as part of a team for their mini-research projects. They were allowed to present their findings in teams as standing up in front of a room full of people some of which were strangers can be a daunting experience for a young person. There was also a focus in coming up with solutions to the problem they were researching. Youth researchers were frequently asked, "now that you know more about the problem what can we do about it?" Learners then took action on the problem which is discussed further in the next chapter.

In the study conducted by the California Department of Public Health (2012) survey information included as part of the research undertaken in some of the schools indicated that students would not be likely to participate in bike to school schemes as they did not own bicycles. This is an excellent example of how youth research can affect policy. The young people who conducted the research instead suggested a walk to school initiative. The steps identified above might be used as a guideline for the implementation of any YPAR project. YPAR is useful to help young people recognise how ideology can influence their lives "these controlling interests may take on the form of white supremacy, capitalism, sexism, homophobia, or xenophobia—all of which is meant to provide certain people with power at the expense of subordinating others, many others" (Cammarota and

Fine 2008, p. 3). ESLs typically come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, migrant backgrounds or have left mainstream schooling because of bullying. YPAR is a useful tool for the implementation of critical pedagogy with ESLs.

In a national evaluation of Youth Work in England, Merton (2004) found that allowing young people to come up with their own solutions to problems they face had a lasting positive effect. YPAR is, therefore, a suitable research tool in Youth Work/ESL education as the challenge of working with a group to solve problems relating to the group is a positive social behaviour. It is particularly apt as many of the young people involved have become excluded on the basis of negative or anti-social behaviour.

2.7 ESL Centres

There is no accounting mechanism for care. It is an abstract concept that has no recognised measurable monetary benefit or payout from the time investment in young people. hooks comments on the need for empathy and compassion over materialistic success, "the absence of a sustained focus on love in progress circles arises from a collective failure to acknowledge the needs of the spirit and an overemphasis on material concerns. Without love, our efforts to liberate ourselves and our world community from oppression and exploitation are doomed" (hooks 1994, p. 289). While it is debatable whether making money should not be the goal of a person's life and though money is important the self-worth of young people should not be based on the financial resources available to them nor should they directed into low skilled repetitive labour the fruits of which they are alienated from.

Language and culture that are associated with the working class are repressed in schools that affirm the importance of the identity and culture of the upper and middle classes, "within the educational system all the authority remains vested in the middle classes. Not only do they run the system, the system itself is one which valorises middle-rather than working-class cultural capital" (Reay 2006, p 294). This can lead to a marginalisation of working-class children, migrants and minority groups who may be already be suffering from marginalisation from external factors outside the school. "Social class differences in aspirations to higher education were evident as early as junior cycle" (Mc Coy *et al.* 2014, p. 17) The school may be the site where children experience social stratification and become aware of their position in society predetermined by the standing of their parents and may function more as a site of social reproduction rather than a site that fosters the development of each child's unique abilities.

The function of the teacher is debatable. While some may argue that the purpose of teaching is to develop the learner's skills so that they are prepared for the labour market others may argue that the purpose of teaching is to cultivate a well-rounded individual. There is a pressure on teachers to reproduce the cultural norms of the society in which they practice their trade. The function of the ESL teacher and the ESL centre may be different from the function of a teacher in the mainstream. There exists a huge pressure on students and teachers in the mainstream to achieve academically and score highly on the points system as this is an easily measurable and comparable metric of success and often determines if the child will progress to third level education. The ESL teacher is an activist working toward a more equal society. The ESL teacher must not blindly accept the edicts of policy but be guided by the needs of the learner.

> The profession has a great and honourable tradition, extending from the dawn of history until recent times, but any teacher in the modern world who allows himself to be inspired by the ideals of his predecessors is likely to be made sharply aware that it is not his function to teach what he thinks, but to instil such beliefs and prejudices as are thought useful by his employers.

(Russell 1950, p. 112)

Though Russell's comments were made about the modern world of the fifties his comments remain relevant today in post-modern society. Teaching and schooling may be regarded as being contributors to social reproduction, reproducing the same class inequalities, prejudices and belief systems that are dominant within the society in which the school is located. Though it is important to satisfy to some extent the gaols of the funders, Connolly (2013, p. 15) is explicit on the position of adult educators, "the first responsibility is to the learners, individually and collectively". While Youthreach centres are staffed with trained counsellors due to the nature of their contracts they may only be available for two or three hours a week "in particular, it urges that staff training and support should be continued and that within ETB Youthreach Centres, permanent contracts for part-time staff should be considered" NESF (2002, p. 69). Youthreach teachers are often employed on sporadic short-term contracts and might only work two or three hours a week in a given centre. This has a demoralising effect and may serve to challenge the commitment of teachers to the learners within a centre, as they are never sure how long their employment will last. This problem was identified by the Inspectorate (2010) *"differing conditions of employment for staff members led to low morale in a few centres, and this affected the management of the centre and contributed to learners' difficulties"* (Inspectorate 2010, p. 18). The Inspectorate report came during a serious economic recession, Connolly (2013 p. 15) describes how adult education programmes were targeted, "public spending was targeted, the recession was used as a Trojan Horse to attack the

progress made in civil society in the work towards equality". Youthreach centres also require a different type of teaching that first recognises that the learners have already been failed by mainstream education and second that a new approach is necessary.

A study similar to this one, of ESLs, conducted in one Youthreach centre with twenty participants aged 15 – 18, obtained the views of ESLs about their teachers, "a significant finding is that for most of the sample their reason for leaving early was that they disliked school. Respondents recalled with resentment, even bitterness, experiences wherein they appeared to be treated disrespectfully or were more or less ignored within the classroom" (Leonard and Walsh 1998, p 2). Students included in the study reported feeling excluded from their teacher's sphere of attention, which later resulted in disaffection and psychological withdrawal before eventual physical withdrawal. Teachers included in the study who were identified as being "ok" by learners had the following characteristics.

> They appear to have a positive rather than a negative view which results in their acknowledging that problems such as lower ability and shorter attention span for classroom learning require a special approach with some pupils rather than a labelling of them as 'no-hopers'. In particular, they indicated their perception of a need to adopt a flexible non-authoritarian style of teacher-pupil relationship within the classroom.

(Leonard and Walsh, 1998 p 4)

Human beings are social animals and culture is a driving force for the preservation and transmission of knowledge. Culture is part of our daily lives, determines our behaviour and the language we speak, and governs our interactions with each other so seamlessly that most of the time we are unaware of it, in the same way in which a fish is unaware that it is in the sea. When culture becomes a push factor in ESL then the fish leaves the mainstream. Bertrand Russell refers to the need for teachers to have an authentic care for their learners "no man can be a good teacher unless he has feelings of warm affection towards his pupils and a genuine desire to impart to them what he himself believes to be of value" (Russell 1950, p. 118). In a culture where money is the primary measure of success, there is a tendency to believe that to be without money is to be a failure. Stokes (2000) states that Youthreach should be a "suite of services and programmes aimed at combatting social exclusion and youth unemployment through the promotion of personal development and lifelong learning". The ESL school seeks to return to young people their sense of value while at the same time addressing any personal difficulties that have caused either young person to fail in the mainstream or the mainstream to fail the young person. The question of blame is an important one to address with ESLs. It is not always obvious to either the ESLs or their teachers why they did not fit in well with the mainstream schooling system. Enrolment in an ESL centre such as Youthreach might

be celebrated as a decision on the part of the ESL to continue with education rather than a revision of their perceived failings in the mainstream. In this way the perception of involvement in the programme shifts from "ending up" in Youthreach to making a positive decision to resume ones education.

Counsellors are available on site in all Youthreach centres to deal with mental health issues relating to ESL, "in a survey of VEC Youthreach Centres, 88% of centre managers referred to the need for counselling and 66% highlighted the need for psychological support. Key reasons for support include substance abuse and severe emotional/behavioural difficulties including offending, aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour" (National Economic and Social Forum 2002, pp. 68-69). Links between ESL and involvement in criminality are strong but may be rooted largely in difficulties relating to substance abuse as a coping mechanism for emotional difficulty. The large number of Youthreach centre managers who claim the need for psychological support for learners strongly points to a link between ESL and mental health issues. Barnardos (2009) report that ESLs report lower levels of general health and report more depression and anxiety. The Inspectorate (2010) reports, "all centres experienced difficulties in accessing appropriate inter-agency support, particularly in dealing with learners showing elements of psychiatric disorder, low levels of emotional intelligence, or significant cognitive difficulties" (Inspectorate 2010, p. 8). Teaching in a Youthreach centre requires more than the ability to teach but also to be aware of the mental health and well-being of the learners.

Stokes (2000) comments on the increased levels of stress experienced by Youthreach staff and highlights the need to support staff in difficulty. The report poses the question "where does Youthreach draw the line?" (Stokes 2000, p. 32). The question is asked in relation to learners who have emotional, behavioural and substance abuse issues. Gordon (2017) reports on the role of Youthreach teachers in alleviating some of the effects of adverse childhood experience, she indicates that teachers provide strong mentorship, develop cognition skills and model self-regulation attention and behaviour. "The principal focus for the teacher is on the creation of a connection with the young person, which involves trying to understand where they are coming from, managing their own reactions carefully, modelling emotional regulation, avoiding power struggles and being careful not to reinforce negative internal working models by causing humiliation or experiences of rejection" (Gordon 2017, p. 10). This represents a significant amount of pressure on the Youthreach teacher not only to deal with emotional outbursts and behavioural difficulties rooted in adverse childhood experiences but also to respond to them appropriately and professionally without any emotional stress reactions of their own.

2.7.1 Andragogy in ESL centres

Engaging with adult learners requires a change in the teaching approach in recognition that the learners are no longer children and their learning styles will have shifted. Andragogy is the practice of teaching adult learners. Their experience can be useful when it allows the learner to make connections with something that happened in the past in their learning but it can also be harmful when their previous experiences of teaching and learning were negative. Knowles comments that ESL teachers and adult educators use the cultural background and experiences of their learners as learning tools, "andragogues convey their respect for people by making use of their experience as a resource for learning" (Knowles 1973, p. 142). Does identity enable action and participation?

Identity is a vehicle for participation in the social world, but it can also lead to non-participation. Prior experiences gained from a culture that does not value education can lead to adults not wanting to learn or being convinced that they are incapable or unsuited to learning. Adult educators who are aware of the possibility of such prejudice to learning can take corrective action by respecting the culture of the individual learner. ESLs sense of identity may have been shaped by middle class hegemony and this influence on their sense of self can summon them away from education. A healthy identity is socially empowering rather than marginalizing. Wenger (2000 pp. 225-246) asserts that knowing is an act of belonging. Looking at this statement another way we can say that identifying someone as part of a certain group will provide some information about what they are likely to know. It can be assumed that a member of a sporting organisation will have some knowledge about the rules of the sport.

Freire suggests that critical consciousness is an alternative to the banking concept of education which he declares "mirror the oppressive society as a whole" (Freire 1970, p. 54). According to Freire in the banking system the teacher has sole authority, power, and control of the learning process in the classroom, and the students are meek recipients of the program content, which they were not consulted about. The importance of self-direction in adult education is recognised by Connolly (2003, p 13) "self-directed learning is fundamental to facilitation, where, instead of the teacher controlling the syllabus, the participants control the process, identifying their own learning needs". While a more traditional approach might be successful for small children who view adults as protectors and guardians but the adult mind needs a different approach. The preference for traditional approaches to education over the andragogy is recognised by Connolly (2013 p 16) "while Dewey, Froebel, Montessori, predominate in mainstream education, adult educators call on the learning from feminist education, popular education, critical pedagogy, praxis and social analysis to underpin their practice". A more emancipatory and empowering approach is outlined by Knowles (1984, p 36) who suggests four principles of adult education:

1. Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.
2. Experience (including mistakes) provides the basis for the learning activities.
3. Adults are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance and impact to their job or personal life.
4. Adult learning is problem-centred rather than content-oriented.

Any PYD programme being considered as an intervention for ESLs should be designed with these principles in mind. It is important when educating adults not to treat them like children, to disrespect their identities or to engage in subject matter that is completely unrelated to them or their lives. Learning, that is problem centred, can help adults deal with problems affecting their own lives is likely to be of greatest benefit to adult learners as they are motivated to learn by being able to change their own lives. This is an empowering element of adult education and should be developed both as part of any PYD programme but also in the development of critical consciousness when educating adults. Power is an important element in the education of adults and the transfer of power from the teacher to the learner is an important part of this process. ESL teachers need to build trust with their learners so that they can form positive relationships. Bronfenbrenner discusses how power can be passed to young people through positive relationships.

> Learning and development are facilitated by the participation of the developing person in progressively more complex patterns of reciprocal activity with someone whom that person has developed a strong and enduring emotional attachment and when the balance of power gradually shifts in favour of the developing person.

(Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 60)

The transfer of power is important to the learning process of a developing person but also a strong emotional connection a genuine concern for the well-being of the learner are important to the development of any PYD programme. Knowledge and truth are not completely objective, they are not the same for everyone and people interpret them differently which leads to people forming subjective views about reality and the world around them. Positivism based on a mathematical and logic based view of the world can fail to appreciate intangible knowledge or relational knowledge "love which is the prototype of relational, epitomizes these qualities. Relational knowledge comes from connecting and leads to further connecting. It is reciprocal, not only in that the parties involved know each other, but also in that it grows from interaction" (Park 2002, p. 86). Being situated within the research, within the ESL school puts the researcher in a place where relational knowledge will occur, positivist research methods are unsuitable to research which is participatory because they cannot account for relational knowledge. Relational knowledge is formed within the community and

through the interactions of its members with each other and Park (2002) suggests that "it is relational knowledge that makes it possible to create and sustain a community" (Park 2002, p. 86). The dialectical tension between the complementary opposites of objective and subjective reality and reasoning is resolved through Husserl's concept of "lifeworld".

> The whole history of philosophy since the appearance of epistemology and the serious attempts at a transcendental philosophy is a history of the tremendous tensions between objectivist and transcendental philosophy. It is a history of constant attempts to maintain objectivism and develop it in a new form and on the other side, of attempts by transcendentalism to overcome the difficulties entailed by the idea of transcendental subjectivity and the method it requires.

(Husserl 1999, pp. 363 - 377)

Tensions emerging between the objective view of reality formalised in science through epistemology are matched by similar tensions in the realm of the subjective view of reality in phenomenology. A personal subjective sense of reality is not independent of a shared sense of objective reality. This is because people do not exist in isolation and the environment in which they live and the people they interact with impact upon their conceptual reality. Lifeworld is a term used to describe how subjective and objective reality reflexively influence or bend back upon one another. Adult educators recognise that Lifeworld is not an exclusively macro social phenomenon. The importance of experience in making interpretations about is recognised by Connolly.

> Lifeworld includes the everyday interpersonal relationships, within and outside of the family, where everyone is orientated towards mutual understanding and common ground … lifeworld explained or, at least, helped to explain the new ways of living, new takes on relationships and, particularly, the new emphasis on personal development and self-understanding which has emerged in adult and community education.

(Connolly 2013, p. 12)

The dynamic interplay between objective and subjective reality and how they influence each other is important to the adult educator when considering Lifeworld because the individual's power to shape their environment is recognised. Aware that external agents influence the world around them and from the moment of birth individuals exist in a world that has been shaped completely free of their involvement it is easy to understand how an individual might become passive to their influences. Recognising the power of the individual to reshape and contribute to a new understanding of the macro world is empowering. Adult educators are therefore in a unique position in society to bring their students to a realisation of their own power to shape and influence the world around them. Hegemony causes oppressed people to fight to preserve a system that oppresses them. ESLs

influenced by the internalised stereotypes might act in a similar fashion, doing nothing to improve their situation. In this sense the individual's personal reality is prejudiced by prevailing influences in their culture or environment and the objective or shared reality acts upon the individual concept of reality.

> Critical participatory action researchers are committed to a communicative form of life': they are committed to exploring and discussing issues relevant to their own lives. It is in their first person roles as participants, together with others as equal subjects that they must form intersubjective agreements, mutual understandings and uncovered consensus about what to do.

(Kemmis 2008 pp. 121-138)

PYD can provide a space for young people to form intersubjective agreements with their peers about reality and who they are and how they can act within it to shape the realities of their lives, rather than having ideas about who and what they are delivered to them by someone in authority, a culture industry or dominant narrative. They can become critical of the objective reality which they share and realise their potential to influence and shape the objective reality of their lifeworld just as the objective reality in which they exist has shaped their subjective selves. Through an understanding of critical theory and engaging in PYD young people can challenge illusory beliefs that they are unsuited to education. That there is more for them than to be alienated into a criminalised working class youth culture and instead realise their own the potential to influence and shape their communities and the world around them.

McKernan (2008) accounts for the power of education to challenge the status quo created by hegemony and structurally embedded in the social system by legislation and culture, arguing that "If it is correct to say that the curriculum is a mind-altering device then we had better take the selection and inclusion of its content in a serious way" (McKernan 2008, p. 165). If schools are to become more than reproductive institutions, a deviation from the cultural and political constraints that govern curriculum is necessary. Theories about adult learners would suggest that adults learn best when what they are learning has a practical use to solving problems in their own lives. Freire (1970) suggests that the disadvantaged should challenge the structures and systems that exist within society that have caused them to be disadvantaged. For these reasons the ESL is best suited to challenge the school as an institution of social reproduction through the lens of the critical theorist for this research.

2.8 Critical Theory and Early School Leaving

Existence is a complex phenomenon, how we experience and perceive our own existence influences how we feel and relate each to other and the world around us. ESLs who are alienated can challenge their perceptions; this is explored further in chapter five. Alienation in the labour force has increased since the industrial revolution and the specialisation that came with it. Alienation in Ireland of 2019 might be caused by a whole new layer of instability and insecurity, the casualization of employment, increasingly digital interactions through social media, automatic teller machines, automated checkouts in supermarkets and virtual learning environments and other digital processes reducing human connectivity. Shepard (1977) describes five elements to alienation; powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement .

> Powerlessness exists when workers are unable to control their job activities; meaninglessness exists when workers contribute only minutely to the total product; social alienation exists when workers do not belong to close work groups; and self-estrangement exists when workers view work as a means to some other end such as making money, rather than as a means of personal self-fulfilment.

(Shepard 1977, pp. 1- 21)

Hegel's concept of alienation, in which the individual is socially and historically constructed and can become unsettled by how the individual perceives the world, was further developed to come to describe alienation from labour. The concept of alienation from labour explored in great detail by Marx (1927) and is well understood by academics today. The concept of alienation might be expanded to include schools as the preparatory site for the work force. Shepard (1977) raises the question, does alienation from labour equal alienation from society? Adapting Shepard's question to an educational setting raises the question; does alienation from school equal alienation from society? Kohn & Schooler (1973) acknowledge the link between social class and employment, "we know that occupational choice is limited by educational qualifications, which in turn are greatly affected by the accidents of family background, economic circumstances, and available social resources" (Kohn & Schooler 1973, pp. 97 -118). They suggest that the job affects the person more than the person affects the job. The theory of alienation normally applied to the labour market is explored as it applies to schools throughout this chapter.

Critical theory is a form of cultural analysis it seeks to change society though analysis and is emancipatory in nature. It emerged during the rise of totalitarianism in Europe during the thirties. Critical Theory is a school of thought that emerged from the Institute for Social Research, which was a Marxist "think tank" that later became known as the Frankfurt School. Noted members of the

Frankfurt school included Theodor Adorno, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin, Jurgen Habermas, and Max Horkheimer. They examined how mass culture impacts upon the individual.

> Critical Theory in its concept formation and in all phases of its development very consciously makes its own that concern for the rational organisation of human activity which its task is to illuminate and legitimate. For this theory is not concerned only with goals imposed by existing ways of life, but with men and all of their possibilities.

(Horkheimer in Bronner 2011, p. 19)

Critical theory is suspicious of tradition or established methods of thinking; it sees the act of belonging to a group as in some way limiting the freedom of the individual who must surrender some degree of their personal freedom in order to conform to group norms. Identity or identification with a particular class, nationality or religion is therefore a way in which individuals submit their personal freedom in order to belong. Preservation of individual freedom and resistance to totalitarianism in the pursuit of human liberty became its goals, preservation of the subjective self and resistance to the assimilation of an objective reality created by the totalitarian state. "Critical theory shifts its focus: its aim is now to awaken the individual from the intellectual slumber into which he or she has been socialized" (Bronner 2011, p. 32). Critical theorists examined the work of Freud (1921) to help explain the psychology of the masses and how they were influenced by ideology. "What they finished up with was an explanation of society's capacity to stay the same by producing malleable aspects of the unconscious with the needs of the economy" (How 2003, p. 33). Adorno (1972) coined the term "culture industry"' to explain the commodification of culture being generated and sold to the masses rather than being produced by the masses. [8]

A culture based largely on the pursuit of material success can fall victim to economic determinism. To the critical theorist, how decisions are made can be as important as the decisions that are made. Luckás (1923) suggested that a kind of false consciousness, an unconscious estrangement determined by class conditions, might be acting upon people. Evidence of this is contained in art as it reflects social reality. This unconscious estrangement in ESLs is a phenomenon that needs to be addressed. Social reality refers to an objective reality brought about by social interactions, it is socially constructed. Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemony suggests that ideology works to make itself invisible and works at a sub conscious level.[9] Foucault (1969) in the Archaeology of Knowledge uses the lens of structuralism to examine themes of cultural empowerment and hegemonic consent

---

[8] First published in 1944
[9] Gramsci's prison notebooks were smuggled out of prison in the 1930s but not published until the fifties and were not made available in English until the seventies.

and suggests that their influence is unconscious. Critical theorists combine philosophy and social science to understand the post-modern society's desire for progress and how this desire is met by the culture industry and a culture of mass consent.[10] Modernity can be described as a social project influenced by a capitalist grand narrative that seeks to increase individual freedom and have unlimited material wealth. Lyotard (1979) describes disputes between parties where neither side can accept the terms of reference of the other as "differends" grand narratives are offered as a panacea for all social and political problems. Where such disputes exist they can be silenced by dominant groups through repressive state apparatus. Schools as sites of social reproduction can repress the narratives of the working class leading to alienation and withdrawal from school.

If a phenomenon such as the "culture industry" were to exist then a culture of mass consent in which those who have cultural and economic capital would benefit from hegemonic power over those who lack it. The unconscious transmission of this false consciousness though the social unconsciousness of the culture industry can project the narrative of the "loser" and the "morbid stereotype" onto young working class children. The "intellectual slumber" described by Bronner (2011) that working class children are lulled into is a cultural phenomenon rooted in social reproduction. Encouraging ESLs to present counter narratives or "differends" to challenge a grand neoliberal doctrine can awaken them from their "intellectual slumber" and challenge this phenomenon. Connolly suggests that adult education is useful in challenging the status quo.

> In our identities as educators and researchers, we regard the creative dimension of adult and community education as crucial … we believe that the point of education is to build the capacity of our students to challenge the forces which maintain the unequal status quo: adult education is for critical democracy.

> (Connolly 2013, p 76)

In building the capacity of students to challenge the status quo adult educators engage in democratic activism. The adult educator is in this sense an activist, working with marginalised groups to challenge oppressive power structures within society be they patriarchal, racist or economic. Benjamin (1936) suggests that every work of art has an "aura", the aura is that which is intrinsic to that particular piece of work and cannot be reproduced. In an age of mass production, the aura is lost and this loss lends itself to the type of alienation from labour described by Marx. Goldmann (1964) forwards the idea of genetic structuralism in which the practice of generating cultural

---

[10] Culture industry – A phenomenon by which culture is defined by commercial interests rather than a natural evolution of human customs.

artefacts evolves and must be understood in terms of its historical states.[11] In "The Hidden God" he argues that Marxism must evolve and redefine itself and the proletariat against the backdrop of a declining working class which was suffering because of mechanisation.

Derrida (1967), deriving his inspiration from the semiologists like Saussure, began to examine loaded binary oppositions. The meta-narrative from religious institutions suggests that there is a binary between divine or heavenly powers acting upon the human world and human beings are influenced by these powers. Marx and Engels (1848) recognised the influence of objective forces acting upon the individual's subjective sense of self and established a binary between capitalism and the individual where capitalist powers would act upon the individual in the same deterministic fashion that the heavens act upon the earth in religious narratives. History, education and knowledge itself are determined by economics, gods or monarchic systems. The reflexivity between objective and subjective realities exists and is determined by a grand narrative whether the narrative relates to an economic, religious or monarchical power structure. How these grand narratives influence, limit or control individuals and the knowledge that is produced in the societies in which they live is the principal concern of the critical theorist. These grand narratives are important to this research as they influence the unconscious of the ESLs and the impact that these narratives have on ESLs is important as it suggests that there is an invisible pressure on ESLs sense of self that motivates them to withdraw from school.

Marxist theory suggests that capitalism is a reproductive system. The educational institutions operating within capitalist societies are equally reproductive. "School knowledge is instrumental for the reproduction of capitalist social relations, which are not confined to preparation for hierarchically arranged occupational and class structures, but also transmit the discourse of domination" (Adams *et al.* 1997, p. 5). Class inequalities that exist outside of the classroom are reproduced in the school by the education system, this realisation can be demotivating.

> The traditional aristocratic and early industrial classes were still high in economic capital. However, as the bourgeois grew, there emerged new groups who were relatively poor in this form of capital. The need to acquire cultural capital in order to gain and justify their social standing therefore became all important. Indeed, it is at this point that educational institutions became so crucial as the mechanism for cultural bestowal.
>
> (Grenfell 2004, p. 98)

As middle classes emerged and expanded their ranks they needed to justify their position with cultural capital if belief in meritocracy was to be maintained. Middle class insecurity about their

---

[11] Genetic structuralism – the word genetic is used here in a similar way to how Nietzsche uses the term genealogy in the Genealogy of Morals.

ability to reproduce their social advantage over the working class had to take on a cultural significance rather than simple economic advantage as Grenfell (2004) suggests. Systemic practices become embedded in institutions and departments so that discrimination is built into systems, "oppression fuses institutional and systemic discrimination, personal bias, bigotry, and social prejudice in a complex web of relationships and structures that saturate most aspects of life in society" (Adams *et al.* 1997, p. 4). This discrimination becomes so embedded into systems that the discriminatory beliefs are internalised into the ESL and they begin to believe negative stereotypes about themselves.

Derrida (1974) basing his theories on Saussare's thoughts about language suggests (logo centrism) that these binary relationships privilege one over the other. Nature and self, Man and woman, White and black, Settled and traveller, Native and immigrant, Bourgeois and proletariat, Straight and gay, where one of these binaries dominates the other a grand narrative exists that influences the power structures contained within the binary relationship to maintain the privileged positions of the dominant. It is the job of the critical theorist to expose these grand narratives. Bourdieu recognised the importance of binary privilege.

> Bourdieu argued that media language sets up oppositions: for example, rich/poor, bourgeois/the masses – notions which go to the heart of the worker movement; or, the way, divisions are established between opposing pairs such as 'national/foreigner', 'indigenous/immigrant', 'immigrant/foreigner', 'them/us', and the way 'immigrant/foreigner' are equated with 'the poor'. Indeed, Bourdieu saw in this equation of poor and outsider, a means of ignoring indigenous poverty and claiming, therefore, that 'we nationals are all the same', thus realizing 'the bourgeois dream' of creating a world where everyone is bourgeois and there is no proletariat.

(Grenfell 2004, p. 94)

The creation of these binaries allows for the privilege of one group at the expense of the oppression of the group at the other end of the binary relationship. Those groups described at the disempowered side of the binary are reduced to being the "other". These outsiders have no right to the cultural capital being transmitted in the school nor should they seek to appropriate it as it does not belong to them and they should remain in the oppressed group while the more deserving natives, bourgeois, or rich are entitled to this cultural capital and indeed require it to justify their social standing. This is a narrative of oppression. Examining ESL through the lens of Cultural theory might provide insight into the fields that exist within ESL in Ireland. If ESLs are to become less marginalised and indeed become advocates for their communities, then they must learn how to view their communities through a critical lens. The agents competing for space within these fields influence the operation and the success or failure of Youthreach centres. Developing critical consciousness in ESL teachers as actors within these fields should allow them to acknowledge that

the hierarchical structure of power in the political field serves to structure all the others at play within their centres.

2.9 Demonization

Throughout this chapter the effect of internalised stereotypes has been discussed. Adams (1997) refers to this as the psychological colonialization of the working class; similarly, Fanon(1952) refers to a "psycho existential" complex in the oppressed, Stokes (2003) refers to a this as morbid stereotype, Lamount (2000) refers to the narrative of the working class "loser", while the OECD (1999) describe the "lack of social belonging and the absence of a sense of community", as features of exclusion. Luckás (1923) theory of an unconsciousness estrangement determined by working class conditions, which was described by Gramsci (1971) in the 1930s as hegemony and might be understood today as an overarching neoliberal grand narrative.[12] Wood *et al.* (2012) refer to capital identity projection as "psychosocial malady". Reay (2017) refers to "chav culture" leading to poor academic self image, indeed the title of her book "Miseducation" is also apt in explaining the effect, as shown in this research. Durkheim (1893) refers to it as "anomie". The learners one Youthreach centre in Munster refer to themselves as "scumbags". This is a well observed and documented phenomenon resulting from structural oppression. This observed phenenomenon has many names and is well documented in the literature. Reay (2017) refers to working class schools being demonised with words like "rubbish , bad, sink, and rough" being used to describe them. This section will examine how working class children can find themselevs and their schools demonized.

Descartes (1641) questions his understanding of the world and asserts the need to re-examine it, "whatever I have accepted until now as most true has come to me through my senses. But occasionally I have found that they have deceived me, and it is unwise to trust completely those who have deceived us even once". Adult learners in Youthreach may suffer from this collection of deceptions which potentially affects their sense of self. Some learners may believe they are stupid or unsuited to learning because of a series of deceptions which they have been exposed to in an education system that failed to meet their needs. A system that struggles to contain the anger of a learner that finds his or herself being gentrified in the hope of realizing "'the bourgeois dream' of creating a world where everyone is bourgeois and there is no proletariat" (Grenfell 2004, p. 94) might react by blaming and excluding the learner rather than address the problems that lie within it.

Young people who don't have the same identity as the dominant social norm can become alienated. Young people who identify outside of what is deemed acceptable to the hegemonic power

---

[12] Not published in English until the seventies

controlling the school can suffer even if the institutionalised ethos or ideology does not directly intend for this to happen. Gramsci's (1971) theory of cultural hegemony describes how a ruling bourgeois class exercise power over culture to maintain their power in capitalist society. Marxist theory suggests that cultural dominance of the bourgeois can alienate members of other less powerful social groups.

Deconstructing the notion of what it is to be an ESL, a drop out, is a deliberate effort to deflate the implied failure on the part of the learner. It is possible to reconstruct the notion of failure on the part of the "drop out" in terms of the success of the ESL in identifying a system that was not suited to them. It must first be determined exactly how ESLs see themselves and in doing so challenge the anomie.

> Historically, some of the advocacy/ participatory (or emancipatory) writers have drawn on the works of Marx, Adorno, Marcuse, Habermas, and Freire (Neuman, 2000). Fay (1987), Heron and Reason (1997), and Kemmis and Wilkson (1998) are more recent to read for this perspective. In the main, these inquirers felt that the constructivist stance did not go far enough in advocating for an action agenda to help marginalised peoples.

> (Creswell 2009, p. 9)

The critical theorists of the Frankfurt School suggest that ideology is an oppressive force in our lives as it governs the moral and political system in which we live. Through examination of critical theory and in particular Marxism, youth researchers may become conscious of the class inequalities that have led them to ESL. If we could forget everything we know, everything we have ever learned and to view the world again without the prejudice as Descartes suggests as all we know and have learned has come to us through our senses which are fallible, then we can rebuild our understanding of the world without assumptions we might otherwise make handed down through culture. Through this deconstruction we can rebuild our conception of the world without the experience of our habitus. Perception is skewed by success just as light refracts in water, and the belief that opportunity and success are doled out to those most deserving seems justified. The opposite is also true, those who find themselves at the "have not" side of the binary between "haves and have nots" can be convinced that their position is natural and justified. Through the deconstruction of cultural values, beliefs and assumptions we allow ourselves to apply a more critical lens to our perception. The catharsis under gone by the ESL as they leave school and leap from the water puts them in an ideal position to overcome the perceptual error of refraction and through the metamorphosis of leaving the school and becoming fish out of water they are ideally positioned to become critical.

Marginalised people and communities do benefit from the dominant ideology that exist and oppress them, they have social welfare, school systems, and access to medical care but while they remain at the bottom of their economic systems it is in their best interest to challenge the dominant groups and social structures that socially reproduce inequalities that oppress them. This type of panglossian outlook is fostered by the culture industry to create the impression among the proletariat that they live in the best of all possible worlds and that they is no need to take action to improve their situation. Hegemony is a Gramscian (Gramsci 1971) concept which suggests that the dominant cultural norms and values can cause people to agree to and act for proposals that are not in their best interest. Descartes example of the Cartesian Demon is an apt metaphor for the effects of hegemony on marginalised youth.

Bourdieu (1998) uses the concept of Maxwell's Daemon to present a similar metaphor for social reproduction. Maxwell's Daemon sorts particles moving around him. Warm fast moving particles are sorted into one container and the slower moving cold particles are sorted into a cold contain where the effect of being grouped causes the hotter particles to become hotter and the colder particles to become colder. "The educational system acts like Maxwell's Daemon; at the cost of energy which is necessary for carrying out the sorting operation , it maintains the pre-existing order, that is, the gap between pupils endowed with unequal amounts of cultural capital" (Bourdieu 1998, p. 20). Maxwell's Daemon is a similar metaphor to that of Descartes' Demon. Bourdieu, using Maxwell's example relates the heat in the particles to the cultural capital of learners while the Cartesian Daemon relates to false beliefs caused by internalised stereotypes in the minds of learners who lack cultural capital. This thesis has provided many examples of researchers and social commentators describing the effect of the internalised narrative of the working class "looser" at this point it seems appropriate to coin a unifying phrase for this effect. Drawing on both Bourdieu's use of Maxwell's Demon and Descartes Demon in "First Meditations" I propose the term demonization to describe the effect.

The purpose and value of theorising and viewing ESL through the lens of the critical theorist is to identify oppressive social power relations and make an attempt to alter them, Brookfield (2005) writes that "in line with Marx, Habermas sees theorizing as having an explicitly emancipatory intent. The purpose of theorizing about society is to understand the mechanisms and relations at play so that these can be altered to give greater opportunity for people to realise their own creative potential" (Brookfield 2005, p.152). Marxists might suggest that given the socio economic grouping of the ESL that an educator best serves the ESL by encouraging him to rebel against the bourgeois, but Foucault is critical of this approach.

The way power was exercised – concretely, and in detail – with its specificity, its techniques and tactics, was something that no one attempted to ascertain; they contended themselves with denouncing it in a polemical and global fashion it existed among the 'other,' in the adversary camp. Where Soviet socialist power in Western capitalism was denounced by the Marxists as class domination; but the mechanics of power in themselves were never analysed.

(Foucault 1994, p. 117)

Class domination is an over simplified diagnosis to the structures and mechanics of power and how they act upon individuals who experience marginalisation. Structural analysis allows for the mechanics of power to be understood but deconstruction allows them to be taken down then replaced or changed. The creation of a "them and us" mentality in the psyche of the ESL was not the purpose of this research. This would create a polemical dichotomy that bundles values into opposing ideologies much like Capitalism versus Marxism, and would serve no purpose other than an increased sense of marginalisation and an increased sense of "otherness". Bourdieu is similarly wary of the Demon metaphor as he suggests that it "favours conspiratorial fantasy" which haunts critical thinking and the idea that "malevolent will is responsible for everything that occurs for the better and especially for the worse" (Bourdieu 1998, p. 26).

The habitus of the ESL is sufficiently different to his counterpart in mainstream education to make him leap from the water and become a fish out of water. When she leaps from the mainstream she is exposed to an unfamiliar world but she must continue the journey if she is to have any chance of making it, to self-actualise, to realise her purpose. She has different social, cultural capital and symbolic capital. Her values and the way in which she views the world are different. Not only is she alienated from mainstream education but she is marginalised from mainstream society. Mainstream cultural values propagated in the media cause cogitative dissonance in the ESL. ESLs are often from backgrounds of social disadvantage and their ability to achieve academically is undermined by this. Feelings of inferiority are common in the long term unemployed and those who come from generations of unemployment have had these feelings reinforced for generations. They are perhaps under the illusion that they are not as smart, as talented, as capable and that they do not have the same potential as their middle class peers in mainstream schools.

Critical thinking is an important consideration when considering illusory beliefs or demonization. Independent thought is an essential part of critical thinking so that individuals can examine cultural or societal norms that determine one's place in society. These norms are formed by powerful groups within society and therefore less powerful members of society must be able to think independently in order to challenge the status quo. If the desired outcome is to challenge the status quo critical

65

thinking might be considered a useful tactic for the consideration of the power relations within society. A hidden curriculum exists in schools, which is recognised by Friere (1970) and Lynch (1989) where social norms, culture, and class distinctions are passed on to children which reinforce the status quo. This is perhaps unintended as the power relations and class structures which exist in society permeate into every social institution, the education system and its institutions are not immune, the institutional instruments of the schooling system are its curricula. The permeation of class structures goes further and permeates into the lifeworld of the citizen through the social, cultural and governmental systems in which the citizen exists.

> Critical thinking is the use of those cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome. It is used to describe that is purposeful, reasoned, and goal directed- the kind of thinking involved in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions, when the thinker is using skills that are thoughtful and effective for the particular context and type of thinking task.

(Halpern 2003, p. 4)

A desirable outcome might be an awareness of the systems embedded into culture and society. Peer review offers learners a chance to test their research and understand the benefits of feedback and membership of a research team. An opportunity to analyse the arguments of their peers might help them refine their own. Problem solving with issues that are of concern to them might help develop skills for addressing social inequalities that are within systems such as culture, society and community.

ESLs researching problems affecting their own lives as part of a research community are learning about shared problems together and using their shared problems as a learning tool to make their learning relevant. When they work together to find solutions to the problems affecting their lives they forge resilience together as part of a team and build a communal sense of resilience. Recognising that the problems faced within a research community are often the same can build trust and solidarity between young people who are sharing the same problem. ESLs tend to come from similar communities and though every member of the research community may not be experiencing the same problems they are likely to have some experience of a problem that is a current issue for a member of the research community existing within their community outside the ESL centre. Learning about these problems even if it is not something occurring for them personally can give them confidence to deal with the issue should it arise within their communities outside the ESL centre in the future and empower them to become leaders in their communities.

PYD can be a cathartic experience that awakens critical consciousness. The behavioural difficulties in mainstream schools that are reported among ESLs might be related to an angry reaction to the systems attempt to gentrify them. While the ESLs anger may be simply a gut reaction to finding themselves forced to conform to cultural class specific norms that are not their own, through PYD they may gain an understanding of the source of their anger and to confront and even change the system that excluded them. Oppressed groups can eventually begin to internalise these beliefs into their psyche, "psychological colonialization of the target group occurs through socialising the oppressed to internalise their oppressed condition and collude with the oppressor's ideology and social system." (Adams *et al.* 1997, p. 17) Oppression has a detrimental effect on the psyche then the psyche should be of concern to those who seek to liberate themselves and the role the psyche plays in governing behaviour.

Behavioural issues are a contributory factor in ESL and through an understanding of the factors at play that led to their angry gut reaction to their gentrification it may be possible for ESLs to come to terms with their initial "failure" at school and seek to direct their anger back at the system in a more articulate and appropriate manner. Fanon (1952) writes on the arbitrary categorisation of groups of people into powerful and powerless and how it negatively affects the psyche of both groups, "I believe that the fact of the juxtaposition of the white and black races has created a massive psycho existential complex, I hope by analysing it to destroy it" (Fanon 1952, p. 5). In Fanon's example he hopes to use psycho analysis to uncover the psychological effects of this categorisation on both groups and through recognising and understanding these effects eliminate them through critical consciousness. The problem of who can do research is important in relation to the phenomenon of gentrification though the analysis should not seek to create a binary opposition between rich and poor. Youth Researchers might highlight where gentrification occurs and seek in doing so to confront the mainstream system and challenge the middle and upper class hegemony within it.

The alienating effect of gentrification is not necessarily intentional. The nature of hegemony is that it occurs unconsciously. Adult education in particular is well suited to the discovery of these binary relationship of powerful and powerless, "adult education is a force for resistance, it can make people aware of ideological manipulation and educate them for participatory democracy" (Brookfield 2005, p. 224). Hegemony suggests that people are convinced to agree to policies or courses of action that are to their disadvantage. They are convinced to do so by those who are in a position of power who wish to solidify that power. The liberating effect of adult education empowers adults to formulate their own solutions to their problems rather than relying on externalities to act in their best interests.

The ontological foundation of participatory research has its roots in class struggle. The orientation toward community action allows for it to tie in seamlessly with social movements. Through shared ownership participants are empowered to make decisions about the research. PAR should be a transformative experience, it should be empowering, and given its ontological foundation it should awaken critical consciousness. YPAR is derived from Freire's (1970) notion of praxis – critical reflection and action, learners realise that their lives are not predetermined and that they can affect change. Knowles (1973) suggests that the ideal adult educator is probably an "open and growing person, not a closed, negative, static, defensive, fearful, or suspicious sort of person. He himself is frequently a learner, and seeks growth and new experiences. He probably tends to be spontaneous and authentic, and to feel free to behave as a unique person rather than in some stereotyped way" (Knowles 1973, p. 67). It is important not to idealise the ESL teacher or to allow them to abdicate their responsibility to promote the qualities outlined by Knowles in their learners, however it is important that the ESL teacher avoid the temptation to gentrify their learners and end up alienating them.

> When students witness the validation of their culture within the educational process, they concatenate their identities as family members and students. Most importantly, the cultural substance of their identities feeds and sustains an academic persona. Teachers acknowledge that the students' culture contains valid and sophisticated knowledge; the students thus see themselves as knowledgeable.

> (Cammatota and Romero 2014, p. 125)

Cammatota and Romero comment on the importance of recognising power relations between cultures and where one culture hold less power than another the dominant cultural ideology will oppress the other whether this is done consciously or not. The "bourgeois dream" referred to by Bourdieu in Grenfell (2004) of a world where everyone is middle class rejects working class children, their culture, their identity and their habitus through the reproductive institution of the school and this rejection manifests itself as anomie.

2.9.1 Learned Helplessness

The theory of learned helplessness is based on the three pillars of: contingency, cognition and behaviour. Contingency refers to a person's perception that their actions will have some reliable resulting outcome or not. Cognition refers to an individual's understanding about their contingency, for example a person who studies for a test and fails anyway may believe they failed simply because they are stupid. Behaviour relates to how an individual reacts to his contingency and cognition. The theory might be simplified by thinking of contingency as effort, cognition as an individual's thoughts

about the success or failure of their effort, and behaviour as the resulting attitude and acts of the individual.

Seligman *et al.* (1965 pp. 256-262) conducted experiments with dogs in order to test the relationship between stimulus and response, dogs were placed on a shuttle box which would light up just before an electric shock was administered. In most cases the dogs learned that the once the box lit up they should jump off before they were shocked. This experiment was modified by Overmier and Leaf (1968 pp. 213-217)in which dogs received shocks while in a harness with the same light stimulus, which prevented them from jumping and avoiding the shock. When these dogs were taken out of the harness and taken to the shuttle box and given the same light stimulus they failed to jump even though they were no longer restrained by the harness and were free to jump off the box and avoid the shock.

> When shock is inescapable, the dog learns that it is unable to exert control over the shock by means of any of its voluntary behaviours. It expects this to be the case in the future. We further suggested that the expectancy reduces the dog's incentive to attempt to escape, thereby producing a deficit in its response initiation. And it also interferes with the actual learning of response-shock termination relationships, thereby producing a cognitive deficit.
>
> (Peterson, Maier *et al.* 1993, p. 20)

The dog's perception that it had no control over whether or not it received the shock impeded its ability to learn to jump off the box when it received the stimulus from the light. The same response to adverse shocks or life events exists with ESLs interfering with their learning. The initial negative experience impeded the dog's ability to learn. This is relevant when considering the ESL as the perceived initial failure on the part of the ESL may have an impact on their ability to learn in the future. The ESL may doubt that their contingency will have any impact on their learning outcome.

The harness that impeded the dogs in the Overmier and Leaf (1965) experiment may be likened to demonization outlined in the previous section of this chapter. Negative self-beliefs convince the ESL that they are unsuited to learning and that any effort expended in the pursuit of knowledge is wasted. The ESL in mainstream education becomes convinced of this and leaves the school and becomes a fish out of water. The dogs in the harness have learned helplessness, they have lost hope. The ESL may feel they have given up when leaving school, they may have no sense of control over their lives and they may believe they have no future. The ESL who returns to adult education is given a second chance at education and gives education a second chance. This puts the ESL teacher under enormous pressure. Whatever incentive or motivation the ESL had to return to education if they are

unsuccessful again they may lose faith in education altogether and worse they lose faith in themselves.

Learned helplessness is a term that can be easily confused. It does not refer to an individual who is so used to having someone looking after them that they lose any sense of their own agency. The term can be applied to an individual who has had so many adverse experiences that they believe that whatever action they take will result in failure. Though learned helplessness is a feature to the concept of demonization discussed above they are not the same thing. Learned helplessness might be said to be a symptom of demonization but not the cause of it. However it is important to understand the concept of learned helplessness as it can provide an explanation for resistance to engagement in education that is common with many ESLs. Furthermore it explains the need to restore the faith of ESLs in themselves.

2.10 Resilience and Early School Leaving

Resilience might be defined as a person's ability to adapt to or recover from adversity. It is a feature in individuals who have experienced adversity but where that adversity is thought to be insurmountable the individual might become learned helpless rather than developing resilience. This is a rather simplified view of resilience, Ungar (2008, p. 225), explains how resilience can be a feature of an individual's habitus or social ecology, "In the context of exposure to significant adversity, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their wellbeing and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided and experienced in culturally meaningful ways." Resilience is not only the ability to interact with others with the social-ecology to meet their physical, psychological and social needs after exposure to significant adversity but another feature of resilience is community resilience in recognition of the social nature of human beings. Resilience can in this way be viewed as communal. Though resilience is often thought of as an individual trait, it is perhaps better understood in the context of a group or community. If resilience is understood in this way, any attempt to improve resilience should be taken from within a group or community approach.

Research on school engagement conducted by Ungar (2013 a) suggests that taking into account the effects of different social strata withdrawal from school should not be attributed to an individual's failing but is rather a function of the communal resilience of the community in which the individual resides. "Research on school engagement that includes measures of distal social factors like class or ethnic identification challenges the assumption that school disengagement is primarily a product of

individual deficits" (Ungar 2013 a p. 6). Disengagement with is due to a matrix of influences of indicated by Stokes (2003) that the ESL is not solely responsible for. "Our findings suggest that for an at-risk adolescent population who scores high on measures of delinquency and depression, and is a user of multiple social services, contextual factors combine with gender to influence school attendance, thoughts about school, and feelings of belonging when at school" (Ungar 2013 a, p. 21). The resilience of an individual might be thought of as a function of the support services available to her, her feelings and her sense of belonging. To improve the resilience of individuals within a group, such as ESLs it is therefore important to improve the group cohesion and each individual's feeling of belonging and connection within the group. This requires a socio-ecological approach and requires an examination of the work of Bourdieu and Bronfenbrenner (examined earlier in this chapter) as they explore the micro, messo and exosystemic effects of social capital on the individual. This view supported by Ungar (2013 a, p.24) "our findings suggest the need for studies to account for meso- and exo-systemic factors when investigating school engagement".

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter has examined factors influencing the social ecology of ESLs. Criminality was explored through the example of a city in the south of Ireland and how criminality can lead to the alienation of whole communities leading to a complete disengagement with the infrastructure of the state. Substance misuse was identified as a contributory factor in ESL and its role in the microecology of the ESL was discussed. The participant's research as part of their mini research projects will be discussed further in chapter 4. The role of culture and class in ESL was introduced.

The dominance of neoliberal ideology in western thought and culture plays a role in the marginalisation of our working class youth as they internalise stereotypes thrust upon them by an ideology that links financial power with self-worth. Criminality and substance abuse were examined as effects of economic oppression and a culture of non-compliance with civil authorities. Identifying as part of the working class, which has a unique set of cultural values of its own, can lead to isolation from the mainstream and to a sense of "otherness", a feeling of just not fitting in. Factors such as the influence of neoliberal ideology, and economic oppression which acts upon ESLs in what is described by Stokes (2003) as a "morbid stereotype" and Lamont (2009) as the shadow of hegemonic oppression being internalised as the "loser" in working-class youths were drawn together under the umbrella term demonization. Developing in a social ecology where criminality and substance abuse are more culturally accepted as part of the norm can lead young people who under the influence of these stereotypes to believe that they are as well off getting involved in criminality and substance use as they are not likely to succeed in any case and are in effect "learned helpless".

Though the effects of demonization are strong they are mostly influenced by external factors in the ecosystem which suggests that through changing the ecology and altering the perception of the ESL slightly it is possible to cause a paradigm shift in the mind of the ESL. Mc Coy (2014) suggest that the perceived capacity to cope with school work or "academic self-image" was predictive of post school pathways and performance at school. Expelling the residency of these stereotypes within the minds of ESLs and replacing it with a new narrative redefined by the young people themselves as they discover that they can act positively upon their own communities and in doing so realise a sense of their own power to act upon the world. In order to bring about such a paradigm shift, ESL teachers must act as allies to their charges and facilitate a move away from the dismal hopelessness of demonization, the phenomenon of demonization was explored to include concepts of anomie and capital identity projection. YPAR is used in conjunction with PYD to provide a critical lens for ESLs to examine their own situation and to take action upon it in this research. This is examined further in chapter 4.

This chapter examined some of the theoretical issues relating to ESL. This chapter first examined the more micro issues relating to ESL and ESLs communities and then examined ESL on a macro level examining the effect of culture, identity and class. The reflexive nature subjective and objective realities and how they shape the perception of the ESL were examined. Cultural influences on systems that often have unintended consequences for learners were explored. How the infrastructure of systems manifest and create an alienating effect on the ESL were theorised through the use of metaphor. Demonization and its effect on the fish swimming in the mainstream leaping from the school and becoming a fish out of water were used to describe the journey of the ESL to second chance education. The fish out of water is exposed and can fall victim to negative ecologies as they have left the mainstream. Theories about learned helplessness, self-efficacy, resilience and critical thinking were introduced. The concept of the ESL as a node on a network within her own social ecology was explored. The importance of the ESL educator in being a mentor in establishing pro-social nodes in the real world social ecology of ESLs was explored.

Chapter 3

Research

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The research examined the negative stereotypes early school leavers (ESLs) internalise as outlined in the previous chapter. Three Positive Youth Development Programmes were used to challenge the demonization; Research Action Project (RAP), GAISCE and Canoeing Skills. Positive Youth Development (PYD) is used by educators, youth and community workers, and government agencies to promote the skills and talents of young people and to diversify and develop their interests. To gain an understanding of the factors leading to Early School Leaving (ESL), Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) methodology was employed to identify issues in the lives of the participants that may have contributed to them leaving school. The RAP programme using YPAR methodology was the main intervention used to investigate these issues. The RAP programme and the GAISCE programme were useful for developing strategies to combat these issues and were integrated into the existing programme in one Youthreach centre in the West of Ireland. The RAP, GAICSE and Canoeing Skills programmes were used to expand the social ecologies of the participants and introduce them to other social and community groups. Participants were tested for resilience using a psychometric measure, the child and youth resilience measure (CYRM), before and after each of their participation in the programmes to measure any variance in their resilience. Survey methods were employed as part of the RAP programme and the methodology is discussed. The CYRM and Survey research made up the quantitative element of this research. A research diary, learner reflections and Mini Research Projects made up the qualitative element of the project. This research used employed both quantitative and qualitative research strategies to satisfy the following research questions.

Research Questions

1. What are the issues affecting the lives of ESLs?
2. How can research into problems affecting their own lives lead to positive actions and problem solving in ESLs?
3. How can PYD be integrated into existing programmes for ESLs?
4. Can PYD programmes be effective in overcoming marginalisation in ESLs?
5. Can PYD cause any alteration in the levels of resilience recorded by ESLs using the CYRM?

The chapter begins by describing the research paradigm adopted to address the research questions. The research methods and data collection tools are then discussed followed by a review of the programme design of the three PYD interventions. The sample of ESLs taken to examine the research questions is then described. Ethical considerations for the project were important as many of the participants fell into the category of children and vulnerable adults. Action Research is described as a research methodology which seeks to encourage participants to reflect on their practice and

examine the justice and logic of their practice. Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) is examined as a methodology for describing and responding to the problems existing in the lives of young people. Through engagement in YPAR as part of a Positive Youth Development Programme, young people and adult allies worked together to gain a greater understanding of what is happening in the lives of (ESLs). Participants and adult allies identify changes that can take place in order to improve teaching and learning of ESLs as well as the lives and communities of ESLs.[13] This chapter examines the evolution of YPAR through action research, participatory action research (PAR) and finally youth participatory action research (YPAR) itself as a research model.

The research design and data flow are discussed followed by the research methods and data tools and analysis. The PYD intervention samples are discussed for each intervention and the participants in each programme are described using aliases. A survey sample was taken as part of the RAP programme a regional survey was undertaken and all Youthreach centres in the Munster area and three counties in the South Leinster (Carlow, Kilkenny and Wexford) area were invited to participate. As the research concerned children and vulnerable youth ethical issues arose which are discussed before the chapter closes with a conclusion summarising the discussion.

3.2 Research Paradigm

Choosing a research paradigm in educational research is a complex undertaking. Quantitative research methods allow for statistical measures and are easily comparable. Qualitative research methods allow for a less mathematical research strategy that can allow for a more human interpretation of data which elevates participants from mere statistics. It can humanise them and give them voice. Choosing the *correct* methodology is difficult and preferences of researchers can be strong, an example of how strongly academic preference can be asserted can be witnessed by the outbreak of the paradigm wars of the 1980s. During the paradigm wars researchers tried to assert the superiority of their preferred research paradigm. Punch and Oancea (2014) describe the merits of both research methodologies.

> Quantitatively minded research brings the strengths of conceptualising variables, profiling dimensions, tracing trends and relationships, formalising comparisons and using large and often representative samples …. qualitatively minded research brings the strength of sensitivity to meaning and context, local groundedness, the in depth study of smaller samples, and great methodological flexibility which enhances the ability to study process and change.

> (Punch and Oancea 2014, p. 348)

---

[13] Adult allies - Described in Important Terms & Acronyms, a term associated with YPAR. Also see section 3.3.2 Researcher Positionality

Quantitative research methods seek to confirm a hypothesis, they are highly structured, the structure allows for standardisation and makes coding data easier and the results are easily comparable. Data is presented in the form of numbers and statistical measures, questionnaires use closed questions that elicit predetermined and easily coded answers. Qualitative research methods are more fluid, less rigid and less comparable measures are used to present data, interviews, observations and even works of art can be presented as data. Qualitative methods are more exploratory and employ the use of open ended questionnaires and semi or unstructured interviews. Qualitative research methods are employed more often to discover the "why or what" of the research problem rather than "compare and contrast".

After the division of the paradigm wars, a realisation in the research community that it was the research itself and the research questions which should determine the research paradigm rather than the personal preference of the researcher. Cohen *et al* (2011, p. 23) discuss selecting a research paradigm based on the practical needs of the research, "research is driven by research questions which are often more than one in number and which require both quantitative and qualitative data to answer them rather than the methodological preferences of the researcher". In practical terms quantitative methods may be required to answer some research questions and qualitative methods may be better suited to others, indeed both methods can be used to complement each other particularly when studying complex phenomena. Punch and Oancea comment on how both methodologies can be used to complement each other in action research.

> Action research may involve quantitative data methods and designs, qualitative data methods and designs or mixed methods data and designs – all arising from practical concerns closely integrated with processes of social change. While action research is often thought of as a qualitative approach … it does not rely only on qualitative data.

(Punch and Oancea 2014, p. 172)

Action research was used as the main research methodology to answer the research questions for this thesis. YPAR is a customisation of this type of research for dealing with young people. A combination of both quantitative, and qualitative methods, were used based on the practical needs of the research. Mixed methods were therefore chosen as the most practical solution to the needs of the research. Cohen *et al* (2001, p. 25) comment, "mixed methods research addresses both the 'what' (numerical and qualitative data) and the 'how or why' qualitative types of research questions". Mixed methods research provides a methodology for combining research that allows the researcher to practically address different needs of the research as they arise. It is particularly useful when dealing with emerging data. Due to the circumstances of some of the participants, as they

were children and vulnerable youth, a flexible and adaptable research paradigm was necessary to address the research questions and so mixed methods were chosen.

3.3 Action Research

The action researcher is situated within the research they are conducting which confers certain advantages upon them. Being situated within the research can allow a researcher to gain insights into anomie present within the minds of the participants. The relationship between consciousness and reality might be reflexive or bend back upon itself. Kemmis (1991, p. 65) writes about this reflexive reality and its application to educational research, "an adequate educational theory will aim to systematically distort consciousness. An adequate educational theory will aim to show how the self-understandings of individuals may be shaped by illusory beliefs which are the products of social structures (particular uses of language, patterns of activity and forms of social relationship) which are beyond the control of individuals." Kemmis believes that these illusory beliefs (or anomie) can be exposed and examined through certain types of discussion between participants. Action research might then be an appropriate tool for fish out of water to challenge internalised stereotypes.

Critical Youth Researchers investigating demonization, or what Stokes (2003) refers to as a "morbid stereotype", about how ESLs perceive these stereotypes and internalise them must gain some understanding of how internalised stereotypes act upon the individual and reflexively influence their sense of self. To enable this type of perspective a series of critical theory workshops were undertaken in a Youthreach centre in the Midwest of Ireland to give participants a critical crow's nest vantage point of their own participation in education. Participants were given training in survey research methods and web site development as part of their Information Communication and Technology (ICT) training for the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA). Participants carried out surveys and developed websites about issues relating to ESL from a critical perspective. Participants also produced reports on their work. The survey questions they developed were then included in a national survey about ESL which was disseminated in Munster and three counties in South Leinster. Table 2 provides some information about the ESLs who participated in the project though efforts have been made to conceal their identities and the names have been changed.[14] Youth Researchers have been given aliases to allow for continuity in the research narrative and make it easier for the reader to make connections between what an individual researcher might say about themselves in their reflections.

---

[14] See page 101

In a national evaluation of Youth Work in England Merton (2004) found that allowing young people to come up with their own solutions to problems they face had a lasting positive effect. YPAR is therefore a suitable research tool in Youth Work/ESL education as the challenge of working within a group to solve problems relating to the group is a positive social behaviour. It is particularly apt as many of the young people involved have become excluded on the basis of negative or anti-social behaviour.

> *A second factor contributing to impact is Youth Work's capacity to enable young people to make their own choices and find their own solutions to problems, rather than acting simply to provide information or ready-made solutions. Youth work engages young people in influencing and taking decisions in projects clubs and centres. Young people and workers reported how this can lead to a virtuous cycle of achievement.*

(Merton 2004, p. 5)

Youth workers and ESL teachers can facilitate this type of group action as genuine members of the group. The research is conducted by and for the group. The group members are not passive research subjects but rather active research participants and as such should be able to influence the course of the research. This should provide participants with a shared sense of ownership of the research project. McTaggart (2005) suggests that any PAR should create a sense of shared ownership of the project so that participants do not feel the change in practice was brought about by the researcher and should end when the research ceases. The link between philosophy and social science is highlighted by McTaggart and he comments on the approach taken by other movements that advocate social justice and humanism and their commitment to PAR.

> *Participatory research is an alternative philosophy of social research (and social life [vivéncia]) often associated with social transformation in the Third World. It has roots in liberation theology and neo-Marxist approaches to community development (e.g., in Latin America) but also has rather liberal origins in human rights activism (e.g., in Asia). Three particular attributes are often used to distinguish participatory research from conventional research: shared ownership of research projects, community-based analysis of social problems, and an orientation toward community action.*

(Kemmis & McTaggart 2005, p. 273)

Participants have ownership of the research process through participation in the selection of the research problems and input on the action to be taken. Sharing ownership of the project with the participants and using the research as a method of dealing with problems identified by the participants that can influence the group practice and improve conditions for the community that the participants are members of. Developing a sense of critical consciousness is central to the

development of a YPAR project as it allows young people to challenge authority, the authority that shapes their world and determines which areas will be most affected by social depravation. Critical consciousness allows young people to take action against oppressive practices and procedures that exist within their communities. Berg, Coman *et al.* (2009 pp. 345–359) comment on the cyclical nature of the research when developing critical consciousness in young people, "The process of developing critical consciousness, skills, and civic engagement for prevention among youth who are most directly affected by the issues that they research and try to change requires time and an iterative approach that includes research, action, reflection, evaluation, and further research".

Research alone is not enough to affect change in the communities that the learners are from. The research allows the research participants to develop a roadmap for action on their own without imposing a teacher or management led plan upon them. The role of the RAP programme was to provide the learners with a ready-made support network to implement the action they agreed upon when their research was complete. The purpose of the research community was not only to accumulate facts but to begin the learners challenging the socio-economic structures in their communities and to make them aware that such structures are neither permanent nor fixed and that they can certainly be altered.

A procedure which might allow the necessary change in the group standard is participatory action research. When a researcher chooses to use PAR he is aware that he must participate in each action carried out by the group and becomes in effect part of the group. There is perhaps a dilemma in this as should the researcher assume a leadership role (perhaps dictated by his personality rather than any conscious intention) and manages to transform the practice within the group. Can he know for certain that when the research ends and his position within the groups ends that the transformative effect of the research will not end also? Lewin (1947, p. 34) studied group think and behaviour and comments that change is best maintained by a kind of positive peer pressure, "If the resistance to change depends partly on the value of the group standard for the individual, the resistance to change should be diminished if one uses a procedure diminishes the strength of the value of the group standard or which changes the level that is perceived by the individual as having social value". Through shared ownership participants are encouraged to make decisions about the research. PAR is designed to be a transformative experience, it should be empowering and awaken critical consciousness.

3.3.1 Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR)

Youth Participatory Action Research has its roots in social justice movements and action research. Action research allows for researchers to explore their own situations and practices that exist within

the researcher's environment. Through this type of examination researchers can reflect upon the suitability of these practices to their situation. This type of examination enables the researcher to take action to challenge and improve practices in existence that impact upon the researcher. Action researchers work with other stakeholders to propose new courses of action or new practices. Action research is a way to continually improve practice by looking at evidence, reflecting and taking action. Action researchers in education might use data from a class, school, or community and reflect on it to better inform their future practice. Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a way of examining practice by involving other stakeholders in the research process. A teaching professional might use action research as part of continuous professional development to improve their classroom praxis, however when the teacher involves the learners as part of the research process and seeks their reflections and feedback as part of the research then it becomes participatory action research.

PAR is part of critical pedagogy as it represents a shift from the teacher as the fount of all knowledge to the teacher as a facilitator of learning and a companion in the research process. Critical pedagogy seeks to involve learners in social justice issues. Miskovic and Hoop comment on action research as a tool for challenging social inequality, "PAR is emancipatory and critical as individuals examine and challenge the role of larger social, political, economic, and cultural conditions that shape their identities and actions, in this process, research inevitably touches on the issues of power, domination, and hegemony" (Miskovic and Hoop 2006, p. 270). Action research is a way in which researchers can seek ways to continually improve their practice by reflecting on evidence around them, reflecting on it and coming up with ways to improve their practice. It is particularly suited to studies involving people and communities. Action research is suited to people who wish to examine their practice and have evidence to support their claims as Mc Niff comments.

> Action research is a name given to a particular way of researching your own learning. It is a practical way of looking at your own practice in order to check whether it is as you feel it should be. If you feel that your practice is satisfactory you will be able to explain how and why you believe this is the case; you will be able to produce evidence to support your claims.

(Mc Niff 2002, p.15).

The research strategy typically involves learners writing reflections relating to their situations. The process might also involve forming a research community and developing a sense of common purpose and group solidarity. The research can involve the research community engaging in community ethnography to identify causes of social exclusion in their communities, particularly useful to ESLs researching issues affecting their own exclusion from mainstream schooling and employment. YPAR is simply using already existing PAR methodologies and employing them to work

with young people to confront issues affecting their lives. Through PAR participants have an opportunity to put what to learn to practical use, "they learn that scholars have the ability to make a real-world impact on their communities, and to fight for social justice and equality by putting their skills into action" (Gullion and Eilis 2013, p.70). In this way critical pedagogy becomes part of the research process in a meaningful way.

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) was chosen as the methodology for the Research Action Project one of the Positive Youth Development Programmes offered to participants in the centre, "youth participatory action research (YPAR)—provides young people with opportunities to study social problems affecting their lives and then determine actions to rectify these problems" (Cammarota and Fine 2008, p. 2). What could be of greater concern to adolescents than solving their own problems? This research also seeks to challenge the notion that research is an activity conducted solely by third level institutions.

> An advocacy/participatory worldview holds that the research inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and a political agenda. Thus the research contains an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher's life. Moreover, specific issues such as empowerment, inequality, oppression, domination, suppression, and alienation.

> (Creswell 2009, p. 9)

YPAR researchers hold a philosophical worldview that focuses on bringing about change in their lives and in the communities in which they live. The political agenda intertwined within YPAR is not necessarily attached to any political party but rather simply motivated by social justice. The YPAR agenda is to work with young people to discover how and where socially unjust practices exist through research and to take action to reduce or eliminate their effects. The action should be of benefit to the researcher's life or be to the benefit of the researcher's community or social group. The YPAR process should empower the researcher to take action on social issues and in doing so return a sense of control to the researcher allowing them to feel less alienated from society. YPAR might be used as a strategy for youth development, "in the end, YPAR represents a fundamental, critical strategy for youth development, youth- based policy making and organizing, and education" (Cammarota and Fine 2008, p. 7). YPAR imparts young people with research skills and challenges them to use these skills to solve problems and propose solutions for combatting these problems.

3.3.2 Researcher Positionality
Researcher positionality affects how the research methods are chosen. Positionality will affect how the sample is chosen. Where the researcher is also acting as the participant's teacher there will be a

personal relationship in existence between the participants and the researcher which may also influence the interpretation of findings. In YPAR research the adult ally is a used to describe the researcher positionality. The adult ally facilitates the research and acts as a mentor. The concept of an adult ally shifts the relationship between young people and adults from adult led to youth led with adults as partners. Power dynamics become less hierarchical and more democratic and negotiated. An adult ally acts as a mentor during the research process successful ESL prevention programmes usually involve the use of a mentor, "while this role may be undertaken by a teacher, programmes now often involve other community members, including business and community volunteers" (Dale 2010, p. 39). The researcher in the case of this research acted as an adult ally however similar guidance and mentoring was provided by other teachers within the centre who were also involved in the interventions that took place. Adult allies are not just teachers but people within the wider community who assist young people to conduct their research.

> An adult ally helps youth have their voice heard through meaningful engagement. With support of an adult ally, young people can be meaningfully involved in every stage of an initiative. Being an ally to young people involves a combination of positive attitude, skill and awareness to help in advocating for a youth leadership and empowerment agenda. YPAR refers to a Participatory action project involving young people as the principle investigators.

> (Khanna and Mc Cart 2007, p. 2).

Adult allies are essential for scheduling rooms and arranging times and spaces for youth to meet. Many adults also find it difficult listening to young people and need to receive their message through another adult intermediary. YPAR has the potential to help young people become leaders, through mentorship young people become involved in community groups and are supported by adult allies throughout the process, "Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) is a tool for increasing youth involvement in social movement organizing that can generate renewed enthusiasm for social change and create new opportunities for youth leadership" (Powers and Allaman 2012, p. 2). Youth leadership is an essential element in YPAR and providing a space for young people to realise their potential to effect change in their communities. YPAR is rooted in critical theory "YPAR integrates critical theory, research paradigms that incorporate positionality, interactive ethnographic methods, and dialogic approaches to service-learning. It provides a context for examining questions related to instructional methods, reciprocal learning, information as service, and the nature and practice of service-learning as reproducing or transforming traditional structures of power and positionality" (Schensul and Berg 2004 pp. 76-88). This slightly more complex definition relates YPAR back to power and positionality which are essential to critical theory. Where young people can become

aware of power structures that impact on their lives they can challenge them. Positionality relates to a person's position within society and YPAR seeks to empower youth to challenge their position.

The importance of mentoring from adult allies in allowing young people to develop efficacy and feel their actions will have a positive effect on their lives and their environment is recognised by Bronfenbrenner. "The developmental impact of a dyad increases as a direct function of the level of reciprocity, mutuality of positive feelings, and a gradual shift of balance of power in favour of the developing person" (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 59). The impact of a strong role model and a positive relationship between ESLs and ESL teachers who are willing to act as both teachers and adult allies or mentors can be important to the development of the ESL.

YPAR allows scope for young people to become self-directed learners, "youth participatory evaluation aims to make the process as youth-driven as possible. Youth, for example, identify the issues to be researched, organize, and then implement the resulting study. Adults serve as advisors only when needed" (Zeldin *et al.* 2012, p. 4). Youth driven evaluation gives most of the ownership to the young people involved. However evaluation can also take place where the youth act only as advisers and adults drive most of the research. The differences between YPAR and Youth Participatory Evaluation are more pronounced when the evaluation is adult driven and the youth serve as advisors. This research project was youth driven where the participants in the centre develop research problems that affect their own lives and communities where the adults involved in the project play a supportive role but do not decide on the research topics.

Qualitative research is exploratory research dealing with subjective information from both the researcher and the participants. Participant observations are essential to understanding the research problem, however as qualitative data is subjective to the researcher and the participants in their given situations it can lead to problems based on participant and researcher bias, especially in regard to conflicts of interest and confidentiality. These biases can be offset by maintaining a record of the researcher's initial expectations which can be later used to help the researcher identify confirmation bias. Maintaining detailed records during the research project including data that does not initially seem useful can later be found to be invaluable when submitted to peer review. Providing all the data will allow the reader to make observations that may not have been seen by the researcher. The peer review process is invaluable in limiting researcher bias.

During the course of this research project the research was presented three times at the "*Connect*" conference which is an annual conference of Youthreach practitioners, once at the "*International Research Methods Summer School*" in Mary Immaculate College and presented at the "*Spaces to*

Belong to" conference hosted by Cultural Policy Observatory Ireland in Queens University. The research was also published in *The Adult Learner* (2018). The *"Connect"* conferences were particularly useful as there were hundreds of years of combined experience of Youthreach in the auditorium during the presentations. The peer review process allowed for observations to be highlighted by peers external to the research project that may not have been seen by the researcher. Peer review offers an opportunity to limit any bias on the part of the researcher when using qualitative research methods. This research used mixed methods to examine the research problem so that any limitations from researcher bias are reduced as the qualitative data is back up by other data types.

3.4 Research Design

The CYRM was chosen to address the one of the research problems, as to whether or not PYD programmes can build resilience in ESLs. The RAP programme seeks to challenge the notion that research is an activity reserved for academics in third level institutions and can be used as a tool by young people to solve problems affecting their own lives. The data collection was undertaken using electronic surveys designed with participants. Participants in the centre created questionnaires as part of their mini-research projects, many of the questions they posed were later included in the regional survey. A research diary was used to record events throughout the course of the research and to record details of informal conversations that took place which seemed to raise interesting issues. Learner reflections and Mini Research Projects were undertaken by the participants and were also used as a source of qualitative data. The CYRM was the instrument used to measure the learner's resilience in the centre. It is an instrument for measuring a person's bounce back ability or resilience, in the face of adversity.

Following participation in the three PYD programmes, the learners were tested again to measure any improvement in resilience following their participation in the research. Participation in the programmes was used to promote self-efficacy in learners in the centre so that they might feel empowered to act upon the problems facing young people attending Youthreach centres and address them on a local and community level. The research group that volunteered for the RAP programme were from the Youthreach centre in which the research was conducted. They assumed the role of youth researchers. There were 19 participants in the 3 programmes. CYRM scores could not be calculated for 4 participants as they stopped attending and could not be contacted.

The CYRM was used to test for resilience in learners at the start and the end of the research. The key stages involved in each programme are outlined above in figure seven. The CYRM was used in at the

beginning and end of the three programmes and other data sources are identified in figure 1 which include; reflection, mini research projects, informal conversations and a regional survey.

Figure 1 Positive Youth Development Programmes Diagram
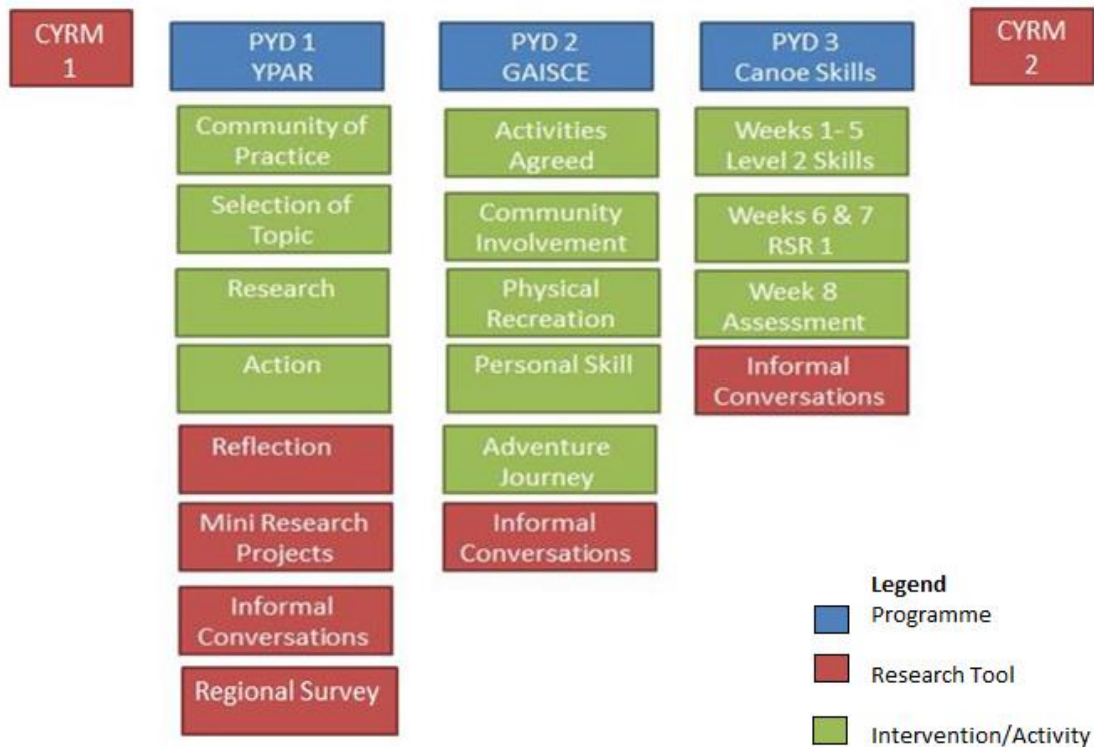
Learners simultaneously took part in the RAP programme and community action projects of their choosing. The community project they selected could be used as part of the GAISCE programme. Similarly, Canoeing Skills could have been used as part of the physical fitness requirement for the GAISCE programme. After undertaking research on a topic they decided to take an action on the issue before under taking reflection on their participation and writing up a mini research project Report. Learners in the RAP programme then agreed a set of questions based on their mini research projects for inclusion in a regional survey of Youthreach Learners. Many of these projects were used to fulfil the Community Involvement criterion of their GAISCE award. These actions typically involved participating in fundraisers or volunteering with an organisation in the community. This type of overlap between the PYD projects allowed learners to seamlessly integrate their participation in each PYD programme.

Figure 2 Timeline
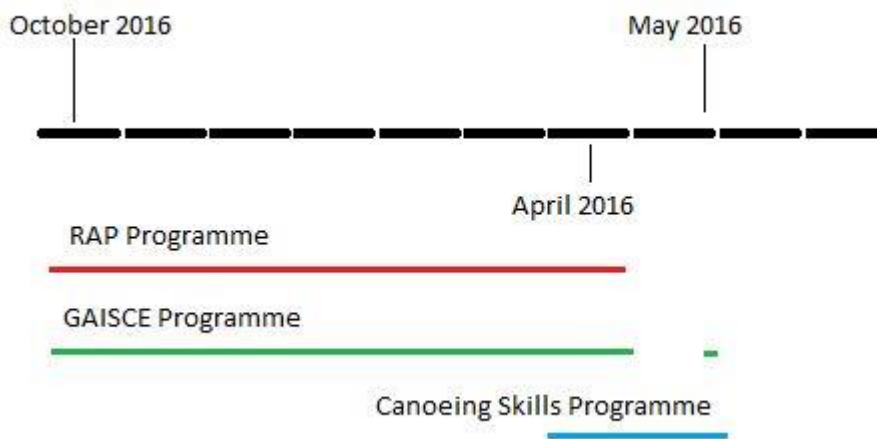
The RAP and GAISCE programmes began in October 2016 and continued until April 2016, the Adventure Journey of the GAISCE programme took place over two days in May 2016. The Canoeing Skills programme took place over 8 weeks in April and May of 2016.

3.5 Research Methods & Data Analysis

There were five data sets collected as part of this research. They are outlined below in Table 1 Data Sets.

Table 1 Data Sets

CYRM	15 Tests
Survey	70 Responses
Research Diary	26 Entries
Learner Reflections	15 Reflections
Mini Research Projects	15 MRPS

3.5.1 Quantitative Data

3.5.1.2 Child and Youth Resilience Measure

Participants were asked to fill out the CYRM psychometric measure before beginning any of the PYD interventions. There scores were recorded in an excel spreadsheet. After the completion of each programme participants were again asked to filled out the CYRM and their scores were again

recorded and entered into an excel spreadsheet. Their initial scores were then subtracted from their later scores and the variance was recorded. Only 15 of the 19 participants had CYRM scores recorded at the end of their participation as they had left the centre and could not be contacted.

The CYRM was developed as part of the International Resilience Project (IRP)[15]. The measure has been used in Canada, South Africa, Jerusalem, China, India, Colombia, Russia, Tanzania, the USA and Russia. The CYRM has been used to investigate resilience in terms of cultural oppression, marginalization, risky sexual practices, substance abuse, criminality, poverty, the aftermath of war on young people and abuse (mental, physical, sexual and emotional). The project was established to develop an understanding of how young people around the world deal with the adversities they face in their daily lives. The project began with fourteen sites across the world and sought to understand the cultural and diverse challenges that young people face in their lives. The principal investigator is Dr Michael Ungar and he liaises with an international team of collaborators to increase our understanding of youth resilience. The CYRM was developed as a tool to gain a quantitative measure to understand resilience, "the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM) is a measure of the resources (individual, relational, communal and cultural) available to individuals that may bolster their resilience" (Resilience Research Centre 2013, p. 5). The CYRM is made up of three sections: Section A contains questions to gender, race, ethnicity and living arrangements. Section B offers the researcher a chance to develop a series of site-specific questions which are answered using a Likert scale. Section C has general questions relating to resilience answered on a three point Likert scale. After discussion with staff at in the centre it was decided that the following questions be removed from Section A of the CYRM.[16]

The centre had a limited number of learners and Question 1 related to the date of birth of the learner and would make learners easily identifiable. Question 3 asked; what is the highest level of education you have completed? This question would identify the class group of the learner within the centre and would then make them easily identifiable and some secondary is the answer almost universally for ESLs. Questions 8 and 9 related to ethnic origin and this would again make learners easily identifiable. On these bases it was decided to omit these questions.

The Child and Youth Resilience Model (CYRM) was distributed at the beginning of phase one of the research to establish a base resilience score for the group being studied. Youth Researchers engaged in mini research projects into issues affecting their own lives through the Contemporary Issues task which form part of the Social Education module and the ICT task of their Leaving Cert Applied course

---

[15] http://www.resilienceresearch.org/research/projects/international-resilience
[16] See Appendix A

while simultaneously engaging in an examination of critical theory through a series of workshops. During this phase of research the Youth Researchers built research skills and learned to apply a critical lens to society. Youth Researchers used electronic survey research methods to gather data while conducting their mini research projects. In the second phase of the research, the process focused on the interpretation the data that was collected and working together on actions to deal with the problems identified in their research. Youth Researchers then reflected on their experiences as part of the research project and the CYRM was administered to the group and compared with the CYRM scores again administered in the first stage of the research to determine if being part of the research community had improved their resilience.

3.5.1.3 Survey

The regional survey was made available online using Google forms. Youthreach centre coordinators were contacted and invited to have their learners participate. Responses were collected electronically and stored in an automatically generated spreadsheet. The survey responses were grouped into 3 main categories; mental health, substance abuse and discrimination. SPSS software was used (see appendix K) to generate descriptive statistics, frequency, histograms, and means. Survey data does present some problems when researching ESLs as they may be reluctant to volunteer information as it may cause difficulty from them or their peers, (Cohen *et al* 2011, p. 395) acknowledge this, "some respondents may be unwilling to disclose sensitive information, particularly if it could harm themselves or others". Though the risk of the disclosing sensitive information was unlikely to cause harm to the survey respondents as the survey was anonymous, some respondents may still have regarded it with suspicion.

The survey was comprised of 51 questions which were agreed by the participants, 46 of these questions used a rating scale and just 5 of the questions were open ended. The questions were based upon the Mini Research Projects of the participants and were non site specific. Cohen *et al* (2011, p. 382) comments on rating scale questions, "if a site specific case study is required then qualitative, less structured, word based and open ended questionnaires may be more appropriate as they can capture the specificity of a particular situation". Open ended questions are more suited to site specific research, as the purpose of the survey was to examine if the findings of the research conducted in one Youthreach centre could be more generally applicable to Youthreach centres generally, closed questions were favoured. Closed questions were also more suited to the group being surveyed as they often present with literacy difficulties and dislike typing up long answers. The choice of closed "rating" type questions also allowed for a greater number of questions to be asked as ticking a box is easier than thinking up and transcribing an answer.

The survey consisted of fifty one questions forty six of these questions had specific attributes and five were open ended questions. This was because the research community felt open ended questions presented coding difficulties and preferred questions with specific attributes as they were easier to code. A further thirty six of these questions had an "other" variable in which respondents could type in a response in the event that the variable attributes were non exhaustive.

Survey research is not infallible; it requires adequate literacy on the part of the respondent, respondents don't always tell the truth, it reports what people perceive rather than what is actually true, samples don't always provide an accurate reflection of the population to highlight a few. However, surveys do allow for truths to be uncovered. Asking questions about health issues depression and drug use in a face to face interview with young people might cause them to lie for fear of being labelled or simply because the question is loaded with social stigma. This was a dilemma for the youth research community as they were aware that some of the members of the group had literacy difficulties and this was likely to be the case for other Youthreach centres. Given the size of the sample population it was agreed that an electronic survey was the best method for gathering enough responses for the sample to be representative and allow for the respondents privacy to be respected.

Surveys may not recognise bias or vested interest in the respondent. In examining the validity of the survey, Cohen and Manion (1989) comment on the issue of volunteer bias, "first whether respondents who complete questionnaires do so accurately and second, whether those who fail to return the questionnaires do so accurately and third, whether those who fail to return their questionnaires would have given the same distribution of answers as did the returnees" (Cohen and Manion 1989, p. 116). The phenomenon referred to as volunteer bias in which the researcher only has the access to data relating to those who are helpful enough to volunteer to be part of the survey. The problem of volunteer bias might be further exacerbated by the fact that some of the target population might be unable to read the survey questions. Though this may represent a short coming in survey research it is hoped that because this research is designed by Youthreach learners for Youthreach learners it is hoped that learners would chose to participate in the survey on the basis that they are helping solve problems relevant to their own lives.

Problems with sampling provide further validity issues. Borg and Gall (1989) discuss the issue of validity with relevance to how representative the sample is and how the survey results can be generalised to represent the population, "the method of selecting a sample is critical to the whole research process. If research findings are not generalizable to some degree beyond the sample used in the study, then the research cannot provide us with a new knowledge, cannot advance education

as a science, and is largely a waste of time" (Borg and Gall 1989, p. 215). To address validity issues in relation to sampling, the total population of learners in Youthreach in the southern area was chosen. Difficulties with volunteer bias are more difficult to address, particularly in relation to non-volunteers with literacy difficulties. Electronic recordings and speech recognition technologies might be a possible way of overcoming these difficulties as learners might have access to smart phone technology and could easily access a static webpage from which to respond. While this was outside the scope of this study, signatures from both guardians and respondents were required to ensure ethical compliance but this methodology may be useful for research relating to learners with literacy difficulties in future.

Literacy difficulties are also often intergenerational, so learners sent home to parents that had trouble reading with consent forms they could not read is an additional problem. The intergenerational nature of literacy difficulties is so important that NALA (2016) support the implementation of family literacy programmes to combat the problem. These difficulties aside, the response rate did not suffer greatly as a result of literacy difficulties thanks to the dedication of Youthreach teachers who were on hand to provide help to learners experiencing difficulties. Traditional research methods used in mainstream schooling might be altered for future studies of Youthreach learners who are already regarded as adult learners so that difficulties in relation to ethical procedures surrounding parental consent and parental literacy can be avoided by treating the whole sample population as adult learners who can make decisions for themselves. The data collection period for the regional survey lasted for three months, from January to March 2016. In that time, seventy learners responded. As a percentage of the total places available this represented a response rate of 6% however as a percentage of the total number of learners who attend frequently (n = 571) this represents a response rate of 12%. Responses were coded and analysed in April 2016 and are discussed further in chapter 5.

There were two samples used in this research, the first sample, the PYD sample, was a convenience sample of learners attending a Youthreach centre in the Munster region and three counties of the South Leinster province of the Irish Republic, as described above nineteen participants were recruited to take part in three PYD programmes. The second sample, the survey sample, was a random sample recruited from all of the Youthreach centres in the nine selected counties and they were recruited to participate in a regional survey. "The difference between them is this: in a probability (random) sample the chances of members of the wider population being selected for the sample are known, whereas in a non-probability sample the chances of members of the wider population being selected are unknown" (Cohen *et al.* 2000, p. 99). Participants in the RAP

programme were challenged to take action on issues affecting their own lives. As part of their research they conducted surveys which were later condensed into a regional survey that was included members of a wider population and could be used to make more generalised assumptions about the population of ESLs in Ireland as a whole. To clarify this point, participants in the RAP programme conducted surveys as part of their mini research projects, questions were then taken from the surveys they used as part of their mini research projects and used in a regional survey of nine counties. Cohen *et al.* (2000, p. 109) define external validity, "external validity refers to the degree to which the results can be generalised to the wider population, cases or situations". The survey sample was used to determine if the issues identified by the initial sample could be used to make generalisations about the wider population of ESLs in Ireland.

3.5.2 Qualitative Data

3.5.2.1 Research Diary

A research diary was used throughout the data collection phase to record quotes from learners and record how the research process was progressing. The participants indicated that they preferred not be recorded. Therefore, a more pragmatic type of type of research strategy was needed to garner qualitative data and informal conversations rather than interviews were used to gather data.

> Short conversations with individual students are likely to be much less structured; an audiotape recorder might seem out of place and perhaps impede conversation in these kinds of situations … it is usually adequate to rely on one's own memory along with a commitment to note taking.

(Cohen *et al.* 2000, p. 91).

During these conversations, a participant might say something that framed the issues under discussion in an interesting way. Prompting the researcher to ask, "Is it ok if I quote you on that?" the quote was then written into a diary, signed and dated by the participant. The research diary was used to record observations of the researcher during the research. ESLs are a notoriously difficult group on which to conduct research, this observational strategy enabled a flexible approach that could react to interesting situations or events as they occurred.

> When the observational strategy is unstructured, the process of observation typically evolves through a series of different activities … as the study progresses, the nature of the observation changes, typically sharpening in focus, leading to the ever clearer research questions that require more selected observations.

(Punch K.F. and Oancea A. 2014, p. 196)

Through the use of an unstructured observational strategy it was possible to use the research diary as a tool that allowed the research strategy to emerge to suit the needs of the research rather than imposing a preconceived research model. The research diary is a malleable tool that allows the

researcher to respond to events as they occurred which was useful as interesting events so often happen outside of a structured process. ESLs can exhibit challenging behaviour and often opt out of activities or more formalised research techniques. The research diary provided the opportunity to gather data even if such an event took place. When a participant unexpectedly withdrew from an activity the research diary was useful as it allowed for data collection to continue and data about the reasons for withdrawal to be gathered.

3.5.2.2 Learner Reflections & Mini Research Projects

Learners wrote reflections with the understanding that these would be used as part of the research. The mini research projects submitted by the learners were included in the research and described the participants learning process. Learners were challenged to research a problem affecting their own lives and take an action on it. A series of workshops (discussed further in Chapter 5 and Appendix D) was undertaken by participants to awaken critical consciousness in the participants. These workshops were designed by the chief researcher for participants so that the basics of critical theory could be accessible to them in a straightforward way. The first workshop examined the nature versus nurture debate. The second workshop focused on perception and positionality and how they impact on our understanding of reality. The third workshop examined economic inequality, Capitalism and Marxism and the specialisation of labour through industrialisation. The desired outcome of these workshops was to prepare learners to become critical of systems that operate around them and impact upon their daily lives. Through an understanding of their own social ecologies it was hoped that participants would begin to become critical of them and capable of examining them with a view to affecting change in their communities. The topics the participants chose to investigate were diverse.

Participants examined issues that impacted upon their lives. They chose issues relating to animal cruelty, childhood obesity, vocational education, race, ethnicity, class inequalities, drug use, mental health and suicide to investigate as part of mini research projects they undertook to develop research skills. Learners carried out interviews with members of the travelling community, councillors, drug councillors, social workers, foster carers, mental health awareness organisers and rescue divers involved in body retrieval of victims of suicide and learners with a group of road racers conducted a focus group.[17]

As part of these projects, survey research was conducted within a Youthreach centre in the Midwest of Ireland and websites were created by participants to communicate their findings. Learners used

---

[17] Road Racing refers to the practice of racing horses with traps known as "sulkys" attached on public roads.

online surveys to collect data about the issues they were researching. Fifteen independent mini research projects were undertaken by learners and of these, eleven surveys were carried out. Where surveys were not carried out this was either because surveys did not fit the research, learners were fatigued with the process, or poor attendance of the youth researcher did not allow sufficient time to conduct the survey. Learners were asked to present their research in the centre using websites they designed and PowerPoint presentations. The purpose of these presentations was to allow for peer review and to give learners the experience of having their findings questioned. Learners teamed up to present their research findings to the research community and visitors from outside the centre who carried some relevance to the topic being researched.

The participants were nervous about presenting their findings on their own and some of the projects seemed to meld together easily enabling participants to present their findings as a group. Six of the participants presented their findings to the group alone. Youth Researchers were very cautious about presenting to outsiders so when then they were asked to do so they found it much easier to present their findings as part of a team. Participants then collectively selected a series of questions from their mini research projects to be included in a regional survey of Youthreach centres.

Youth Researchers then began their mini research projects which were integrated in the Leaving Cert Applied syllabus through the ICT and Contemporary Issues tasks. They contributed questions from electronic surveys, which they created relating to their mini research projects into a regional survey of Youthreach learners. Youth Researchers analysed the responses to the regional survey. They took individual actions on their mini research projects and they agreed on an issue that was of most importance to them and took action on it as a group (this is discussed further in chapter 5).

3.6 Sampling

Using mixed methods two samples were used because of the sensitive nature of some of the problems that ESLs face; a PYD intervention sample and a regional survey sample. It would be difficult to gain enough trust from young people over a short period of time and so being situated within the research over an extended period of time in one centre allowed the requisite trust to develop. "In ethnographic or qualitative forms or styles of research it is more likely that the sample size will be small" (Cohen *et al.* 2000 p. 93). The PYD sample was relatively small as it was largely qualitative and ethnographic. The PYD sample was made up of the nineteen participants recruited from the centre. This approach was also useful to allow research questions to be drawn from observation rather than entering into the research with a preconceived research agenda. Cohen *et al.* (2000 p. 108) comment on ethnography in qualitative research, "internal validity in ethnographic

research is also addressed by the reduction of the observer effects by having the observers sample both widely and stay in the situation long enough for their presence to be taken for granted". Being situated within the research in the centre for over a year it was possible for the researcher's presence to become taken for granted and thereby reducing observer effects and increasing the research projects validity.

"Although it is sometimes helpful to have a specific purpose for systematic observation, general and relatively broad observations of classroom processes, student interaction and behaviour, your teaching or activities in the broader school context be just as informative and often help to identify an area for more focused inquiry" (Cole, A.L. and Knowles, J. G. 2000, p. 89). This is a pragmatic approach to the research drawing on approaches used in auto ethnography and grounded theory the approach taken involved assuming nothing and developing trust so that the most accurate picture of what is happening for ESLs would emerge from the research. Cole *et al.* (2000, p. 90) comments on pragmatic research design, "there is no one right way. What is important is making the commitment and finding ways that will provide the information you need to better understand your teaching. One of the major outcomes of observation, then, is the identification of questions or areas of focus for further clarification and inquiry". Using two samples was a pragmatic design used to enhance validity and aid triangulation. A probability or random sample was not appropriate in the initial stage due to the delicate nature of the issues being discussed but was later useful to determine if the results from the first sample which involved PYD interventions, YPAR and informal conversations were applicable to the population as a whole, represented by the survey sample.

> A probability sample, because it draws from the wider population, will be useful if the researcher wishes to be able to make generalisations, because it seeks representatives of the wider population … On the other hand, a non-probability sample deliberately avoids representing the wider population; it seeks only to represent a particular group, a particular named section of the wider population, e.g. a class of students, a group of students who are taking a particular examination, a group of students.

(Cohen *et al.* 2000, p. 99)

A non-random sample was chosen to discover the issues affecting the lives of ESLs once these issues were discovered a random sample was chosen to see if these issues were pertinent to a wider population of ESLs. The group being studied is a notoriously difficult group to study as recognised by Cohen *et al.* (2000).

> Researchers will need to ensure not only that access is permitted, but is in fact, practicable. For example if a researcher were to conduct research into truancy and unauthorised absence from school, and she decided to interview a sample of truants, the research might never commence as the truants, by definition, would not be present! Similarly access to sensitive areas might not only be difficult but problematical both legally and administratively, for example, access to child abuse

victims, child abusers, disaffected students, drug addicts, school refusers, bullies and victims of bullying.

(Cohen *et al.* 2000, p. 98)

ESLs are a difficult group to conduct research with. They have problems with attendance, truancy, substance abuse, and bullying. This problem manifested itself during the research process as some of the participants were uncontactable during the final stages of data collection and a second set of CYRM scores could not be attained for them. There were problems determining the response rate to the regional survey as mentioned previously as up to half the learners enrolled in a Youthreach centre might be absent at any one time. Early School Leavers have by definition difficulties in their school attendance, this does not mean that these difficulties cannot be overcome but rather that reengagement with school should take place on a gradual basis. Youthreach centres often reintroduce learners into education on a part time basis and try to avoid expelling learners. Alternatives such as a part time timetable are often used as a compromise. Though these methods reduce the number of learners in the centre at any one time these practices are useful to coax learners back into education on a phased basis.

Using theories of alienation outlined in the previous chapter three PYDs were designed in order to promote pro-social activity and help young people connect to pro-social nodes and make connections that enhanced their social capital and resilience. Participants became involved in sporting and community projects, these activities are regarded as pro social involvement to develop the interests and talents of young people in keeping with the principles of positive youth development.

3.6.1 PYD Intervention Sample

Nineteen participants were recruited from a Youthreach centre in the province of Munster in Ireland to participate in the three PYD programmes. Fourteen youth researchers were recruited to research problems affecting their own lives as part of the RAP programme. Nine of the youth researchers were male and five were female. Nine participants were recruited to take part in the GAISCE programme, six were male and three were female. Ten participants were recruited to participate in Canoeing Skills, nine were male and only one was female. The centre refers to a Youthreach centre in the Munster region of Ireland. Youth Researchers were undertaking their Leaving Certificate Applied and aged between fifteen and twenty years of age, their names have been changed to protect their identities. Three Positive Youth Development Programmes (PYDs) were made available to them; Research Action Project (RAP), GAISCE and Canoe Skills. There were two samples selected

in this research the first was a sample of nineteen learners in a Youthreach centre participating in PYD research. The second sample, referred to as the survey sample, included a survey all the learners in Youthreach centres in the province of Munster and three counties in South Leinster in Ireland. The diagram below outlines the participants in each PYD programme and which programmes they participated in.

Figure 3 Venn Diagram of Participants in PYD Programmes
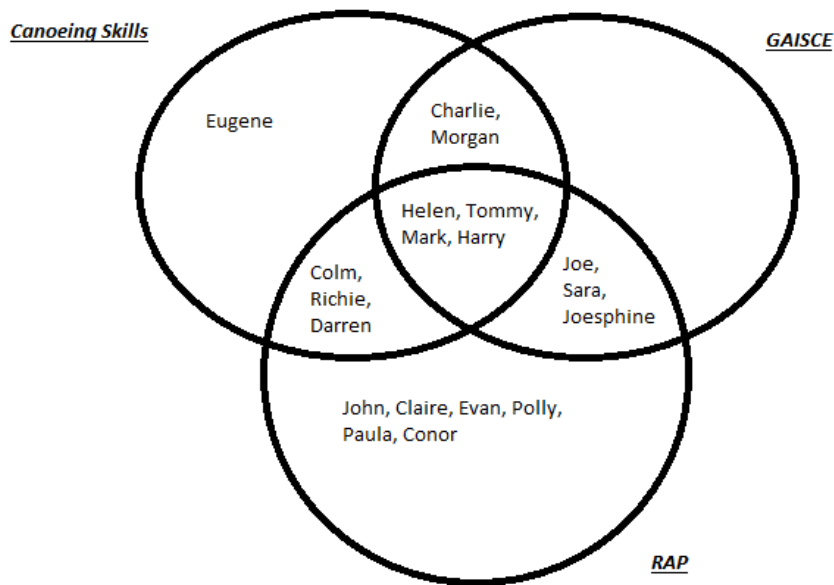
Table 2 Youth Researcher Sample Information

Alias	Age	Identity	Gender
1. John	18	Irish Traveller	M
2. Richie	17	Irish	M
3. Conor	19	Irish/British	M
4. Joe	19	Irish	M
5. Josephine	16	Irish	F
6. Harry	19	Irish	M
7. Evan	16	Irish	M
8. Darren	17	Irish	M
9. Claire	19	Irish	F
10. Sarah	19	Irish	F
11. Polly	16	Lithuanian	F
12. Helen	17	Irish	F
13. Mark	19	Irish	M
14. Colm	17	Irish	M
15. Morgan	18	Irish	M
16. Charlie	18	Irish	M
17. Paula	19	Polish	F
18. Tommy	18	Irish	M
19. Eugene	19	Irish	M

Table 2 presents information about the age, nationality and sex of all the participants as well as the title of the mini research project they completed for the RAP programme. There is a gender bias in the sample for males. This was not intentional. A ratio of 3:1 exists in the sample between males and females, though the Department of Education and Science (2007, p. 185) state that in Youthreach nationally the ratio of males to females is almost 50:50. Four of the nineteen Youth Researchers identified themselves as having an identity other than Irish.

Programme 1 Research Action Project

The RAP programme was the most intensive of the three PYD programmes. The action researcher is situated within the research they are conducting which confers certain advantages upon them. Cole (1991) explains that as an action researcher situated on the board of the company he was researching, he was able to gain "real time" access to key figures in the organisation as events were happening and could subsequently interview them so that he did not have to rely on their memories or "reconstruct" events. While advantageous, being situated within the research is a double edged sword as the researcher can influence participants to produce research outcomes that are desired by the researcher. The participant can exhibit behaviour which acts as a "function of the researcher's intervention", Cole suggested that the limitation placed upon him as a researcher by virtue of his proximity to the research were more than compensated for by "the wealth of data that became available to me by virtue of this role" (Cole 1991 pp. 161-165). The RAP programme was the most data intensive of the programmes. The RAP programme used YPAR methodology that needs further explanation than the methods employed with the other programmes.

Figure 4 RAP Programme (26 Weeks 45 hours in total)
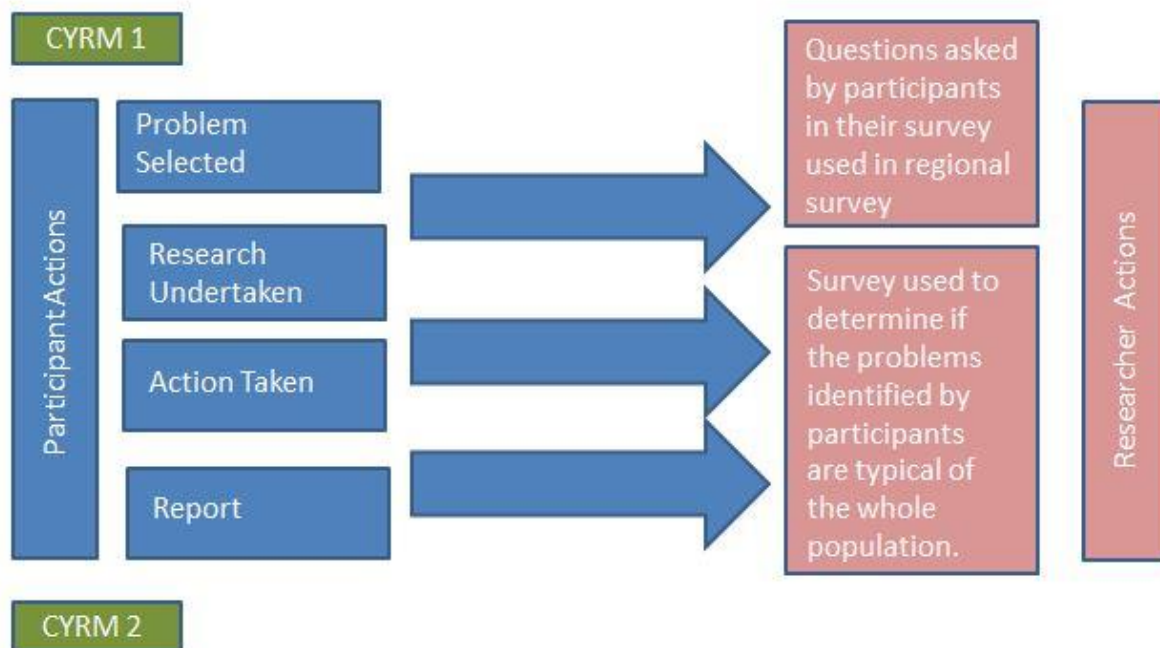
Participants in the RAP programme undertook the CYRM to determine their base score before the programme began. Participants then selected a problem affecting their own lives, conducted research about the problem, engaged in an action to doing something positive about the problem and finally wrote a report on the action they had taken. Researcher actions in the RAP programme were to examine the types of problems identified by the participants. Then, using the questions asked by the participants about the problem to their peer group within the centre, expand the sample to Youthreach trainees in other centres. Other centres included all the Youthreach centres in the province of Munster and three counties in South Leinster; Kilkenny, Carlow and Wexford. This was done to examine whether these problems were typical of ESLs as a whole using survey research methods. Finally the CYRM was used to measure any improvement in resilience as a result of participation in the programme.

This programme incorporated elements of YPAR and sought to challenge the participants to research a problem affecting their own lives and take action upon it. In this programme participants acted as youth researchers.

Table 3 Participants in each Programme[18]

Participant Name	Only RAP	Only Canoeing Skills	RAP & GAISCE	RAP & Canoeing Skills	Canoeing Skills & GAISCE	All 3 Programmes
Helen						X
Tommy						X
Mark						X
Harry						X
Colm				X		
Richie				X		
Darren				X		
Joe			X			
Sarah			X			
Josephine			X			
John	X					
Claire	X					
Evan	X					
Polly	X					
Paula	X					
Conor	X					
Eugene		X				
Morgan					X	
Charlie					X	

As this programme was integrated with elements of two of the LCA students tasks, the ICT task and the Contemporary Issues tasks which participants were already doing it had the highest number of participants. There were sixteen participants in total but resilience scores were calculated for only

---

[18] For a more detailed breakdown of participants in each programme see Appendix P

12, as Richie, Conor, Colm and Paula left the Youthreach programme before the completion of the research.

YPAR is emancipatory in nature and seeks to empower young people to take action on issues affecting their own lives, "its goal is to empower vulnerable populations, both by including them as evaluation partners and by focusing on issues of importance to them" (Sheldin *et al.* 2012, p. 4). YPAR is particularly useful for use with ESLs as they are frequently coming from vulnerable populations and it recognises their experiences and seeks to make community connections. YPAR seeks to encourage young people to challenge structures of power affecting them that are unfair, "Education is instrumental to democracy, and education for diverse democracy should include information about social identities, group similarities and differences, patterns of dominance and subservience, and struggles to challenge structures that perpetuate injustices" (Checkoway and Aldana 2013, p. 1895). Originating in marginalised communities, ESLs are often disconnected from mainstream schooling that does not recognise the diversity of their identities and experiences, or that in the communities they come from the rules and accepted norms are often different. This is recognised by Mc Hugh (2014, p. 30), "50% of participants came from dysfunctional family backgrounds: a collective term to describe various family issues, including: parents with mental illness, substance abuse issues, violence and abusive environments, child neglect and poor role models. 30% of participants needed psychological support and had literacy and numeracy difficulties". Disconnection from mainstream schooling in a particular issue in relation to members of eth Travelling community, Mc Hugh (2014, p. 32), remarks that nomadism, feuding, marrying during their teen years and attitudes to work and education that differ vastly from the settled community contribute to this effect. YPAR seeks to get young people to critically analyse their own position and challenge rules and social structures that are unfair to them, Fine and Cammorta (2008, p. 24), "we create a politically and intellectually charged space where very differently positioned youth and adults are able to experience and analyse power inequities, together".

Programme 2 GAISCE
Participants agreed an individualised programme with the researcher who acted as their President's Award Leader (PAL). They were required to undertake thirteen hours of community involvement, thirteen hours developing a personal skill and thirteen hours of physical recreation. Participants also had to do a further thirteen hours in community involvement, personal skill or physical recreation for a total of twenty six hours in their chosen specialisation. The final stage of the award involved a two day self-catering adventure journey and a thirty kilometre hike.

Figure 5 GAISCE Programme (26 weeks 52 hours in total and a two day adventure journey)
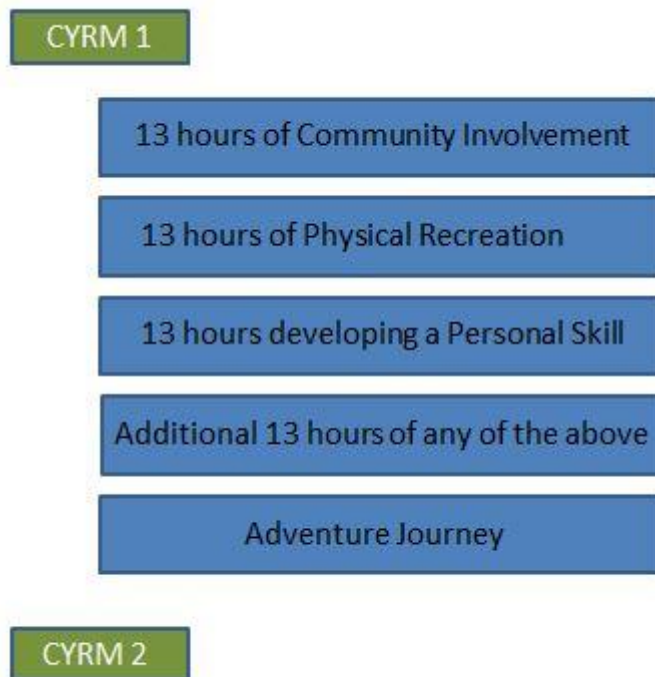
The first stage of the GAISCE programme was to agree the set of activities that the participants would complete. Each participant in the GAISCE programme designed a customised plan to meet the programme requirements as mandated by GAISCE with their Presidents Award Leader (PAL) who was the researcher. All participants undertook to complete the requirements to obtain the Bronze GAISCE award which involves: 13 hours of community involvement, 13 hours of physical recreation; and 13 hours of a personal skill. Participants were also required to double up on one of these strands and complete 26 of any one of these activities and finally complete an adventure journey at the end of the programme. The GAICSE programme allowed the participants a lot of scope for customisation of the activities undertaken as part of the award and in doing so allowed for a great deal of self-direction in their learning.

The GAISCE programme is very flexible and can be easily integrated with other PYD programmes. This is also the only programme that a complete set of resilience scores was available for as all the participants remained in the Youthreach programme. Participants were allowed to use the RAP programme as their community involvement activity as they would be meeting the time requirement for community involvement through the RAP programme. Many participants chose the RAP programme as their community involvement activity but others chose being part of the student council in the centre or involvement with the Tidy Towns project as their community involvement

activity. Participants were interested in volunteering with elderly people in the local community centre, volunteering in the local charity shop and first aid. However in the end opted to use the RAP programme, student council, or Tidy Towns due to the pre-existing relationships with the centre it was easier get their record sheets signed on a regular basis. Participants chose woodwork, photography, cooking, art and the driver theory test as their personal skill. Participants were interested in using the music group they set up as part of the RAP project for their personal skill but as there was no official music teacher to sign their record sheets they were encouraged to find an alternative. Participants chose soccer, gym work or hill walking as their physical recreation activity. Participants were interested in canoeing, cycling, boxing and horse riding as an activity for their physical activity requirement however as the cycling and canoe clubs had not yet been established they were encouraged to pick other options. The Canoe Skills programme did not take place until much later in the year and was a much shorter programme. Horse riding and boxing were explored as options but did not go ahead. The adventure journey involved staying in a hostel overnight prepared a meal onsite and completed a thirty kilometre hike through Killarney national park.

Programme 3 Canoe Skills

This Positive Youth Development Programme was undertaken as part of a Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level Four component award and was also certified by Canoeing Ireland as a Level Two skills award and a River Safety and Rescue Level One award (RSR1). The purpose of the award is to equip the learner with the competence to canoe as part of a group exercising due attention to their own safety and the safety of the group. A full outline of the programme syllabus is available in Appendix J.

The CYRM data collected for Colm and Richie was incomplete as the left the Youthreach programme before the end of the year. The principles of CLAP are communication, line of sight, avoidance and position. This acronym is used to teach paddlers how to navigate a river as part of a group. During the research learners where taught the safety principles of Self Team Individual Gear (STIG). The STIG model was also used during the training for the Adventure Journey requirement of the GAISCE programme as these skills are transferable across a broad spectrum of outdoor education. It outlines a methodology for learners to look after themselves and each other. Learners were taught to look after themselves first so that they would be strong functional members of the team. Their second responsibility was to the team as a whole so that the team could achieve its goals and the safety of the group as a whole was maintained. Thirdly they had a responsibility to individuals on their team so that the group achieved its goals as a team but without risking the safety of the whole group for the sake of one individual. Finally, the learners had a responsibility to ensure the maintenance and proper use of their equipment.

Figure 6 Canoeing Skills Programme (8 weeks 52 hours in total)
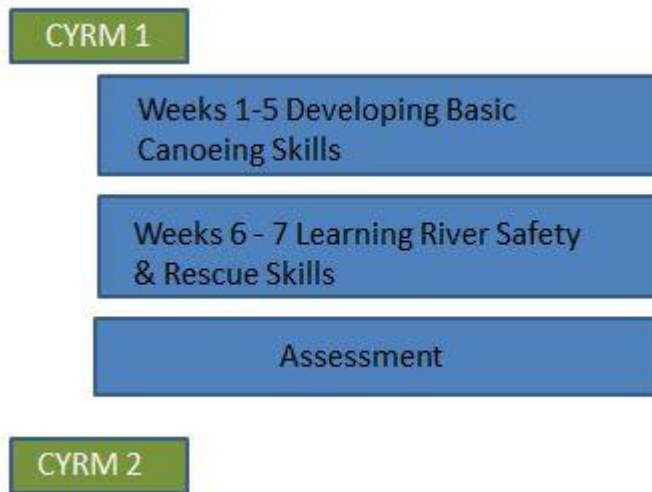
Participants in the Canoe Skills programme spent five weeks mastering essential skills for river navigation followed by two weeks of river safety and rescue training before a final assessment in the last week of the programme. A more detailed outline of the canoeing skills programme is available in Appendix L. Data sources from each programme included; the CYRM, reflections, mini research projects, notes taken on informal conversations with learners, and a regional survey of Youthreach learners.

The STIG model is designed for managing risk as part of a team. Where the risk involved in a task might be too great to attempt safely alone the challenge of overcoming adversity as part of a team builds self-confidence and acceptance as part of a group. Risk taking behaviours are generally understood in the context of ESLs to include risky sexual practices, drug taking, and other negative hedonistic behaviours unsuited to the healthy development of young people. In the context of Outdoor Education however, risk taking is both encouraged and supported, provided measures are taken to control the risk. Young people are exposed to danger as part of a team and they work as a team to get down the river safely. While learning about their local natural environment, learners learn to rescue each other from the river as individual members of the team capsize and become separated from their boats and need to be rescued by other members of the team.

Resilience is made up of internal and external factors. The personality of the learner may be resilient and they may have developed this trait through life experience or because of external support of friends or family. This research concentrates on both internal and external resilience of the learners as they develop as part of a team. Important factors in the development of resilience are perseverance, efficacy and supportive relationships. "Children and youth develop into mature adults

depending on the extent of intrinsic assets such as perseverance, efficacy, self-esteem, and active avoidance of risk-taking behaviours, and extrinsic assets such as living in a nurturing environment with supportive parents, having a non-delinquent peer group and experiencing a healthy school climate" (Liebenberg *et al.* 2013, pp. 131-135). Internal resilience is the adaptability of the individual to adapt to adversity. External resilience is the individual's ability to adapt to adversity by virtue of being part of a group. Though the participants actively took on risky challenges such as rapids and small waterfalls, they learned how to approach the challenge and reduce the risk by examining the river. This programme was chosen to be part of this research as it deliberately exposes young people to danger and fear which they must overcome as part of a team and rely on other members of their team to assist them in their endeavour.

Participants had to work as a team to moderate the risk. More challenging scenarios required scouting ahead and having other team members stand on the bank with throw bags ready to assist a team member in the event of capsize. Participants had to trust one another to manage the risk and to rescue one another, they also experienced fear together as part of a group and they overcame this fear together. This type of team building exercise is useful for building external resilience. Learners undertaking this programme visited three zones on their journey through the programme:

1. The comfort zone
2. The adventure zone
3. The danger zone
   (Canoeing Ireland 2009)

While in their comfort zone learners are relaxed and feel they can handle situations that arise with ease. In the adventure zone learners are pushed out of their comfort zone and begin to experience adrenaline. In this zone, they are having new experiences and are not completely comfortable in the knowledge that they can deal with any situation that could arise. In the danger zone the learner experiences high levels of adrenaline and is out of their depth in terms of the skills and ability they require to get themselves and their team safely down river. When learners enter the danger zone it is important that an instructor is on hand to give assistance should any of the learners panic. This PYD programme took place over eight weeks and was the shortest programme participants under went as part of this research. A total of ten participants took part in this programme while only eight saw it through to the end, and three more participated but did not wish to be included in the research. Data collection for this programme included reflections and notes taken during informal conversations with participants discussed in chapter five. These PYD Programmes ran concurrently and complimented each other as many of the skills learned were transferable.

3.6.2 Regional Survey Sample

The sampling frame for the survey developed by the youth research community was learners in Youthreach in the province of Munster and three counties in the province of Leinster in the Irish Republic. Nine counties were included in the survey including; Clare, Tipperary, Limerick, Kerry, Cork, Waterford, Kilkenny, Carlow and Wexford (See Map Appendix F). The counties included in the survey consisted of forty Youthreach centres with a total number of one thousand learners, being invited to participate. However, as indicated by the Inspectorate (2010), "absenteeism by learners was a significant problem in most centres. Data supplied by each centre evaluated showed that daily attendance was frequently less than half and rarely reached more than two-thirds of the learner cohort". When considering the population size of learners in Youthreach in the survey area the high rates of absenteeism should be taken into account. The total number of places available in the survey area is 1143 however, if only half the learners are attending regularly then a total population size of 571 were available to participate in the survey.[19]

This suggests that the population of learners invited to participate in the survey was closer to (n)= 571. Survey variables were evenly distributed over the whole population. The largest centre had seventy learners and the smallest centre had just six. The average size of the centres being surveyed was 29. An electronic database of Youthreach centres was created to manage the contact details of each centre and its location and the number of learners in each centre. Geographical cluster sampling was used for the survey. The coordinators of every Youthreach centre in the selected counties were contacted and invited to have their learners included in the study. Learners in the selected counties had equal probability of selection in the survey. The survey sample was recruited from the learners in Youthreach centres in the nine counties selected.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Participants in the RAP programme set about conducting research into issues affecting their own lives. The GAISCE programme allowed young people to customise their participation in pro social activities including sport, community involvement and a personal skill with the challenge of an adventure journey at the end. The Canoeing Skills programme focused on developing skills but also forging relationships of trust and teamwork. The benefits of the study are that research participants are able to research and present data relating to issues affecting their participation in Youthreach centres and their experiences of mainstream schooling. Learners in the centre became involved in pro-social activities, developed physical fitness and experienced a range of non-traditional learning environments.

---

[19] Based on information extrapolated from www.youthreach.ie

As this research involved using learners as research participants there is an ethical question concerning whether or not the research becomes secondary to the learning. The learner's interests were given priority over the research, and their learning was of primary importance and the research was secondary. YPAR is a research strategy that is dynamic and the participants must feel able to influence the research process throughout the RAP programme. GAISCE provided participants with an opportunity to customise a series of challenges promoting pro social involvement. Canoe Skills developed young people skills and forged relationships of trust between members of the group for instance Charlie commented "you don't get on the river with just anyone, you need to know they can get down safely and they won't do anything that will put the rest of us at risk" – Charlie Youthreach Learner.[20]

Ethical procedures require that approval be given to the project as defined by the researcher in advance, this presents a challenge as the learners' ability to influence the research should not be compromised. There is a balance to be struck between the learning objective and the needs of the research, and there exists a similar tension in YPAR projects as to who 'owns' the research. There was much discussion as to what questions would be included in the Regional Survey. The inclusion of 51 questions made the survey quite long however this was necessary to allow the participants on the RAP programme maintain a sense of ownership of the research. This is not an uncommon issue with PAR research projects.

> In presenting action research to teachers, we stress that the research objective is always secondary to the learning objective. Thus, if a teacher designs a study to encourage students to participate more actively in groups, and later concludes that it is not working or that something more significant emerges for the study, we encourage the teacher to change the strategy or the focus of the project. An approval process which assumes a project will remain the same throughout the research is not well suited to the dynamic nature of action research.

> (Cohen and Kirkpatrick 2001, p. 137)

The ethical procedures in many research institutions require that the research project be well defined before the project starts, as YPAR is a dynamic research model it was difficult to predict if new data collection strategies would be required as the project evolved. This presented a challenging yet not insurmountable ethical issue. Manzo and Brightbill (2007 p. 33) suggest that PAR is a less traditional form of research and that PAR practitioner must therefore call for reform of educational research ethics procedures as ethical issues encountered with PAR are not typically encountered when using more traditional research methods.

---

[20] Taken from research diary

For the survey sample the age of participants presented some problems in terms of informed consent. The participants' guardians may have literacy difficulties and it is not always clear who is legally responsible for each participant (See consent forms and information letters in appendix N). Learners may wish to conceal the fact that they had been taken into care. Many of the study's intended participants were aged under-eighteen years of age. A higher response rate could have been achieved if students could have independently agreed to participate without the response of their guardians. Some participants were under the care of the state, in foster care etc. The same bias for middle class norms that has been discussed in the previous chapter was present in the ethical guidelines colleges and universities exacerbated the challenge of researching a difficult group to study. It might be that ethical procedures have been written for researchers studying third level students. As many of the participants were under 18 a guardian had to be contacted to give consent for them to participate. As some of the participants came from households with literacy difficulties and mistrust of the education system relationships of trust had to be established between the researcher and guardians. These difficulties were largely overcome at parents' day in the centre where it was possible to address any concerns parents might have had in person.

For both samples to ensure privacy and confidentiality responses were kept anonymous and where participants were quoted their names were changed. The centre participant responses came from was not identified and every effort was made to ensure the anonymity of every participant. Each participant read a consent form outlining the aims of the study was then able to indicate their consent to participate and whether or not they agreed to participate.

For the PYD sample, where comments were recorded in a research journal, students were asked, "is it ok if I write that down?" Learners then signed the margin to indicate their consent to quote them provided they were over eighteen or permission had already been given to participate in the study by their parent or guardian. PYD sample participants were selected based on their attendance in the centre. Participants were free to stop participating at any time this was made clear at the start of every research session.

3.8 Limitations of this Research

The PYD sample size of the participants that took part in the three programmes was small. Only nineteen ESLs agreed to participate and of that number only fifteen were available to complete the CYRM at the end of the programmes. The survey sample was used to examine if the issues identified by this group could be generalised on to the wider population of Youthreach learners. The group being studied is notoriously difficult to conduct research with as they are prone to truancy and

absence which is recognised by Cohen (2000). This represented a significant problem as attendance was necessary at the beginning of each of the three programmes and at the end and at least twenty six weeks of participation was required. Four of nineteen participants were unavailable by the end of the programme which indicates twenty one percent of the total sample size. Literacy difficulties, faced by participants and their parents was also a problem. Though 21% of participant data was incomplete due to the degree of difficulty involved with the particular cohort of learners being studied, they should not influence the generalisation of the findings.

The CYRM was a research tool used to calculate any variance in the resilience of the participants in the study. The same test was given to participants at the beginning and end of the study. Though the same psychometric measure was used at the beginning and the end the time that had elapsed between the beginning and end of the study was over 26 weeks making it unlikely that participants would remember their responses to the initial test when completing the final test.

Researcher bias was a limitation of the research as the researcher was personally connected to the research site and the participants. This limitation was offset by using multiple data sources outlined earlier in this chapter. There may also have been some scope for the halo effect to come into play particularly as participants began to unburden themselves of emotional problems onto the researcher. The study also held scope for acquiescence bias because as the programmes progressed, a genuine spirit of trust and friendship developed within the group and a culture of openness emerged which was in itself a finding. To limit these effects a position of unconditional positive regard was taken when interacting with participants so that they felt it would be ok to give accurate responses rather than responses they felt would please the researcher or other members of the group. A further limitation was that the PYD research was conducted in only one Youthreach centre. To offset this limitation survey research was also conducted. An in depth analysis of learners in other Youthreach centres was beyond the scope of the study.

Funding concerns and insurance problems were a constant worry throughout the research process as even after programmes were under way insurance issues persisted to arise. This was particularly frustrating in relation to the Canoeing Skills programme. These problems took over a year to iron out. It was gratifying to see that the programme continued and expanded the year after the research took place due to its popularity with the learners. This made it difficult to compare with the other two programmes as it was of much shorter duration. It may also have impacted upon the resilience score recorded by the participants CYRM score. Though brevity of the programme placed limitations on the research it did suggest that PYD programmes yield better results when implemented as long term programmes.

YPAR is a relatively new research methodology. It involves the empowerment of participants that are often considered vulnerable. This provided a significant challenge with the consent process. Simultaneously dealing with rebellious youth and trying to treat them like adults while at the same time recognising that they are vulnerable and parental consent is required proved difficult. Consideration was given to excluding participants under eighteen years of age. However this would have resulted in the exclusion of participants in an already small sample size. This would have had a knock on effect on the regional survey. The regional survey had over fifty questions which may have led to respondent fatigue, particularly because of the recorded history of literacy difficulties in the sample population. Some teachers in other Youthreach centre contacted me on this point and were encouraged to complete the survey with their learners in the event that they had difficulty. This may have led to some biased responses in regards to some of the more serious questions particularly in relation to drug use, though other studies have yielded similar results, which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

PYD programmes have similar traits and this allowed for a large degree of overlap between programmes. Some participants took part in all three programmes, some in two and some in only one as indicated in the Venn diagram presented in chapter 4.[21] This made it difficult to compare or identify the specific outcomes of the programmes on an individual basis. Improvements in resilience scores cannot be easily separated as being attributable a specific programme for these participants and only aggregate results for each programme could be used. The sample size was a problem in this regard too as running three programmes in such a small centre meant that for each of the programmes to have enough participants to be run successfully some overlap was required. The programmes had similar goals and in many aspects they were easily integrated. The decision to run the three programmes was made on the basis that exposure to the greatest possible number of activities would be of greatest benefit to the participants.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented the research methodology used to discover the problems affecting the lives of ESLs and to measure the effect of PYD programs on ESLs using the CYRM. Mixed methods research was identified as the research paradigm. YPAR was discussed as a research methodology, and its evolution from Action research. The research design was outlined, and the research methods and data analysis were explored. The three PYD interventions were described. The ethical implications of the study were presented. Through using a non-random sample followed by a random sample it was possible to determine if the results from the first sample could be generalised.

---

[21] Fig. 5 Venn Diagram of Participants in PYD Programmes

Cohen *et al.* (2000, p. 115) comment on triangulation, "triangulation has special relevance where complex phenomenon requires elucidation. Multiple methods are suitable where a controversial aspect of education needs to be evaluated more fully. Triangulation is useful when an established approach yields a limited or distorted picture". This study used multiple and mixed methods in order to triangulate the results. Qualitative elements of this research included, te CYRM and Regional survey. The CYRM was used to determine if the PYD programmes had an effect on the resilience scores of the participants. These programmes were used to demonstrate to the participants that they could exercise agency over the problems affecting their lives. Cohen *et al.* (2000, p. 231) comments on action research "emancipatory action research has an explicit agenda which is political as it is educational". It is not sufficient to merely discover the problems affecting ESLs. If the research is to be emancipatory action must also be taken to overcome symptoms of learned helplessness and powerless as discussed in chapter 2. Qualitative elements of this research included a Research Diary, Learner Reflections and Mini Research Projects. A mixed methods research strategy was chosen so that data could be collected, analysed and integrated to answer the research questions for this thesis.

Chapter 4

Research

Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines findings from the research that took place in a Youthreach centre in the Midwest of Ireland, and the effect of three Positive Youth development (PYD) programmes on the resilience of the participants in the centre. This section of the thesis will first explore the findings from a psychometric test, the Child & Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM). The test was given to participants before they began the programmes and after the completion of the programmes to test if participation in the programmes had improved their resilience scores. A profile of the Early School Leavers (ESLs) will be presented. This research involved the implementation of 3 PYD programmes being made available to ESLs in a Youthreach centre in the south of the Ireland; Research Action Project, GAISCE and Canoeing Skills using multiple data sets; CYRM, RAP Survey, Research Diary, Learner Reflections and the Mini Research Projects from the RAP programme. This chapter will examine the thematic findings from each of the three programmes and will also discuss how those results were examined using RAP survey data in a wider sample of Youthreach centres in the southern nine selected counties of the Irish Republic. The rationale behind this research was to discover how to combat false beliefs that ESLs held about themselves; that they were unsuited to learning, that they were not good enough to succeed, that they were criminals, that they were "scum or scumbags".

When asked informally about stereotypes that people might have about learners who attend Youthreach, an unfortunately common answer from learners was that they were scumbags, this phenomenon was consistently observed by the researcher for nearly a decade. This is a stereotype that seemed to be internalised by the learners who appeared to believe to some extent that it was true. This was a crushingly poignant realisation for me personally to hear that many of the learners thought such things of themselves and was the impetus that led to the research beginning. I propose that this is one of many false beliefs that Youthreach learners hold about themselves, a symptom of demonization, interfering with their learning and leading to a type of learned helplessness when it comes to learning as outlined by the Seligman (2002) experiment in chapter two. To combat these internalised stereotypes and false beliefs a series of Positive Youth Development programmes were undertaken to empower the learners and dispel these false beliefs and overcome demonization.

The three PYD programmes that were undertaken as interventions to improve the resilience of the participants are then briefly revisited to make connections between the activities involved in each programme and any change in the resilience score of the participants. Stories of some participants are presented as vignettes in order to give voice to the participants and humanise their stories. Data collected in a regional survey of Youthreach centres as part of the RAP programme in the nine selected counties in the Republic of Ireland is presented and issues emerging from the survey are

examined to see how representative the findings from the centre in which the research took place are.

4.2 Child & Youth Resilience Measure

The young people who participated in this research project lived with an average of 3.2 people. The biggest household had eleven members and the smallest had just two. In total nineteen early school leavers (ESLs) took part in three positive youth development projects (PYDs); these projects included Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR), GAISCE, and Canoeing Skills. Four participants took part in all three projects, eight took part in at least two of the projects and seven took part in only one of the projects. A convenience sample of ESLs (n = 19) enrolled in a Youthreach centre was examined. SPSS software was used to analyse the CYRM data collected. Participants undertook the CYRM resilience test at the beginning and end of the interventions. As these PYD interventions ran concurrently it was not possible to assign discrete values to each programme as any improvement in resilience may have been as result of participation in one or more of the other programmes. Their resilience scores ranged from min = 49 to max = 75 before the interventions and min = 53 to max = 86 after the interventions. The mean and standard deviation were $\overline{X}$ = 64.3333, s = 1.93136 in the initial testing before the intervention occurred and the resilience scores ranged from $\overline{X}$= 69.73333, s = 2.06205 in the post intervention testing. The change in resilience after participation in the programmes was $\overline{X}$ = 5.4, and s = 2.39603. The highest individual improvement in resilience came from a participant engaged in RAP and no other PYD.

Table 4 CYRM Scores for each Positive Youth Development Programme

	All	RAP	GAISCE	CANOE SKILLS	3 PYDS	2 PYDS	1 PYD
Test 1	965	762	512	532	266	446	253
Test 2	1046	828	565	567	281	488	277
Difference	81	66	53	35	15	42	24
Percentage	8%	9%	10%	7%	6%	9%	9%
Participants	15	12	8	8	4	7	4

As demonstrated in table 4 participants in the GAISCE programme had cumulatively the largest percentage improvement in their CYRM scores, outperforming the group as a whole by two percent. Participants in the RAP programme had the second largest cumulative improvement in CYRM scores and the largest individual improvement.

Three participants showed a drop in their resilience scores and one showed no change at all. Two of these participants were cohabiting and had unstable living arrangements. The remaining participant also had quite an unstable living arrangement. The participant who showed no change was related to the cohabiting participants and challenging family circumstances might account for the CYRM score. Participants who took part in three programmes experienced a smaller increase in their resilience scores than the participants who took part in two. This might suggest that that there is a diminishing return in resilience with PYD programmes as students become fatigued with the process and that living circumstances that can have an impact on resilience. Though PYD can be effective in boosting the resilience scores of participants it is not a magic wand that can combat any level of adversity.

The highest reported improved score came from a student who participated in the RAP programme alone. The next three highest reported increases came from students who participated in one or more programmes. The highest normally distributed improvements in CYRM came jointly from two learners who participated in all three programmes and a learner who participated in RAP and GAISCE. The second highest normally distributed improvement came from a learner who participated in GAISCE and Canoe Skills. Participation in the GAISCE programme seems to have had the greatest impact on CYRM scores, followed by RAP and Canoe Skills all programmes reported an improvement in CYRM scores. The GAISCE and RAP programmes were completed over a twenty-six week period and the Canoe Skills programme was completed over an eight-week period. It might be possible that the Canoe Skills programme could be equally or more effective than the other two programmes given a greater period of time in which to run the programme. **This would also suggest that to maximise the resilience building potential of PYD programmes they should be designed as long term programmes.**

Table 5 shows the resilience scores for each participant before and after their participation in each programme. The 15 participants had their initial score subtracted from their final score and when the variance for all participants was combined an increase of 81 CYRM points was recorded for the group as a whole. This represented a nine percent average increase in resilience for the group as a whole as the total group resilience increased from 965 to 1046. The percentage increase per group was calculated by dividing the total variance (81) by the total score for the group from test 1 and multiplying by 100. The percentage average increase in resilience for all participants was 8%[22].

---

[22] Rounded to the nearest whole number

Table 5 Variance in Resilience

All	Helen	Tommy	Mark	Harry	Joesphine	Eugene	Sara	Joe	Darren	Charlie	Morgan	Clare	John	Evan	Polly	**Total**
Test 1	66	70	57	73	61	64	75	51	63	68	64	69	49	64	71	965
Test 2	66	86	62	67	64	69	74	67	68	80	66	77	75	53	72	1046
Variance	0	16	5	-6	3	5	-1	16	5	12	2	8	26	-11	1	81

Participants were grouped according to the number of PYD interventions they took part in. Table 6 shows the number of programmes that each participant was involved in. This created 3 categories for analysis; 1 PYD (as participants in this category had only participated in one programme), 2 PYD and 3 PYD. The percentage average increase in resilience for participants who undertook one PYD programme was 9%. The percentage average increase in resilience for participants who undertook two PYD programmes was also 9%. The percentage average increase in resilience for participants who undertook three PYD programmes was 6%.

Participants were then grouped according to the PYD programme they took part in which created 3 categories for analysis; RAP, GAISCE and Canoeing Skills. The percentage average increase in resilience for participants who undertook the RAP programme was 9%. The percentage average increase in resilience for participants who undertook the GAISCE programme was 10%. The percentage average increase in resilience for participants who undertook the Canoeing Skills programme was 7%. It is difficult to attribute improvements in resilience to any particular programme or identify an optimal number of programmes to be involved in or optimal combination of programmes to be involved in.

Table 6 Variance in Resilience Per PYD Programme

RAP	Clare	Mark	Joesphine	Timmy	Harry	Eugene	John	Sara	Helen	Joe	Charlie	Evan	**Total**
Test 1	69	57	61	70	73	64	49	75	66	51	63	64	762
Test 2	77	62	64	86	67	69	75	74	66	67	68	53	828
Variance	8	5	3	16	-6	5	26	-1	0	16	5	-11	66

GAISCE	Charlie	Helen	Tommy	Mark	Sara	Joesphine	Morgan	Joe	**Total**
Test 1	68	66	70	57	75	61	64	51	512
Test 2	80	66	86	62	74	64	66	67	565
Variance	12	0	16	5	-1	3	2	16	53

Canoeing Skills	Charlie	Helen	Polly	Tommy	Mark	Harry	Darren	Morgan	**Total**
Test 1	68	66	71	70	57	73	63	64	532
Test 2	80	66	72	86	62	67	68	66	567
Variance	12	0	1	16	5	-6	5	2	35

Table 6 shows the variance in resilience of each participant per PYD programme. Hypothesis testing allows researchers to make statements about future events. Directional hypothesis testing allows researchers to make suggestions about future improvements in quantifiable measures such as an improvement in CYRM scores following participation in PYD projects. A statistical hypothesis might claim that a population can be tested with data obtained from a sample portion of a population. A hypothesis test for statistical significance using inferential statistical procedure can be used to determine if the results of the study are due to chance. The null hypothesis is that participation in one or more PYD programme will have no effect on the CYRM scores of a group of ESLs. The alternative hypothesis is that participation in one or more PYD programme will have a positive effect on the CYRM scores of a group of ESLs. The results indicated in Table 6 indicate that PYD programmes can be used to increase resilience in ESLs. However, this was not the case for every participant. **It is possible to conclude that the interventions had a positive overall effect on the participant's resilience scores.** Though it was not possible to make any conclusions as to what combination of programmes led to optimal improvements in resilience. It is possible that all three programmes could be integrated and developed in one PYD programme.

4.3.1 RAP Mini Research Projects

This section has been included to give provide scope into the negotiation that goes on between the researcher and the participants while trying to run a YPAR project such as RAP. Many researchers will be familiar with data tools such as reflection and research diaries, however the RAP Mini Research Projects are less common data collection tools. The participants chose the project topics. Participants' names have been changed to protect their identities. Many of the participants wanted to investigate suicide and depression but it was felt that some diversity was needed in their projects so some projects topics had to be negotiated. Two participants, Josephine and Helen, researched suicide for their RAP projects as they were affected by the issue or had experienced depression. John is an Irish Traveller and chose to research discrimination against Traveller people. These projects were of particular relevance to the lives of the participants. Two participants, Eugene and Richie, chose to research drug taking among young people. Conor chose to research vocational education as he felt that the mainstream school system he had left overemphasised academics and also found it strange that music was not offered as a subject in the centre. He used on online questionnaire to determine the learning strengths of each participant. This was novel for the participants as they realised the differing strengths each one of them had. No form of intelligence was given preference over another and participants in the group were able to see how differing types of intelligence could be suited to different fields of employment.

Joe chose to research road safety as a family member had been in a serious accident, this made the issue relevant to his life. Harry chose to research road racing as he was a regular racer himself and felt other road users and the police are particularly hostile to the sport. Joe and Harry worked quite well together as they had similar projects and concluded that road racers should be wearing helmets regardless of legal status of the sport. Evan chose to research racism as he felt political correctness had "gotten out of control", however this seemed to act as cover for thinly veined racism at times.

Darren chose Human Trafficking as a topic as he felt it was topical given the refugee crisis. Colm decided to research ISIS and refugees as he also felt it was topical. Neither of these projects were particularly relevant to the daily lives of either young man but they would not be dissuaded from their topic. It is difficult to make a judgement call on the relevance of these topics to the boy's lives however there was no discernible link. There was potential for conflict here as the participants having been assured that they "owned" or shared ownership of the research would not be dissuaded from topics they felt they had chosen and were relevant to their lives even if this researcher did not feel that their chosen topics had much relevance at all. As these projects did not seem particularly relevant to the participants lives this presented a dilemma to this researcher, between ownership and relevance to their lives. On reflection it would have been more beneficial for these learners to have chosen more relevant projects. Cohen discusses the importance of ownership.

> Participatory action research does not mean that all participants need to be doing the same … The agendas and areas of focus are identified by the participants themselves so they are rooted in reality, are authentic and are "owned" by the participants and the communities themselves.

> (Cohen *et al* 2011, p 349)

Despite the instance of Colm and Darren to continue with these projects other participants seemed more able to choose topics to research that were of greater relevance to their lives. Ownership of the project, as discussed by Cohen does not necessarily mean complete control. Ownership as described by Cohen relates to the relevance of the PAR project to the participant and their community. Darren became interested in the turn off the red light campaign, which is a movement dedicated to the rights and protection of sex workers. Clare chose to research young people in care as she had foster children living with her and wanted to become a social worker someday. She had great respect for her foster brothers and sisters and held a good understanding of the backgrounds they came from. This made her project relevant to her.

Sara chose to investigate childhood obesity as she wanted a career in childcare, and was trying to help her sister lose weight. Polly chose to research animal cruelty as she regularly attended protests against circuses in her locality at the time and felt very strongly about animal rights. Mark chose to investigate doping in sport as he felt young people are being pressured to take performance enhancers in order to compete. Mark had initially wanted to do his project on depression but changed his mind as he decided it was too personal for him. He later avoided all situations where the issue might arise. When a guest speaker, Bobby, came to speak about his own experiences with depression to the group Mark did not want to participate however reported being glad he did afterwards, stating, "It is not so bad when you talk about it and hear other people tell you what went on for them. Especially when you can see they are better now".[23] Mark was very interested in sport particularly, basketball, though so his project was relevant to his life. Mark seemed to benefit from participation in the group even though he did not directly research the problem affecting him.

4.3.2 RAP Regional Survey

The questions included in the regional survey were compiled with the participants in the RAP programme. Many of the questions were either taken directly from some of the questions that they had used as part of survey research in their Mini Research Projects while some of the other questions were modified to suit a larger survey. ESLs from 9 counties were invited to participate in the survey; Cork, Clare, Limerick, Tipperary, Waterford, Kerry, Kilkenny, Carlow, and Wexford. 70 ESLs responded to the survey. The survey was made up of 51 questions which were agreed by the participants of the RAP programme. Most of the surveys were conducted using an electronic form however some centres contacted the researcher and requested paper versions which were then sent through the post. Three key themes arose from the regional survey, drugs, discrimination and depression and they are examined below.

4.3.3 Drugs

Over fifty-five percent of survey respondents to the regional survey claimed to have smoked cannabis and over thirty-six percent of respondents claiming to have taken other illegal drugs. According to the NACDA (2014 p. 7) only 6% of young adults aged between fifteen and thirty four had tried smoking cannabis meaning ESLs use cannabis 49% more than the general population of young people their age. 73% of respondents thought drugs were easily available where they lived. Over 30% of respondents said they had owed money for drugs, and 43% of respondents said they worried about their friends and drugs with 35% reporting that they worried about their friends who

---

[23] Extract from researcher diary.

owed money for drugs. 72% of respondents felt that cannabis was not a dangerous drug. 7% of respondents claimed to have taken an anti-anxiety medication and 12% of respondents claimed to have taken more than substance from of a list of legal highs and anti-anxiety medications. 24% claimed to have taken prescription drugs used to treat anxiety or legal highs from head shops. 27% of respondents claimed to have taken street drugs other than cannabis including stimulants, hallucinogens, and amphetamines. Significantly 80% of respondents said they knew someone whose life had been affected by drugs.

Figure 7 ESL's and Cannabis Use

Have you ever smoked cannabis?

43%

57%

■ Yes
■ No
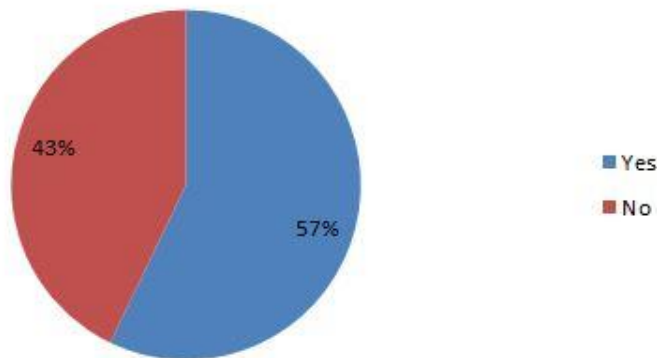
Figure 8 ESLs and other illegal drugs

Have you taken any other illegal drugs?

33%

67%

■ Yes
■ No
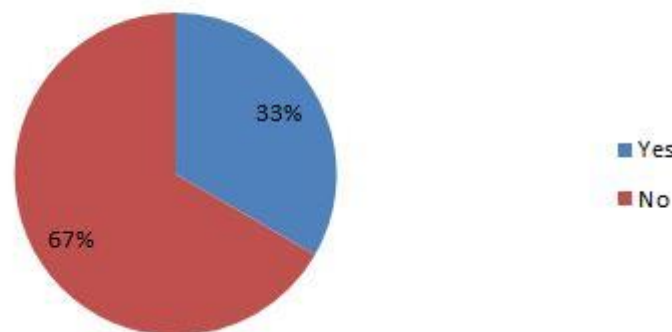
Figure 9 ESLs opinions about Cannabis

Do you consider cannabis a dangerous drug?

3%

24%

73%

- Yes
- No
- Other
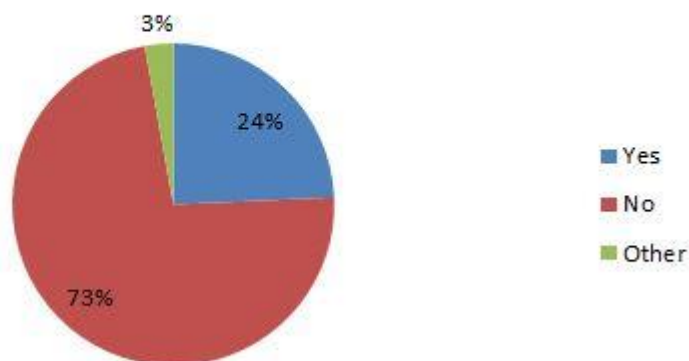
The effect of positive experiences in school and positive relationships with teachers can have on ESL is noted by the National Advisory Committee on Drugs and Alcohol as having an effect on reducing the risk of substance abuse, "this indicates a substantial overlap between the factors that increase the risk of early school leaving and those which encourage substance use among young people" (NACDA 2014, p. 8). Survey respondents indicated that under-age drinking among ESLs and their mainstream counterparts is roughly the same however cannabis use is much more prevalent among ESLs, (NACDA 2014, p. 12), Cannabis use is fifty seven percent for ESLs and twenty four percent for mainstream children. This reveals that ESLs have nearly double the rate of experimentation with cannabis than their counterparts in the mainstream these results are very similar to Haase (2010) who indicated twice as many ESLs have used cannabis as the general population and two fifths have used other illicit substances. It is significant that the RAP survey finds that the rate of cannabis use among ESLs is nearly double the rate of mainstream school goers confirming Haase (2010) earlier work. Eleven percent of mainstream school goers have tried other drugs whereas forty percent of ESLs have tried other drugs. This may be more representative of the communities from which ESLs come from rather than a strictly cause and effect relationship. Table 7 summaries the responses to the RAP survey in relation to drugs.

Table 7 Summary of responses relating to drug use

55.7% of respondents had smoked cannabis.

30.4% had tried other illegal drugs.

74.3% felt drugs were easily obtainable.

30.9% had owed money for drugs.

44.1% worried about their friends and drugs.

35.7% worried about their friends who owed money for drugs.

72.9% felt cannabis was not a dangerous drug.

12.9% had tried head shop or prescribed drugs.

10.3% had tried Cocaine, Magic Mushrooms, Speed, Ecstasy or MDMA.

16.2% had tried more than one of these drugs. (26.5% had tried hard drugs)

81.2% knew someone whose life had been affected by drugs.

50% were drivers. 11.4% had taken drink or drugs and driven a car.

The NACDA (2014) suggest that disadvantaged youth are no more likely to experiment with narcotics but because of the cultural context of the areas in which they live are more likely to keep using drugs after initial experimentation, "although disadvantaged youth are no less likely than their more affluent peers to experiment or to seek the pleasurable effects of intoxication, it would appear that the nature of their social and cultural context tends to transform this experience and its relationship to the other activities and goals that they may have" (NACDA 2014, p. 19). ESLs are more likely to come from communities where the use of recreational drugs is more culturally permissible which creates an environment in which they are free to continue using drugs rather than just a one off initial experiment. This is an important consideration when examining drug use. Habitual drug use is different to having consumed a substance once. To have consumed a substance once a young person need only come into contact with it once and the circumstances which encourage the taking of the drug; peer pressure, opportunity, curiosity, availability, need to manifest themselves only once however for long term drug use a culture of acceptance is necessary. In communities were drugs are easily available the opportunity and availability are constants, in these communities there is less employment and there are less expectations on young people to become gainfully employed.

Young people do not have the same geographical mobility as older adults, as shown in table 7, 78% of respondents to the regional survey of Youthreach centres said it was difficult for young people to

get on the road for the first time. Living in rural communities can lead to a situation where in young people have easy access to drugs and nothing else to do. The NACDA (2014) refers to this neighbourhood effect wherein young people do not move outside disadvantaged areas and problems within these areas become concentrated; "neighbourhood effects due to the concentration and interaction of distinct dimensions of disadvantage within the boundaries of specific localities" (NACDA 2014, p. 27). The young people living within these areas are faced with the constant easy access to drugs within these boundary areas that have left school are increasingly likely to engage in drug taking through lack of alternatives and an acceptance of drug taking that exists within the culture of these boundary areas. These boundary areas are likely defined by socio-economic factors and likely relate to social disadvantage. Figure 9 suggests that ESLs do not consider cannabis a dangerous drug. The following extract is from Darren's mini research project and gives some indication about his attitude to cannabis.

> Cannabis is not just for getting high and having fun, it has many purposes. Cannabis is a really good way to relax and have a good time. I love to do it myself now and then but not very often. I don't like to build a tolerance for it. I prefer to get the full effect each time to get my money's worth. It is reasonably priced and it cannot kill you unlike every other illegal drug out there. Why legalise alcohol when it kills 1000s of people every year when they could legalise cannabis and people can have fun? The government are just stubborn and oblivious to the fact that cannabis is less harmful than alcohol. It is a very commonly used drug on the streets and it is often smuggled into the country to sell on the streets illegally. This is a risky way to buy cannabis, as people will die if they do not pay for weed on time if they get it on tic.[24] Some people abuse cannabis too often, they are always short of money and spend every penny on it.

-   Extract taken from Darren's Mini Research Project

There are many contradictions in Darren's account on one hand he seems to recognise that there are dangers associated with the use of cannabis while on the other hand he associates it with having fun and relaxing. There is also some attempt at downplaying his level of use. Darren might be attempting to rationalise his use of cannabis however it might also be said that he indicates a nuanced understanding of cannabis use. The "just say no" approach is inadequate for young people like Darren and just as his understanding of cannabis use is nuanced any drug intervention strategy to be implemented with young people like Darren needs to be just as nuanced. The "just say no" approach cannot be effective with ESLs who are already using drugs.

The temporal ordering of events is important in understanding how young people interact with drugs and while this is outside the scope of this research it may be that young people leave school first before becoming involved in regular drug use and the time they spend docile during the day when they would otherwise be in school is where they develop most of their drug related problems.

---

[24] Tic - Credit

It may also be the case that cannabis use is a rite of passage for young people today. This research clearly indicates that drug use is an issue affecting ESL and drugs are part of the habitus of ESLs. **There is an association between drug use and ESL.** Harm reduction and cessation of use programmes may be more suited to ESLs than prevention strategies.

4.3.4 Discrimination

In the RAP regional survey, 77% of those surveyed felt that there is a lot of discrimination in Ireland, 58% claiming to have experienced discrimination themselves, as demonstrated in table 8. 51% of respondents claimed to have witnessed racism, while 14% claimed to have been hurt by racism. 53% felt that Travellers were treated badly in Ireland and 68% felt the police did not treat Travellers fairly. 35% percent of respondents felt the police did not treat them fairly. 51% felt Travellers and Settled people get along while the 21% felt they did not. When asked what charitable organisations they would like to be involved in respondents identified groups dealing with issues of poverty, depression, homelessness and animal welfare as the groups they would be most interested in joining. Fourteen percent of respondents indicated that they had been in care at some point in their life. A feeling of being treated differently is likely to lead to feelings of alienation and marginalisation there is definite evidence that ESLs feel discriminated against. **There is a correlation between ESL and discrimination.**

Table 8 Summary of responses relating to discrimination

79.4% felt there was a problem with discrimination in Ireland.
41.2% had experienced discrimination.
52.2% had witnessed racism.
53.7% felt Travellers were treated badly in Ireland.
37.3% felt the guards didn't treat them fairly.
52.2% felt Travellers and settled people got along. (No 24.6% Other 23.2%)

4.3.5 Depression

In the RAP regional survey 57% of respondents surveyed said they had experienced bouts of depression lasting more than two weeks, as demonstrated in table 9. 74% of respondents felt that suicide was preventable and 60% of respondents indicated that they had dealt with a suicidal person. 41% of respondents said they knew a number to call if they felt suicidal. Williams *et al.* (2002) comment, "major depression is defined by depressed mood and loss of interest in nearly all activities for at least two weeks". There are other symptoms needed in order to diagnose clinical

depression but the methodology suggested for diagnosing clinical depression is a semi structured interview. The survey is not an adequate tool to diagnose depression however respondents who self-report depression should be significant enough to point to depression being an issue for ESLs. 40% of respondents reported having bouts of depression lasting longer than two weeks suggesting that depressive episodes are a problem for ESLs and this may be a factor in their non-attendance in mainstream schooling. 60% of respondents also claim to have dealt with a suicidal person, which would support a theory that many ESLs either have suffered or do suffer from significant depression. As the RAP participants held meetings in small groups perhaps this allowed for the development of trust and allowed group members to discuss these issues. **There is a correlation between depression and ESL.**

Table 9 Summary of responses relating to depression

58% had been depressed for longer than two weeks.
75% felt suicide was preventable.
60% had dealt with a suicidal person.
57.1% did not know what number to call if they felt suicidal.

As shown in table 9 above more than half of ESLs surveyed experienced depression. Mark recalls his experience with depression and how being involved in an action to do something about depression made him feel better about it. Being able to contribute to an organisation like Pieta House that is dedicated to helping people who suffer from depression allowed Mark to gain a sense of power over his experience of depression.

> I felt good about raising money for Pieta House because they are willing to help people who suffer from it (depression) like me. When you are depressed; you feel like no one likes you or would care if you were gone. It is a horrible feeling to wish you would die. I feel great that I can help make money for Pieta House because they can help people who feel the same way I do. If there are so many people out there willing to help them it means there are many people out there to help me too and I found that out recently.
>
> - Mark, Youthreach Learner, Extract from Research Diary

Mark indicates depression was an issue for him. He was very reluctant to speak about it and often tried to avoid situations where others might be discussing it, however after participating in the programme and listening to a talk on depression he was very proud of himself for having been involved. Mark also often spoke about his cannabis use and suggested that it might be a problem for him. **Most, but not all of the participants reported depression and drug abuse as issues for them,**

from a series of informal conversations it was clear that these young people were dealing with significant levels of adversity.

Mental and physical health arose as important issues affecting ESLs. Negative psychology a lack of self-esteem, internalised stereotypes and learned helplessness are issues that relate to the mental well-being of ESLs are recurrent issues in ESL. **17.9% of ESLs surveyed had been in care**, which is a significant amount. Mistrust of state authorities may be rooted at being separated from their families during their childhood. Issues that could be explored further might include criminality and sexuality. The RAP programme was complementary to the GAISCE and Canoeing Skills programmes. The RAP programme allowed learners to research issues affecting their own lives the other programmes were designed to promote positivity and empower young people to believe in their own agency.

During the RAP project mental health arose as an issue in within the research community that affected nearly all of the learners. A relationship of trust began to develop in a more significant way than was ever present in the group previously a culture of openness began to develop in the centre. The learners began to discuss their feelings and speak about issues such as anxiety and depression. As a researcher this was a difficult development as learners felt confident to speak about their issues but the burden of dealing with their emotional difficulties was sometimes overwhelming.

> It is difficult to write about this and it is also important that I don't betray any of the kids confidence but I am lying awake at night worrying about what is happening some of them. I can of course pass things on to the Centre Coordinator and indeed I am required to, but it doesn't stop me worrying. The centre councillor and the advocate are in constant demand, and we have had to reach out to outside organisations to take up some of the slack. I like to tell them that they can come to me with a problem and I would never say it to them but sometimes I wish they wouldn't. You can pass details on to the higher ups and the authorities but often you wonder if you are making the situation worse, particularly if it leads to someone being taken into care.
>
> -Extract from Researcher Diary

Though this raised issues for me personally as my research involves resilience it would not be true to research to be deterred from the work. Another emergent issue that began to develop was being in the care system and some learners began to feel confident enough in the relationship of their research community that they were capable of sharing the fact that many of them had been in the care system and were able to discuss their experiences. This was a new development and though previously aware that some of the learners were in care the number of learners who had been in

care in the group was surprising. As a result of this an extra question was added to the regional survey asking, "Have you ever been in care?". This is discussed further in the next section.

4.5 Gender

Gender differences in the Canoe Skills programme were observed. Though there was a lot of initial interest from girls this later subsided. Getting changed outside at the side of the river is necessary in the sport of Canoeing as there are rarely changing rooms provided, this made it more difficult to keep the girls interested.

> The girls seemed very uncomfortable, particularly when it came to changing their clothes and they seemed to be very concerned that some of the boys might steal a glance at them. The girls were normally given the back of a van to themselves to change, while the boys seemed happy to wrap a towel around their waist and get changed. The boys made no attempt to watch the girls changing though the girls seemed to have a very real fear of this. At one point some of the boys left the seclusion of the river bank to go to and get food from their bags which were nearer the road while they were still topless despite being called back. This prompted a passing motorist to beep his horn, which resulted in the boys laughing and cheering. Though the girls were not visible to anyone in the back of the van from the riverbank or the road they seemed upset by the occurrence.

> - Extract from Researcher Diary

This difficultly may have been overcome somewhat by the presence of an adult female, however there was no female teacher willing to participate in the programme. Another method in which such difficulties may have been addressed might have been supplying the girls with equipment known as a "robie". A robie is a kind of hooded poncho which covers the head down to the ankles and also acts as a towel, it allows the user to get changed underneath without revealing any part of their body. This may have been due to the gung-ho attitude of the males on the course. Van Amsterdam (2018) comments on how the presence of males in a group can interfere with the development of female members in the sport.

> The main findings of the interviews are that men, generally speaking, will throw themselves into activities more than women will. Women in general will hold back a little and would want a little more reassurance that both their ability is up to standard and that the instructor will rescue them when needed. With these results though, most of the instructors straight away noted that they all knew plenty of men and women who did not fit this description.

> (Van Amsterdam 2018, p 75)

It should be noted that the research did not find that there was any difference in ability between men in women in the sport, but that women seemed to be put off by the presence of men. The future design of PYD programmes that incorporate a Canoe Skills element might consider the

inclusion of some women's only days, with female instructors, though it is difficult to say how young men may react to their exclusion.

The GAISCE programme did not provide as many gender related difficulties, though it is perhaps worth mentioning that during the adventure journey the boys and girls were segregated into different dorms during the night. There were many times during the night that the accompanying adults had to deal with noise coming from the boy's dorm while there were no corresponding disturbances from the girl's dorm. Similarly there were no significant gender issues encountered in the RAP programme.

The research sample for the CYRM had 5 girls and 10 boys a ratio of 1:3. There was a gender difference recorded here as the average increase in the CYRM score for girls was 2.2 while the average increase in CYRM scores for boys was 7. The sample size was relatively small and the gender differences in average increase in CYRM score may not be generalizable. It might be worth considering that the discrepancy might be attributed to the gender of the mentor. Participation in the Canoeing Skills programme may have been easier for girls had there been a female mentor/instructor present. It is difficult to make conclusive arguments about the gender of the mentor given the small sample size, however it is worth noting.

4.6 Vignettes

This section uses a cross section of data from the participants Mini Research Projects from the RAP programme, their personal reflections, and notes on informal conversations from the research diary to provide further evidence of the themes identified in the regional survey. The vignettes are also presented to give voice to the participants and to humanise their stories for the reader.

Vignette 1 Darren
Programmes RAP & GAISCE

Darren is a seventeen year old Irish boy who suffers from a great deal of anxiety. He has no plans for when he leaves Youthreach. Darren had previously left Youthreach for a while but had made the decision to return. He finds social situations quite difficult. Darren reported having some difficulties with drugs. Darren recorded an increase of five in his resilience score. He took part in the RAP programme and the Canoeing Skills programme. Darren outlines the differences between Youthreach and mainstream schooling.

> *Positives about Youthreach are, a friendly atmosphere, small numbers, learning more, many outings, meeting people/friends. I felt nervous coming back but it's grand now. I would like to get a lot done while I'm here. I came and went because I wanted to get a job and also personal reasons. I intend to stay this time. Changing school to Youthreach was an important event. There are not as many classes in the day which is good there is less stress. There are not as many classes in Youthreach as in my last school there was 9 or 10 a day and in Youthreach there are eight a day. In my last school it was very stressful as it was all go but up here it is a bit more laid back also classes were bigger in my last school.*
>
> *Darren, Youthreach Learner – Extract from his personal reflection*

ESLs in Youthreach centres find the centres more "laid back" and less formal because smaller numbers of learners allow for more to be done with individual learners. The need to maintain order over a huge student body is removed. The number of subjects which are tested through final examinations is similar but the pressure to perform in a once off exam is greatly reduced in the Leaving Cert Applied course that most Youthreach centres follow and which uses continuous assessment as opposed to the traditional Leaving Cert that is undertaken in the mainstream system. Darren benefited from the less formal and less pressurised environment in Youthreach.

A research project conducted by Darren investigated youth drug use in Ireland. Darren was particularly interested in cannabis and admitted having trouble with the drug himself. Darren made links with cannabis use to anxiety and paranoia but believed that the medicinal and industrial uses of the plant out weighted the difficulties associated with long-term use. Darren reported sometimes feeling depressed but identified anxiety as being a much more omnipresent feeling in his life. Though he understood the correlation between cannabis use and anxiety, he was not convinced it implies causality instead suggesting that perhaps anxious people turn to cannabis for relief. Darren was convinced however that smoking cannabis caused paranoia.

A drug consciousness day was held in the centre as part of the RAP programme and three of the Youth Researchers presented their research to a community drugs worker. Learners seemed reasonably knowledgeable about the more common street drugs, such as cannabis, ecstasy, and cocaine. They were unfamiliar with less common drugs and had no knowledge at all of date rape drugs or psychedelics. They were split about the safety, use or whether or not cannabis should be legal but agreed ecstasy and cocaine were very dangerous. One learner commented on the effects of cocaine and ecstasy lasting a fairly short time while the come down lasted a long time. The phenomenon of "Suicide Tuesday" was discussed whereby a person ingests ecstasy on a Saturday night and feels great while high but experiences suicidal thoughts the following Tuesday and in this way learners were able to understand a relationship between drug use and suicide. It was generally

agreed that the risk was not worth the reward. **Further links were made by the group between people suffering from anxiety or depression turning to drug use as an outlet or escape from the pain they feel inside.**

Darren also took part in the Canoeing Skills programme and was initially very nervous, capsizing multiple times on his first venture into the water. When panic imprints itself on one's mind the impulse to panic and the fear of panic can consume oneself, it is good to have coping strategies. Capsizing causes panic and anxiety. The capsize drill reduces this panic as the paddler learns that they can free themselves by pulling the deck and exiting the boat. [25] At this point the paddler loses some part of their fear, and becomes less worried about falling in. The T rescue is the next weapon of self-preservation in the kayaker's arsenal, though it requires teamwork. When the boat capsizes the paddler bangs on the side of the boat and runs his hands up and down the side of the boat until a teammate comes and puts the nose of their boat into his hand, when this occurs the capsized paddler can flip the boat back upright using the team mate's boat as a leaver. Resisting the urge to panic and pull the spray deck are essential to this technique and the longer the paddler waits under the water for their team mate the greater the chance that the technique will be successful. Breath control and resisting the urge to panic are essential. Darren's journey to from beginner to mastery of these techniques is discussed below in an extract from the researcher diary.

> I didn't think I would be able to do it. I toppled over two times at the start and I freaked out. It was a shock to fall over. It made me very nervous. What if I can't get out? I kept trying to find the loop on the deck. I was angry about falling out and the second time it was even more annoying as I fell over again almost straight away but it was not as frightening the second time. I was nervous trying the T rescue. Getting the rescue done was a huge relief. You need to teach yourself to relax and not to panic. By the end, I was confident going under the water. I practised rescuing Charlie twice and I was rescued three times with a T rescue. I had a competition at the end to see how long I could hold my breath in a capsized boat and I won. If I can pull out of my kayak under water, I can pull out of anything. Most of the time panic is all in my head but out there, it is real. Kayaking can help with anything; keep you fit and healthy, clear your head, handle anxiety. You feel like a new man after ten kilometres in a kayak.
>
> – Darren, Extract from Researcher Diary

The nervousness experienced by Darren in this new environment for the first time is made clear in the account given. Dealing with the perceived initial failure was frustrating and for some of the

---

[25] Deck – Short for spray deck a neoprene skirt worn by kayakers around the waist to seal them into the boat and keep water out. The deck attaches to the cockpit of a kayak and needs to be removed by pulling a loop at the front so that the kayakers can exit a capsized boat.

young people who began the programme it was too uncomfortable and they did not continue with the programme. The fear of not being able to exit the capsized boat and actually drown is quite real even though experienced instructors were on hand to ensure that this would not happen. This is an irrational and destructive thought. Seligman (2006 p. 15) comments on the need to challenge destructive thoughts, "changing the destructive things you say to yourself when you experience the setbacks that life deals all of us is the central skill of optimism". The danger was exaggerated in Darren's mind as he wondered if he could get out and it is likely he considered himself to be in mortal danger experiencing some cold water shock and being unable to breathe.

When submerged in cold water for the first time and frantically feeling around for the loop of a spray deck that can release you from the capsized boat most learners will be forgiven for forgetting about the instructors that are there to prevent catastrophe. Seligman (2006 p. 89) comments on destructive and automatic thoughts, "automatic thoughts are very quick phrases or sentences, so well-practised as to be almost unnoticed and unchallenged". Introducing a new activity in which every participant has no prior knowledge or skill allows everyone to start on an equal basis. Darren was in a position where he could not assume he was the worst in the group. Being able to conquer the panic which was a physical reaction to a stressful situation rather than panic that is omnipresent as a result of physiological distress or disorder allowed Darren to differentiate between the two. He describes panic on the water as "real". Learning how to conquer a "real" panic response when supported by members of a team can help challenge automatic or destructive thoughts when they manifest in other areas of life.

Darren learned to teach himself not to panic. In this way Darren was able to take a skill from one setting, managing his anxiety and inclination to panic on the river, and use it other settings. The emotional support he received from his peers during this process might be considered community resilience "development is enhanced by providing experiences that allow for the formation and maintenance of trans-contextual dyads across a range of settings" (Bronfenbrenner 1979 p. 214). It is unclear if learning to manage his anxiety in this way reduced his cannabis use but anxiety did seem to be the cause of his cannabis use.

Frustration at having to endure the same experience again seconds after being rescued later turns to resilience, having being rescued the first time might make the second experience a little less frightening. In this way Darren was forced to confront his feelings of anxiety. Learning to fight the urge to get out of the boat and patiently await rescue while attached to a capsized boat by a spray deck is an exercise in overcoming adversity while at the same time forging a bond with the rescuer on whom the capsized paddler must rely on to restore him to the oxygen rich surface. Darren

learned to teach himself not to panic to the point where what had initially terrified him, capsizing, he was later doing for fun and competing. **Confronting the fear and anxiety leads to a great feeling of relief a kind of natural high when these techniques are mastered.** "The placements of persons in social roles where they are expected act competitively or cooperatively tends to elicit and intensify activities and interpersonal relations that are compatible with the given expectations" (Bronfenbrenner 1979 p. 101). In this particular activity Darren began with a technique that is designed to be cooperative, he had to rely on a buddy to right his kayak after capsizing. As he gained confidence using the technique, he modified the activity to make it competitive to see who could stay under water the longest. Engaging in this activity with the group improved the interpersonal relationships of the participants in the Canoeing Skills programme. The Canoe Skills group formed their own clique within the centre and became obsessed with the sport.

> The Canoe Skills group are in the computer room every lunch time watching videos of kayaking in exotic places on YouTube. They have formed their own clique. They have become very biddable. The mere threat of not being allowed to go kayaking is enough to get them working in class. If I cancel a session due to commitments in my own life, they are bitterly disappointed.

> - Extract from Research Diary

While practicing these rescue techniques with each other young people form bonds which will hopefully endure beyond the river. The relief of being restored to the surface, described by Darren, and being able to breathe again puts things in perspective for the paddler. Clearing the mind of any superfluous anxiety and building faith in oneself and self-efficacy and trust in one's team. During the course of the programme a total of ten participants took part in the Canoeing Skills programme over eight weeks however after a number of weeks a number of participants left the programme leaving eight participants in total. The experience of having to change out of wet clothes at the side of the river without changing rooms often in the rain and once during a hailstorm proved too arduous for some participants, but for those who kept the sport on like Darren it was worth it.

> I had not done kayaking before. I enjoyed it; the weather, the water, the weirs. The excitement you feel going down a weir your heart is pounding at ninety miles an hour. It is and adrenaline rush everything happens really fast, you are having fun enjoying the adventure. As you improve the rush you get starts to fade you want bigger and better stuff to get your rush. More drops, weirs and faster flowing water gives you more of a rush. Going home I felt good, happy, fresh, it clears your head.
>
> - Darren, Extract from Researcher Diary

Darren's story highlights anxiety, depression and substance abuse as problems in his life. The RAP programme allowed him to explore his own drug use and though his views were controversial he raised an interesting question about causation and causality in terms of cannabis use and anxiety and depression. He really enjoyed being exposed to outdoor education and Canoeing Skills. **Initially he found it quite difficult but eventually he found it a great way to release his anxiety.**

Vignette 2 Josephine
Programmes RAP & GAISCE

Josephine is a sixteen-year-old Irish girl who would like to work as a hairdresser or with children when she finishes in Youthreach. She participated in the RAP and GAISCE programmes. Josephine recorded an increase in her resilience score of three. Josephine revealed that she had spent some time in care. Joesphine describes how her experience of Youthreach was distinct from that of mainstream schooling.

> What I like about Youthreach is I get along with everybody here I like all the teachers and I don't get into as much trouble as I did (in mainstream school). The subjects in Youthreach are easier and I understand what they (the teachers) are saying because there are not so many in our class. I was getting into trouble in my old school because I was hanging around with the wrong people. In the old school I found it hard because everyone was distracting me.
>
> – Extract from Josephine's Personal Reflection

Hanging around with the wrong people was a common issue identified by learners in the centre as having been a contributory factor in their initial withdrawal from mainstream schooling. Josephine produced a mini research project about suicide, produced a website with facts about suicide, how depression is treated, an interview with a mental health awareness campaign organiser and information about what the government is doing to reduce suicide rates. Survey questions from this mini research project were included in the regional survey. Joesphine explains why she chose her topic.

> I decided to do my project on suicide because I want to find out more information about why people want to end their own lives, and I want to find out what the government is doing to stop suicide. Some people unfortunately do not get the help they need or want and I think there should be more done to help people suffering from depression.
>
> – Extract from Josephine's Mini Research Project

The Youth Researchers found that open questions were problematic when completing their survey analysis as it was difficult to code and graph the findings for these questions, Josephine was no exception. The research community agreed that for the regional survey closed questions would be used to help them summarise and analyse their data faster. Josephine had trouble while coding the responses to a survey she conducted in the centre about suicide. An example of a typical coding issue youth researchers encountered while conducting their surveys happened when Josephine, realised she had only open questions in her survey and that she would have to group certain types of responses. In response to the question, "how could you help someone that is thinking of suicide?" she received fifteen replies; in general these were well meaning and helpful suggestions such as talking to the person or seeking the help of a professional but one response was malicious simply stating "buy them a rope".

The anger she felt at the first response Josephine received was exacerbated by the challenge of having to code data for the first time. Having fun poked at an issue that was important to her coupled with the frustration of using technology she was unfamiliar with caused her to give up on her research for a few days. Fortunately she came back, presented her research to the group and participated in the organisation of a mental health fundraiser. This was the second time there was tension within the group as Youth Researchers felt that the subjects they had chosen to research held great personal significance to the youth researchers and having these issues undermined within the group was difficult emotionally for the researchers.

Josephine's story identified depression as an issue affecting her own life. She also identified "hanging around with the wrong people", or negative social nodes as being a problem affecting her scholastic performance and attendance. Josephine participated in two programmes, RAP and GAISCE. As part of the GAISCE programme Josephine was exposed to outdoor education. In the face of adversity; personal problems and depression Josephine's resilience score increased (by 3) after participation in two of the programmes.

Vignette 3 John
RAP Programme

John is an eighteen-year-old Irish Traveller. He would like to work as a jockey or horse trainer when he finishes in Youthreach. He took part in the RAP programme. John recorded an increase in his resilience score of twenty-six. A mini research project completed by John about Traveller Discrimination this Youth Researcher described how he felt about being treated differently.

> Stereotypes about Travellers say they are always fighting about something if it's not horses it is dogs, they are always fighting other families. Personally, I have been called a tinker, a knacker, a scumbag, a tramp. These are slurs against Traveller people I get very angry when people use these words against me. Travelers are often refused service in pubs just because they are Travellers. Shops, hotels, and other businesses often refuse service to Travellers too. When you are refused access to businesses because you are a Traveller you have to leave even if you have never been there before and could not have done anything wrong. The bad feeling I get when I am turned away can stay in my head all day. I would like to be treated with kindness, manners, and respect just like everyone else.
>
> – Extract from John's Mini Research Project

This project involved a website with three pages, an introduction and a piece about Traveller accommodation which referenced a radio interview with the Co-director of Pavee Point Martin Collins and a newspaper article which was written after nine young Travellers were burnt to death in an overcrowded halting site. The radio interview and the newspaper article were extremely critical of local councils which chronically underspent their funding allocations for Traveller Accommodation. John explains her frustration at institutionalised discrimination.

> I do not believe the government are doing enough at all as even the Garda and other sources of government workers can be very discriminating themselves. I don't believe much can be done as settled people will never come to terms with a lot of Traveller ways/culture. It is very shameful to be refused or discriminated against in public. It makes me feel ashamed and very angry as it's not a crime to believe in different things or do different things.
>
> – Extract from John's Mini Research Project

This mini research project painted a very poignant picture of the virtual apartheid that exists between Travellers and many Settled people.[26] The website contained a survey which found that the majority of people surveyed thought that Travellers were treated badly in Ireland, that they could not get jobs, that they were treated badly by police. There were mixed opinions as to whether Travellers and Settled people get along and whether or not it was possible for Travellers to become Gardaí (Irish Police) or whether or not they deserved their reputation. **The project was difficult for John as he realised the extent to which discrimination was institutionalised by the political system.** Though he may not ever use a word like institutionalised he believed that a politician who is an advocate for Travellers would find it hard to be elected. On this point critical theorists would be quick to point out that the political system may simply be a reflection of wider society. He was also greatly upset when he discovered some of the attitudes of his peers within the group to Travellers

---

[26] Settled people – people who are not members of the Travelling Community

where extremely negative. Some members of the group would make derogatory statements about Travellers and then make an exception for John excluding him from their generalisations but it was 0clear that were real prejudices against Travellers within the group.

John's story is largely about discrimination. He made his presentation to the road safety officer with Harry and was quick to point out to her that the road safety information being disseminated by the RSA was not aimed at Travellers but seemed to be geared toward wealthy people who own horses. John was initially resistant to the idea of researching discrimination against Travellers and reluctant to get into debates with his peers. At the end of the process he seemed more able to engage with the topic and more confident in dealing with put downs and derogatory remarks without getting angry. John often found it difficult relating his school work with any real world applications in his life. After making his presentation to the RSA Education Officer John seemed to have made a link between his school work and real life. [27]

> Will she have our stuff in it? I would like if she did and that she would tell people lads from our centre did it. That would show that we know something out here and LCA doesn't just mean let's count apples.[28]
>
> – John, Extract from Researcher Diary

John is referring to the RSA Education Officer who was impressed with his work and took the point that her organisation had no information aimed specifically at Travellers but she promised that she would amend this in future presentations. Here John identifies another type of discrimination that is not unique to Travellers and that all the other participants seemed to suffer from too, being labelled a dummy. John wanted her to take heed of the information he presented and was visibly upbeat and positive about the suggestion that school work he did might have implications outside the school.

Vignette 4 Clare
RAP Programme

Clare is a nineteen year old Irish woman pregnant with her first child and aspires to be a social care worker. Clare reported having problems with cannabis and other drugs but had quit since becoming pregnant. She expressed concern about her boyfriend's continued substance use and his ongoing interactions with the law. She has foster brothers and sisters who have been in care. She participated in the RAP programme. Clare recorded an increase of eight in her resilience score. Clare

---

[27] RSA – Road Safety Authority
[28] LCA – Leaving Certificate Applied an alternative school leaving certificate with a greater vocational focus that the traditional Leaving Certificate

produced a mini research project concerning children in the care system, produced a website with information about the different types of fostering, transcripts of interviews with a carer and a social worker, information about the residential care services and the state care system, and information about different types of child abuse. [29] Clare empathically outlines the plight of children in the care system.

> In Ireland at the moment the HSE are struggling to house children that have been put in care as the numbers are just too high. Residential care may be the best placement choice in short or long term for some people in care. Some of these homes do not give children/teenagers the specific attention that they need. These children may be hurting, emotionally or have behaviour disorders that do not get proper treatment and as a result these children act up. Children/Teenagers that act up may cause harm to the staff in these centres and are sanctioned by the staff, social workers and the law. These children may end up in trouble with the law through no fault of their own other than what has happened them or neglect.
>
> – Extract from Clare's Mini Research Project

Clare first suggested to the researcher that many ESLs have spent time in the care system. Through their mini research projects youth researchers in the centre identified depression as an issue and drug use as a form of escapism for ESLs experiencing depression. Following a visit from Bobby a regional coordinator of Darkness into Light the research community in the centre decided that they would like to take a more proactive role in their communities.[30]

> When can we start doing things like Bobby for charity and fun stuff because a lot of us suffer from depression and I don't think we need that to be a secret any more.
>
> – Clare, Extract from Research Diary

During his visit Bobby spoke about his own battle with depression and the existential angst that goes with it which he described as "something missing". He recounted the various ways in which he tried to fill this void until eventually he decided that doing things for others for his community and for charities were part of what filled this void for him. A number of the centres learners tried to opt out at the beginning but were glad that they participated by the end of his talk. Josephine and Helen presented their research and the money they raised to Bobby and took great pride in doing so. Clare describes how Youthreach was better suited to her needs than mainstream schooling.

---

[29] Carer - carers are people who look after certain people in need of full-time care and attention on a full time basis.
[30] Darkness Into Light – An annual charity walk to raise funds to provide services to those at risk of suicide or self-harm. Bobby's name was changed to protect his identity.

> Positives, (about Youthreach) meeting new people, more practical work, getting more hands on help and support from teachers, having more freedom getting opportunities I wouldn't otherwise get. I left in 5th year halfway through the year. I left because I hated it in every way. I was always getting in trouble and I used to mitch days off all the time because I couldn't stick another day in there anymore.[31] The school was so strict and didn't allow students to express themselves at all they treated students like a number rather than an individual person. The teachers were too controlling.
>
> - Extract from Clare's Personal Reflection

Learners in the centre almost universally commented that the teachers there were much nicer to them than in their old schools in the mainstream. This should be qualified by noting that the classes typically have less than ten learners compared to a mainstream class of between twenty and thirty. Though subject to a great deal of adversity, substance use, depression, being a teenage mother and worrying about her boyfriend's legal difficulties, her resilience score improved (by 8) after participation in the programme. Claire's desire to work in social care and her attitude to children in the care system stuck a cord, and put me in mind of an earlier diary entry.

> The social worker arrived outside the gate. The kids told me there was an adult outside looking for someone in charge. I went out to speak to her. "Do you know Craig?", he asked. I replied that I did, at which point he asked me to tell Craig that he couldn't go home to his foster family. They were no willing to keep him anymore. She handed me a bag and said there would be someone calling later to pick him up and take him back into a care unit. I was really annoyed at her. "Tell him yourself", I said, dropping the bag. She explained she had never met Craig and it would sound better coming from someone he knew.
>
> -   Extract from Research Diary

When I went to tell Craig that he couldn't go back to the place he had thought of as home, he laughed at my visible concern. He told me that things like this happened him all the time, and that I shouldn't worry about it. He seemed genuinely concerned that I was upset about what was happening to him and tried to reassure me.

4.7 The D Cycle

Three key issues arose as a result of the research; drug use, depression and discrimination. There is a cyclical relationship between these three themes which is shown in figure 10 below and dubbed the D Cycle. The evidence of these 3 themes are presented quantitatively in the regional survey and qualitatively in the vignettes. The vignettes were constructed using qualitative data derived from 3

---

[31] Mitch – Play Truant

data sets, the research diary, learner reflections and the mini research projects of participants. Thus far this chapter has examined issues affecting ESLs.

The literature review in chapter 2 identified demonization and learned helplessness as issues impeding ESLs on their journey through education. This chapter puts forward the notion of the D Cycle as a further impediment for ESLs. At the beginning of the RAP programme the participants, upon learning that they were to research a problem affecting their own lives, almost universally wanted to choose depression as their topic. This identified it as an issue for the participants of the RAP programme from the outset. This was confirmed again by the RAP Survey which confirmed that 57% of respondents surveyed said they had experienced bouts of depression lasting more than two weeks.

ESLs are subject to internalised stereotypes or false beliefs about themselves discussed in chapter 2 and recognised by a range of authors; (Durkheim 1893, Lukás 1923, Fannon 1952, Adams 1997, OECD 1999, Lamount 2000, Stokes 2003, Wood 2012, Reay 2017). This demonization or estrangement of young working class people is well recognised by these authors. In the RAP survey 58% of respondents claim to have experienced discrimination themselves. John's vignette points to a young man who has clearly suffered a great deal of discrimination in his life.

 The correlation between ESL and drug use is well recognised by multiple studies; (O'Mahoney 1997, HSA 2008, O'Reilly 2009, Haase 2010, NACDA 2014). The RAP survey confirmed earlier work of Haase (2010) that suggests cannabis use among ESLs is twice that of students in mainstream education in Ireland. Worryingly the RAP survey suggests that 33% of ESLs have taken another illegal drug other than cannabis. Extracts from Darren's Mini Research Project outline his positive view of cannabis smoking. Darren and Claire reported using cannabis and other drugs. With these findings in mind the D Cycle shown in figure 10 was constructed. The interplay of discrimination, depression and drug use is likely cyclical.

Figure 10 D Cycle

Participants responded well to doing research into problems affecting their own lives. Learners also seemed to become most engaged when they had real life experience of the problem they were researching. The learners in the centre work towards the Leaving Certificate Applied qualification which involves continuous assessment of key assignments that must be completed, these assignments are often done in isolation and having a mini research project to work on gave these assignments a unified purpose and provided scope for cross curricular integration. It was possible to integrate many of these assignments for many of the mini research projects when analysing data in spreadsheets, writing their reports and rather than learners completing their key assignments by following a series of unrelated worksheets they had a unified purpose relating to a real world problem that they were trying to solve which gave a relevance in their learning to their own lives. The programmes were also designed to expose participants into new settings and activities in which they could establish relationships with new people. The programmes also required participants to engage in peer support in order to complete tasks. The programmes also had elements of outdoor education and thrill seeking in their design to offer an alternative to the "buzz" of drug taking. The next section will try to outline how some of these issues were overcome by the participants.

4.8 Taking Action

A common theme that emerged from the research was that when participants actively worked to find solutions to their problems they were much better able to deal with them while passively accepting the effects of an issue on their lives led to greater problems. Taking action on an issue causes a paradigm shift in the mind of a demonised learner shifting their perception from being a burden on society to being a contributor with something to offer. Service learning can be used to challenge the effects of the D Cycle. Taking action is empowering, it improves social connectedness. Many of the participants identified "hanging around with the wrong people" as an issue for them, by taking positive action on issues affecting their own lives they become the "right people". Service learning requires crossing boundaries and entering the contact zone. Pratt (1991) defines a contact zone as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today" Pratt (1991 pp. 33- 40). Taking action on an issue affecting one's own life can help young people take power over it.

"To demonstrate that human development has occurred, it is necessary to establish that a change in the person's conceptions and or activities carries over to other settings and other times, such demonstration is referred to as developmental validity" (Bronfenbrenner 1979 p. 35). Developmental validity was achieved as many of the activities were still continuing a year after the research was completed. The participants were also engaged in a greater number of activities together outside of the school setting and became involved with other organisations. **Developmental validity can be achieved through PYD.** This research sought to change the self-perception of ESLs from the belief that they were "scumbags" to the belief that they were capable contributing members of society.

The most interesting projects involved links from outside the centre either tying in with existing community projects or involving people from outside organisations relating to the problem being studied. Freire (1970) comments on how this expression is an essential part of critical pedagogy, "If it is in speaking their word that people, by naming the world, transform it, dialogue imposes itself as the way by which they achieve significance as human beings, dialogue is thus an existential necessity" (Freire 1970 p. 69). Learners who had experienced mental health difficulties gained a feeling of being able to take the power back and become part of the solution by participating in fundraisers and awareness events. Through their mini research projects learners were able to examine issues affecting them and have their own say on the issue.

For instance, Claire's story highlights that many ESLs could be suffering from the traumatic effects of being separated from their parents in their early childhood she also reports having feelings of depression. She reports feeling like she was under control of her teachers in the mainstream. Having participated in fundraising activity and being able to take positive action on an issue affecting her own life she seems more able to speak about the issue of depression.

Being involved in this type of service learning events has two positive effects on learned helplessness. Seligman (2006 p. 6) comments "personal control means the ability to change things by one's own voluntary actions; it is the opposite of helplessness". Involvement in activities that relate to a problem affecting one's own life but that have a wider altruistic effect to the community return a sense of power to young people as they confront the catastrophic thoughts feed to them by as an effect of demonization. In Claire's case she did not feel her experiences of depression needed to a secret anymore after participation in the programme. Claire was highly motivated to participate in the RAP programme and worked on it relentlessly. As demonstrated in Mark's comments at the start of this section and through Clare's comments, **taking action on an issue affecting one's own life can help young people to take power over it.**

4.9 Contact Zones

This research saw the creation of many contact zones. Participants in the RAP and GAISCE programmes presented to visitors from outside organisations, government bodies, like the Road Safety Authority, and charitable organisations, like Pieta House. Members of the Youthreach Canoe Club who participated in the Canoe Skills program became members of the University of Limerick Kayak Club to avail of the facilities and resources available there. They interacted with young people their own age but in general from different more affluent and middle class backgrounds. Through participation in the three PYD programmes the participants entered the contact zone with great trepidation expecting to find people completely different to themselves who were likely to reject them. What they found was entirely the opposite and it was here that the paradigm shift most easily occurred when the participants began to identify with people from outside their own background. It was here that they realised that they were just the same and just as good as everyone else. Charlie outlines his experience of being in the University of Limerick Kayak Club.

> Dan suggested we join UL Kayak Club so it made me even more nervous to be going kayaking with very experienced kayakers while in the beginning I thought they would all be posh and kind of stuck up. Once we got to meet some of the members of the club, when we were either in the boat house, which is amazing, or doing practice in the pool everybody was so welcoming and we were new members so they offered to teach us new things.
>
> – Extract from Charlie's Personal Reflection

The contact zone is a space in which those who benefit from dominant ideologies interact with those who suffer from those dominant ideologies. In these spaces, well intentioned attempts at gentrification in the spirit of inclusion can be overcome and an understanding that people do not wish to be assimilated but rather understood for who they are develops. Multiple studies (Stokes 2000, 2003, Brown 2005, Dale 2010, Downes 2011, Day *et al* 2013, Gordon 2017) suggest that ESLs come from socially disadvantaged areas. ESLs are generally from working class backgrounds and when the opportunity to interact with other young people of the same age there existed some potential for conflict. Though not universally from middle to upper middle class backgrounds in the main, there existed a class disparity between University of Limerick students and the participants. There was some initial apprehension about the participants joining the University Kayak Club, "who are you bringing in are they not all little knackers who are going to rob the place?" – Anonymous UL Kayaker, extract from Research Diary. Eventually it was agreed that the participants would be allowed join the club but only allowed participate under my direct supervision. Other members of the club who had come along with the participants on trips with the participants also helped sway the decision of the University Kayak Club committee. In this way participants were able to borrow the cultural capital required to join the club and were able to negotiate the "doxa" of the club guided by myself and other members of the club who had already made their acquaintance.

> I spoke with some of the members of ULKC today and they seem so surprised about how nice the Youthreach lads are. A member of Limerick Kayaking club said to me, "it's funny I would probably be afraid of my life to talk to those lads, they look so rough. To be fair to them they are good as gold. They really want to paddle and you can see how much they appreciate it.
>
> -   Anonymous Limerick Kayak Club member, Extract from Research Diary

Pratt (1991) comments on how the influence of a dominant ideology can affect minorities within institutions, "in their dialogues with dominant Institutions, many groups began asserting a rhetoric of belonging that made demands beyond those of representation and basic rights granted from above. In universities we started to hear, I don't just want you to let me be here, I want to belong here; this institution should belong to me as much as it does to anyone else". Understanding what

happens in the contact zone is important as where groups of people with asymmetrical power meet there is great potential to see the world from another perspective. Though two communities might be located within minutes of each other the inhabitants might be living very different lives.

The RAP and GAISCE programmes involved the organisation of, and participation in many events which created opportunities for participants to enter the contact zone and engage with people outside their normal social networks. These programmes also provided scope for young people to produce work they could be proud of and share it with experts in their field of inquiry allowing them to solve problems affecting their own lives and feel that they have achieved something in doing so. The year after the data collection had finished there was great demand from learners for Canoeing so the programme was expanded to last twenty six weeks and learners were taken to a greater number of events run by the University of Limerick Kayaking Club and Canoeing Ireland to increase their time in the contact zone and expose them to greater number of groups and different people. Charlie shares his experience of his reaction to entering the University of Limerick Kayak club boathouse for the first time.

> The people in the club are so nice they showed us around the boathouse and showed us where everything is from the kayaks to gear and where to sign in and out equipment. When I first walked in and met the members I couldn't talk over everything that was in the boathouse from the kayaks to the gear the place it's amazing.
>
> – Extract from Charlie's Personal Reflection

Entering the contact zone allowed participants to interact with groups of people they would not normally encounter. It allows young people to expand their social networks and their interests. To identify new "sparks" that might ignite a new passion, it expands their access to developmental assets while focusing on their strengths. Transgressing these social boundaries can be an emotional experience as highlighted by Charlie and the reaction of Tommy described below.

On the drive home after a particularly long day kayaking followed by pizza and a trip to the pool to practice more advanced techniques with the university students Tommy seemed close to tears.[32] When asked if he ok he kept repeating that it had been the "best day of his life".

- Extract from Research Diary

This was a poignant moment for me as a researcher and conveyed to me the passion Tommy had discovered for his new sport and reminded me of my own passion for the sport. These programmes encourage pro social activity and help young people to overcome marginalisation as through greater exposure to pro social nodes with shared interests these "sparks" can be kindled and nurtured so that young people can thrive.

Through the RAP programme the participants were challenged to research problems affecting their own lives. The solutions created to the problem identified by these young people were not particularly effective on a macro level because of the small sample size and the rural setting in which the research took place but through partnership with allies in the wider community participants were able to feel like they had made a positive contribution to the problem they were working on and made an impact on a micro level within the group and on themselves. Being part of an organisation and having a sense of belonging can allow for young people to cross boundaries. In these social spaces they have positive adult role models, experience positive peer influence and see that there are high expectations of them.

Crossing boundaries like this can empower young people as they are transplanted into an environment that is rich in developmental assets. They experience community that values youth, a university environment that sees youth as resources rather than a future drain on the state. While risk taking is essential to the development of young people, the approach taken to ensuring safety and managing that risk are critical external developmental assets. Transgressing boundaries allowed the participants in the programme to be seen as "good as gold" rather than "rough looking lads"

---

[32] Advanced techniques - After learning the basic strokes that a paddler uses to navigate a river the focus of the course shifts to learning safety skills. The learners learned how to pack and use a throw rope to rescue a person floating down a river using the "Talk, Reach, Throw, Go" principle in which they attract the persons attention, throw the rope to them and then pull them into the safety of the river bank. The learners are then taught how to conduct a series of rescues including a capsize drill where a canoeist safely exits a capsized boat. An "X rescue" where a canoeist assists a team member to empty a capsized boat that is full of water and to get back into the boat while in deep water and finally a "T rescue" where a canoeist helps a capsized team member to right his boat without exiting it.

who would normally be avoided. A similar shift in perception occurred when the participants began to see the University students as "so nice" rather than "posh or stuck up". Crossing the boundary and within the contact zone participants were able to nourish themselves on developmental assets that were abundantly available in the University realm but not as readily available in their own communities. **Through interactions that occurs within the contact zone it is possible to "borrow" social capital.** Charlie describes his unease crossing into the contact zone.

> To be part of the UL club was unreal because it's a very well-known and very recognised club in Ireland for the amount of championships and trophies won. After a few weeks passed we were so used to being in practicing every week we were told we had been entered in the club champs which was taking place down In Clonmel for 3 days in April. This made me and even the other kayakers from Youthreach very nervous because we had to perform in front of hundreds of not just people, but really experienced kayakers from all over Ireland. It was an amazing experience to be included in the club champs and represent a club in front of so many people.
>
> – Extract from Charlie's Personal Reflection

The participants in the Canoeing Skills programme particularly enjoyed interacting with members of the University of Limerick kayaking club being taken to "pool sessions" with the University students, and were granted membership of the club. Getting permission to join the club was challenging initially the members of the club committee and some of the college authorities had to be contacted and there was some fear that the participants would disrupt club events, and steal or damage equipment, but after some assurances were given fears were allayed. This resulted in a greater interest in pursuing higher level education and a perception shift in how they viewed University students from "posh" and "stuck up" to nice friendly supportive people. In general participants in these programmes enjoyed the fresh air and the novelty of the approach and the escape from the confines of the classroom to the tranquillity of the outdoors, as described by Darren in the vignette. The participants and the University students connected on a personal level after which there was no longer any friction between their respective social fields. They were comfortable and at home with each other, the participants truly felt part of the University Kayak club and began referring to the University boathouse as their boathouse. This study found that young people need to feel like they belong and that they are connected, before connections are made contact must occur.

4.10 Assessing the PYD Programmes

The Framework of Developmental Assets has according to Benson *et al.* (2010) 40 different assets which met the needs of the ESL's psyche. These 40 assets are subdivided into external assets

including; supports, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time and internal assets including; commitment to learning, positive values, social competences, and positive identity. Benson (2010) found that learners engaged in PYD programmes performed better using academic indicators, were less likely to be violent and exhibit lower levels of anti-social behaviour. The presence or absence of these developmental assets within the social ecology of young people determines whether the conditions are likely to allow the young people within to thrive or fail. As demonstrated by this research through engagement in PYD programmes, ESLs can enter new social fields where there is a greater abundance of developmental assets mentored by an adult ally who can help them to navigate the doxa of the new social field. The PYD programmes that were included in this research were particularly useful in developing internal developmental assets that relate to positive values such as personal power, self-esteem, sense of purpose and a positive view of the future. The programmes were particularly useful in the development of external developmental assets that relate to empowerment such as community that values youth, youth as resources, service to others and safety. Charlie reflects on how he developed leadership skills and learned to guide the group safely.

> I never wanted to go first in case I went the wrong way. After a while I could tell where the rocks were and where the water would capsize you. Then I could lead the way.

- Extract from Charlie's personal reflection

As Charlie's confidence grew he was no longer afraid to lead the group but was also able to guide the group members following him safely through rapids on the river. Benson (2010) suggests that in order to develop what he refers to as the developmental nutrients a youth needs to succeed in life PYD programmes should, "(a) develop a science-based approach to ecological change, (b) orchestrate that change, (c) measure change in the intended context, and (d) assess how context changes actually inform individual-level development" (Benson 2010 p. 226). A scientific measure was used to test the success of the programmes in this research. The CYRM is a psychometric measure that measures the resilience of young people. Change was orchestrated in the external assets of the learners; adult relationships, school climate, community involvement, service learning, safety, adult role models and positive peer influence. The ecological assets available to the participants were altered through the intervention of PYD and the agency of the participants themselves. Internal assets of the participants that changed included; achievement motivation, school engagement and school work, bonding to school, social justice, responsibility, interpersonal and cultural competence, personal power self-esteem and positivity. These ecological changes were brought about by the agency of the learners involved and the group dynamic that was created as bonds developed throughout the PYD programmes. Though these assets are desired, the context in

which the research was conducted was to discover if these PYD programmes could improve resilience and this was the main criterion being measured. Individual level development was constant throughout the programmes as the ESLs learned new skills and began to use these skills for the benefit of the group, confidence grew.

> We were near the end of the section of the river we were doing when two boats capsized at the same time. It wasn't particularly dangerous but I was worried the lads in the water would panic. I started paddling as fast as I could to help when Charlie and Darren paddled up to one of the swimmers and took over the situation, putting their new rescue skills into action. This left me free to assist the other swimmer.[33] This was a proud moment as a teacher for me.

> - Extract from Research Diary

In this example it was clear that characteristics such as discipline, and leadership, had been fostered in the participants as they confidently demonstrated their new skills. The CYRM was the measure employed to test for improvements in resilience and results indicated an 8 percent increase in overall resilience. RAP required the participants to seek solutions to problems affecting their own lives. When participants realised they had many of the same problems in common, a sense of solidarity developed and when any member of the group spoke about a problem affecting their life they empowered others in the group to do the same. This enabled learners to become empathetic towards one another and learn how to care about themselves and each other. They formed connections with each other and the adult allies participating in each PYD as they worked together find solutions. Canoe Skills participants developed empathy and trust as they held their breath waiting for rescue and felt fear as part of a group endeavour.

GAISCE participants experienced similar bonding experiences as they motivated slower moving group members on their adventure journey and completed their challenges. Participants in each of the PYDs developed competences in new skills; research skills, rescue skills and the ability to persevere despite setbacks and meeting with initial failure.

> Sometimes when we were walking and one of us fell behind you had to encourage them to keep going. Otherwise we all fail. Some people are fitter than others but if you don't help the ones who fall behind, we don't get to the end.

> - Extract from Joe's personal reflection

In the above example Joe recalls how the group learned how to move on after a failure. On one of the practice walks undertaken in preparation for the adventure journey the morale of the group broke down after the group went off course and the walk was abandoned. After much discussion

---

[33] Swimmer – In the sport of Canoeing a person who falls out of their boat is referred to as a swimmer.

about responsibility, commitment and teamwork in the days after the practice walk, the group tried again in the understanding that we could not proceed with the trip without sticking together. Participants responded well to service learning and enjoyed the notion that they were making a positive contribution. This tended to increase the participant's self- worth and as this happened they formed more positive perceptions of their community too. Adult allies acted as gate keepers and positive pro social nodes in partnership with the participants. Participation in community activity was an empowering experience for participants. Participants were able to see themselves as making a positive contribution.

Participants engaged with critical theory through a series of workshops. They were able to make connections between systems and asymmetrical power relationships. While they easily understood the concept of social class, more advanced concepts such as hegemony seemed beyond their reach. They were able however to imagine how system might be changed and how small events might contribute to big changes. Participants became more involved in sporting activities and outdoor education. They enjoyed the challenge and excitement of the outdoor expedition and responded well to concepts of self-reliance and teamwork. Charlie explains how in the Canoe Skills programme the participants were forced to work as a team and be self-reliant.

> When we get on the river the van and the boats are parked where we are getting off. If someone comes with us and gets too tired we have to take turns towing them. There is no other way of getting to the end.

> - Charlie, Extract from Researcher Diary

Responsibility, commitment and empathy were personal skills developed as part of this process. Tommy explains how solidarity and empathy emerged out of necessity.

> I used to get angry with people if they could not keep up. But that just makes it worse. You need to hang back with them and tell them they can do it. Complaining doesn't get the job done.

> - Tommy, Extract from Researcher Diary

Participants were empowered by the challenge of solving problems relevant to their own lives. This was effective in developing group solidarity, friendship and empathy as many of the participants realised they had similar problems affecting their lives. Participants experienced a range of emotions as they faced set-backs and found themselves having to deal with difficult challenges on their expeditions. More than once participants seemed to give up and flatly refuse to continue until motivated to continue by other members of the group. Difficulties such as getting lost or injured were significant setbacks from which participants had to recover.

Though aware of their own history, participants seemed less aware of the similarities in their history. ESLs tend to label themselves as "scumbags or knackers" these are classist slurs on working class people that have been internalised by ESLs. While at the end of the research process participants no longer thought of themselves as "scumbags" they did not seem to realise from where it was that they had gotten the idea that they were in the first place. Participants became involved in service learning and made contributions to each other's projects and a wider contribution to the community outside the centre to charitable organisations and the local community centre. This was a highly supported approach to service learning were adult allies were nearly always available to come to the rescue. There is scope for research on a more prolonged and in-depth approach to service learning with ESLs. Participants became involved in three PYD programmes which are described throughout this thesis. The Youthreach programme itself might be regarded as a PYD programme as it seeks to maximise the potential of marginalised youth.

The resilience scores of the participants increased as measured by the CYRM. Service learning might be a contributory factor in improving resilience scores. Throughout the three PYD programmes the participants developed leadership skills, commitment, discipline and responsibility. The desire to lead and an attitude of looking for work for ways in which they can contribute was perhaps the greatest affect the programmes had on the participants. These were the most beneficial attributes of the programme because it gave the participants a sense that they were valued. Through their mini research projects and the regional survey the participants were able to collect data necessary to present a profile of ESLs. They did not compile a profile of the ESL as the data they collected was almost entirely interpreted by this researcher. Though data analysis with the participants might have yielded more in depth and novel interpretations of the data the time available did not allow for this to happen as most the participants finished their final exams.

4.11 Summary of Key Findings

When asked informally about stereotypes that people might have about learners who attend Youthreach an unfortunately common answer from learners was that they were scumbags. This stereotype seemed to be internalised by the learners who seemed to believe to some extent that it was true. This is significant as it confirms that demonization exists and is an issue for ESLs, many of them have internalised the working class loser stereotype. The internalisation of this discriminatory belief might result in other themes that emerged from the research; depression and drug use and their might indeed be a cyclical relationship between all three themes. The effects of these three themes likely influence and exacerbate each other resulting in the phenomenon of learned

helplessness. It is important to note that not all ESLs suffer from these effects but this research had indicated that for many ESLs; discrimination, drug use and depression are commonly experienced.

ESLs identified being treated as different and reported suffering from discrimination. The project was difficult for John as he realised the extent to which discrimination was institutionalised by the political system particularly in the area of housing. John took action on the issue by presenting his findings to the Road Safety Authority which he felt only produced road safety information for wealthy horse owners and did not try to engage with Travellers at all. He was hurt to discover how some of his peers who themselves reported suffering from discrimination held negative views about Traveller people. The role of discrimination against minorities is recognised as a contributory factor in ESL, "as long as minority groups are overrepresented among the truants, imbalances between majority and minority groups are perpetuated and empowerment of the disadvantaged is less feasible" (Cnaan R.A. and Seltzer V.A. 1989 pp. 171 - 183).

There is a correlation between drug use and ESL particularly cannabis use. Most, but not all of the participants reported depression and drug abuse as issues for them, from a series of informal conversations it was clear that these young people were dealing with significant levels of adversity. This would seem to confirm that ESL is an effect of adversity rather than ineptitude on the part of the individual. Further links were made by the group between people suffering from anxiety or depression during to drug use as an outlet or escape from the pain they feel inside. It is outside of the scope of this thesis to investigate whether drug use is a result of depression and emotional difficulty or inversely depression and emotional difficulty are a result of drug use. There may be no cause and effect relationship but they are both significant issues affecting the lives of ESLs.

There is a correlation between depression and EL. Feeling constantly discriminated against is likely to cause depression and other negative emotions. There is a correlation between ESL and discrimination. Truancy or continuous absence is a likely predictor of ESL. Depression is a likely cause of truancy. Hunt and Hopko (2009) discovered a strong correlation between depression and truancy.

Brandibas *et al.* (2004) found that anxiety is an "essential component of school refusal". In Darren's case he visibly suffered from and reported suffering from severe anxiety. Through his involvement in the Canoeing Skills programme he was able to confront his fear and anxiety which led to a great feeling of relief a kind of natural high. Initially Darren found Canoeing quite difficult but eventually he found it a great way to release his anxiety. This is further supported by improvements in resilience of thirteen of the fifteen participants. Harry and Helen's resilience scores did not increase. However they were subject to adverse extraneous conditions during the research period. Recorded

increases in resilience were greatest for participants that took part in RAP and GAISCE which were twenty six weeks long, and reported increases in resilience of nine percent and ten percent while Canoeing skills was eight weeks long and recorded an increase of seven percent this would suggest that to maximise the resilience building potential of PYD programmes they should be designed as long term programmes.

ESLs enjoy being treated like adults. The uniform breaks association with the world of adults. ESLs do not like uniforms because it breaks alignment with the world of adults. Being treated like an adult signifies that the young person is being respected. She is not being rejected as a person or because of her habitus. She can form positive connections. Hanging around with the wrong people was a common issue identified by learners in the centre as having been a contributory factor in their initial withdrawal from mainstream schooling.

Clare reported the controlling influence of teachers as a push factor in her decision to leave school. Josephine identified hanging around with the wrong people as being a factor that led to her eventual withdrawal from school. Both girls reported suffering from depression. This would suggest that peer influence and mentoring can influence ESL. Darren reported drug use, depression and anxiety as negative forces in his life and John reported systemic oppression and discrimination as being of concern to him. **PYD has been shown to disrupt the negative effects of the D Cycle, and it increases resilience in a quantifiable way.** Through PYD participants in this study were exposed to new social networks and activities which allowed them to make connections in new peer groups guided by a mentor. The prevalence of low self-esteem and depression among ESLs is high and strategies for addressing it and other attributes of the D Cycle are considered in the next chapter.

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter examined the effect of the Positive Youth Development Programmes on the resilience of Early School Leavers in the centre and sought any improvement in resilience using the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM) as a metric for measuring resilience. The research question, "Can Positive Youth Development Programmes (PYDs) be used to increase resilience in Early School Leavers (ESLs)?" is answered by the data presented in this chapter which shows an overall improvement in resilience (CYRM scores) for the same group being tested. The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that PYD programmes are useful in the promotion of pro-social involvement in ESLs. The data suggests that the PYDs can lead to increased physical activity among ESLs. This may seem a redundant point as for some of the programmes physical activity was required. However, a supportive group dynamic that emerged in the group kept participants that would normally give up

easily motivated as they were encouraged by their peers within the group and a sense of solidarity. Many of the outcomes of the RAP programme suggest that PYDs can also increase agency in ESLs. YPAR is also congruent with best practice in adult education in that the knowledge is relevant to learner's life. This resulted in increased motivation in learners in the centre. Youth Researchers developed tangible projects as outcomes for their mini research projects. Though the sample size was small for the RAP programme (n = 19) because of their ability to identify issues affecting their own lives the YPAR group were able to examine a larger sample in the regional survey (n = 571) which confirmed that the issues identified for these young people where issues relevant to ESLs and were representative of the population as a whole.

It is difficult to present the findings of each programme independently as many participants took part in more than one programme. It would also be possible to integrate all three programmes under the GAISCE programme however it was not possible to do this at the time for various reasons including the scheduling of classes and rooms and insurance difficulties with the Canoe Skills programme. Conducting the GAISCE programme as a two year programme to span the length of the LCA and following the Gold or Silver GAISCE programme would allow scope to do this. There have been efforts made to run a programme similar to RAP within the GAISCE framework by the Young Social Innovators project which is also run by the office of the president.

Positive Youth Development is a useful methodology for working with ESLs who are alienated from their communities and seeks to expose them to as many pro-social activities as possible in the hope that this, can help reintegrate them into their communities and feel that they can be valued members of their communities. The only participants in the programme to experience a drop in resilience were Harry and Evan. During the course of the programmes Harry was evicted from his home and in the last week of the programme he was expelled from the centre though allowed to finish the last day of the Canoeing Skills programme. There is a limit to what can be achieved through these programmes as if a young person's life is particularly chaotic the effects of PYD programmes can be significantly reduced. Though the PYD programmes were successfully for the majority of participants extraneous conditions of extreme adversity in Harry's life made it difficult for this to happen. Though PYD can be effective in promoting resilience in ESLs it is not a panacea.

This chapter examined the three PYD programmes that were undertaken by participants in the centre. The RAP programme was by far the most data intensive and identified depression and substance abuse as serious issues affect the lives of ESLs. The regional survey confirmed that these issues are reported by ESLs in other Youthreach centres in the south of Ireland. Evidence from the CYRM scores of the participants indicates that all three programmes were effective in promoting

resilience in ESLs. Depression and substance abuse are significant issues affecting the lives of ESLs. ESLs respond well to outdoor education and challenges such as the adventure journey component of the GAISCE award. Participants reported feeling a better about issues affecting their own lives and were empowered to take action on them. Positive Youth Development is a non-judgemental way of dealing with ESLs and the issues they present with. The YPAR methodology used in the RAP programme underpinned the study as a whole as it identified the problems affecting their lives. Participants were able to take action on these problems as part of the GAISCE programme as part of the community involvement component of the award but the driving force behind the actions was the RAP programme.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the issues affecting the lives of ESLs, recommendations on how the D Cycle (discussed in chapter four) might be disrupted, review the key findings of the thesis, state the contribution to knowledge this research has made, the limitations of this research, implications for future research and make recommendations for ESL policy and practice. The level of adversity experienced by ESLs is a major impediment to their development and influences how they navigate their educational lives. The burden of socio-economic adversity impacts upon the physical, mental and emotional health of ESLs. Positive youth development is explored as a proactive approach to the health and well-being of ESLs and as a methodology for overcoming marginalisation in ESLs. Contact zones are examined as a space in which ESLs can challenge their self-perception and revaluate their opinions and beliefs about other groups of people. Recommendations about interactions with ESLs are discussed. In the previous chapter, research findings indicated that ESLs often experience discrimination, depression and use drugs. ESLs are more likely to have suffered from adverse experiences such as child abuse, poor housing, domestic violence, substance abuse within the home and a deficits based approach to their development will likely be counterproductive. Positive Youth Development (PYD) has been shown to offer ESL educators a chance to challenge the phenomenon of demonization discussed throughout this thesis. Strategies from PYD are examined as a methodology to combat negative internalised stereotypes. While psychological examinations of ESLs are outside the scope of this thesis exploring strategies to combat and challenge demonization are well within the scope of this research, as evidenced in the research findings.

Through the RAP Programme young people in a Youthreach centre in the province of Munster in Ireland, were able to concentrate on problems affecting their own lives. The GAISCE programme created scope for the ESLs involved in the programme to develop their own interests in a pro social way as well as gaining a sense of achievement by completing the programmes. The Canoeing Skills programme allowed the participants to engage in a new sport and to experience their environment in another way from another point of view. These programmes sought to focus on the strengths of the learners, to expose them to new situations to help them to discover a side of themselves that they were previously unaware.

The participants developed a sense of group solidarity empowered them to discuss difficult issues together. They were able to articulate issues in their lives that made them more interested in their school work, particularly when it came to their mini research projects. There was a newly found motivation for their projects which arose during the RAP programme. The prestige and challenge of the GAISCE programme and the passion the participants developed for a new sport in the Canoeing Skills programme are examples of how PYD allowed the participants to discover a spark, "sparks are

156

described as a passion for a self-identified interest, skill or capacity that metaphorically lights a fire in an adolescent's life, providing energy, joy, purpose, and direction" (Scales & Benson 2010 p. 264). This research has found that helping young people to discover these sparks is the job of the ESL teacher. The adult ally acts as the gatekeeper to positive social connections this is best achieved by a sustained focus on what is best for the young person and a genuine concern for their well-being. Scales & Benson (2010 p 265) suggest, "adolescents' deep personal interests or sparks; the opportunities most often realised through significant relationships youth have to identify and develop those sparks, talents and interests; and their self-perception of being empowered or having voice".

This research suggests that forces feeding demonization include; educational disadvantage, substance abuse, discrimination, internalised stereotypes, and membership of marginalised groups. These forces can dampen the spirits of ESLs and prevent these sparks from igniting. Friction which occurs in the contact zone can reinvigorate the spirit of the ESL as they experience life from another point of view. The contact zone is important as it expands the social networks of ESLs and exposes them to new influences and potentially positive relationships. In the contact zone, access to new social fields is expanded. Mentoring from an adult ally prevents the ESL being expelled from a new field for disobeying the doxa within that field or not having enough cultural capital. In this sense, the adult ally or mentor acts as a lender of social capital as demonstrated in the last chapter. Charlie's comments help clarify this point.

> I am always getting thrown out of the pool when I go in there with the lads. They tell us we can't dive in but it's an Olympic swimming pool with things for diving in off. That's actually what they are for. The students seem to be able to do anything they want and it's not a problem.
>
> -   Charlie, Extract from Research Diary

When reading Charlie's comments it is reasonable to assume that he was subjected to some degree of discrimination. When visiting the pool as a member of the public was subjected to the standard rules of pool use by a member of the public. When visiting the pool as a member of the University's Kayak Club, he is treated as a member of the student body. Though there are still life guards present they are more relaxed as they see the other students as colleagues and the pool has been closed to members of the public. Often the lifeguards are also members of the kayak club. The sport has intrinsic to it a need for safety and rescue training which is one of the reasons for being in the pool in the first place. The rules have changed. Charlie might react with anger to a lifeguard who approaches him to scold him for jumping in and see it as discrimination, however he does not understand that the doxa within the social space that is the University swimming pool changes when it closes. Having

a mentor explain the difference and indeed explain the best way to deal with an angry life guard is useful.

Young people who experience poverty and discrimination might be forgiven for resorting to substance abuse as escapism, Sadava *et al* (1978) suggest that drug and alcohol abuse are related to escapism, assuagement of tension and learned helplessness. Substance abuse is related to a thrill seeking behaviour that emerges either from boredom or a lack of concern for oneself as a result of prolonged exposure to fatalistic narratives. The NACAD (2010) found that young people with friends that engaged in drug taking were more likely to take drugs. However, the opposite, was also true, young people who had friends that did not use drugs were less likely to take drugs, "it is likely that involvement in many kinds of activities, if these are properly supervised, provides a healthy environment for young people" NACAD (2010 p 96). Replacing drug taking behaviour with a more socially acceptable and pro-social activities like outdoor education where exposure to risk and thrills are intrinsic to the experience allow for healthy growth and development of young people without the dangers of overdose, chemical dependency and criminality. ESLs may also turn to drugs as a way of constructing a counter narrative about themselves as the NACAD (2010 p 26) suggest, "those who feel that they have failed at school and are seeking an alternative identity through participation in non-conforming peer groups or counter-cultures".

The science of positive youth development emerged in the late nineties and the knowledge base continues to grow (Benson *et. al* 1998, 2006, Lerner *et al.* 2002, Benson 2006, Benson & Scales 2009, Benson & Scales 2010). PYD is an emancipatory and empowering process. Deliberate effort should be taken by ESL teachers to build self-esteem in their learners and this is an integral part of teaching with any group. Fostering a sense of purpose and goal orientation is part of regular schooling as learners work towards exams and qualifications PYD offers another set of goals to work towards which are often complementary to the school or centre objectives. Service learning, physical fitness and the development of skills are congruent to the goals of most educational institutions.

The PYD programmes undertaken as part of this research focused on empowerment. Youth were challenged to become more active in their communities and engaged in community involvement. Being seen as resources by their community and providing service to others is important for young people, it is empowering and reinforces their identities as being contributing members of the community. Safety was identified as an issue for ESLs in chapter five. Engaging in reckless behaviour is associated with juvenile delinquency as Brownfield and Sorenson (1993 p 247) comment, "criminal acts involve an element of risk and excitement. Offenders tend to be more adventuresome and physical than non-offenders". The research indicates that outdoor education provides young people

with an opportunity to learn about safety and risk minimisation, to measure risk and reward and assess risk and reduce risk.

All three of the PYD programmes improved resilience in the majority of participants. The GAISCE programme recorded the greatest increase in resilience for the participants of 10%, the RAP programme followed closely behind with an overall increase in the CYRM score of 9%, finally Canoe Skills had an overall increase of 7% though this programme only lasted for a third of the time that the other two programmes lasted. The participants in the GAISCE programme were exposed to outdoor education and through these programmes became more physically active. GAISCE comes from the Irish language and it means achievement. It is of course an achievement and when participants look at their medals upon completion of the programme they likely feel a sense of pride in what they have achieved. However, what participants seemed to value most was the challenge.

> You get the sheets that have to be signed off and you think it's never going to be done. I wasn't even sure that I wanted to do the thing. Especially because you have to pay the money to it and you're told that if people start dropping out then we won't be doing it anymore and the money is gone then. Then you see the signatures on the pages as the weeks go by and you're thinking we might actually do it. It could all fall apart at any time though, like when the lads just walked off home. But then you're thinking if we all just stick together we could actually get it.

> -Josephine, Extract from Research Diary

While the challenge exists and there is doubt as to whether or not the challenge can be completed, there is excitement, nervous energy, and the chance of failure. The realisation that the challenge can only be completed through sustained group effort binds the group together. The participants were able to challenge the dismal narrative of demonization and disrupt the D Cycle. Participants became more supportive of each other through mutual engagement and were able to confront issues affecting their own lives together. There is no miracle cure for the effects of demonization but as its effects are largely rooted in self-perception from false beliefs. Any attempt at challenging its effects must begin with perception of the young person. Through exposure to adversity in a controlled setting young people can be guided to find what is helpful or useful to them in adverse situations rather than becoming hopeless and resorting to despair. The futility of negativity can be overcome through talking out problems. The tendency to catastrophize alone was reduced and unexpectedly participants began to unburden themselves on this researcher which became overwhelming at times.

The RAP study focused on YPAR as a methodology for challenging young people to research and take action on problems affecting their own lives. This resulted in the participants opening up about their

problems. General health and well-being was raised as an issue and many of the participants identified depression as a problem affecting them. Substance abuse was another common problem. Discrimination and road safety were identified as a problem particularly a cavalier attitude to road safety. Discrimination and depression indicate a lack of self-esteem and a resulting recklessness and lack of concern for one's own well-being might explain the risk taking behaviour associated with substance abuse. This is recognised by Weiss *et al.* (1992 p 121) who claim that drug use is often used to alleviate depression. These were prominent issues identified by the youth researchers in the centre. Figures from the RAP regional survey confirm that these are issues for ESLs throughout the region. The RAP programmes YPAR methodology brought into focus the connectedness of the issues identified by participants in the programme. They relate to both physical and mental health. The research has found that ESLs have a negative perception of themselves which causes them to enter into the D cycle where discrimination, depression and drug use exacerbate their negative self-perception. A lack of self-regard manifesting itself in risky behaviours such as drug use, criminal activity and reckless activity on the road can be successfully challenged with PYD. Adult allies can act as mentors and lend social capital to this marginalised group of young people and assist them as they engage in safer pro-social activities.

5.2 Forces causing Demonization

There are a number of forces which result in demonization. They include the class-system, cultural narratives and neoliberal politics on the macro scale and on a micro scale manifest as negative internal dialogues and learned helplessness. Lamount (2000) refers to these beliefs as internalising the belief that the working class are "losers". This is a natural conclusion in an aggressively capitalist society wherein worth is determined by wealth. The class system has embedded within it cultural values and practices of its own. Working class people can transmit cultural values to their children which are suspicious of state authority and education which is discussed in chapter two. A grand narrative of neoliberal politics and recessionary economic doctrine, fuel the belief that the working class are a burden and the cause of the economic misfortune that has been in effect since the crash of 2008.[34] This research and the literature suggest that the issues affecting the lives of ESLs which lead to demonization are;

1. Educational Disadvantage
2. Adversity and crises
3. Substance abuse
4. Discrimination

---

[34] Crash of 2008 – refers to the global economic shock during this time period specifically as it relates to Ireland.

5. Internalised stereotypes
6. Membership of a marginalised group

5.2.1 Educational Disadvantage

ESLs are typically from working class backgrounds as was the case with the participants in this research. The training allowance paid by Youthreach centres to their learners provides some relief from poverty allows for a degree of financial independence, and provides an incentive to attend. There is an intergenerational effect relating to poverty, which is due to social reproduction as discussed in chapter two. The intergenerational effect of poverty is transmitted from parent to child in a value system that may not value academic achievement.

Poverty increases the level of adversity in a young person's life. Financial resources allow people to avoid some of the adversity that they face in life. Inadequate financial resources can result in the type of shock experienced by the dogs in Seligman's (1968) experiments. Subsequent expose to adversity can lead ESLs to believe that they are helpless. PYD is a methodology to challenge this notion.

5.2.2 Adversity and Crises

The participants in this study confirmed that higher levels of adversity and personal crises are reported by ESLs. ESLs suffer from a great deal of adversity and generally come from more disadvantaged groups in society as confirmed by (Stokes 2003, Dale 2010, Brown 2005, Downes 2011, Gordon 2017). According to Freil and Coulter (2004) Youthreach centres frequently report time being taken up dealing with the personal crises of their learners. Unmet mental health needs are also frequently reported by Youthreach management. The study shows PYD programmes can act as proactive solutions to crises. If young people are challenged to solve problems affecting their own lives they may begin to take power over their problems before they develop into full crises. Though aware that a number of ESLs that attended the centre had been in the care system it was surprising for this researcher to realise that so many had experienced it. Of ESLs surveyed as part of this study 17.9% reported having been in care. Being in care can have long lasting effects on young people and cause them to see state authorities as responsible for taking them from their parents. This can adversely affect their transition into adulthood. O'Neil comments on how difficulties experienced during childhood can impair transition to adulthood.

> Difficult and traumatic early childhoods as well as poor and deteriorating relationships were experienced by those studied and their accounts also revealed the interconnectedness of homelessness, drug and criminal careers. Negative relationships with key state institutions and services over time ensured that at a very young age, those homeless were living outside or marginal to the key services designed to facilitate children's transitions into young adulthood.

(O'Neil 2014 p. 82)

Young people who have had experience of the care system are likely to seek groups in which they can feel a sense of belonging, often they can easily fall prey to criminal groups. They might also have difficultly forming secure emotional attachments. Being moved around between different foster homes by state officials just as they begin to settle into one placement or another is likely to create a sense of mistrust with state officials. These events represent shocks upon the psyche of the ESL. Young people who find themselves in these situations are likely to become involved in criminality as they seek a sense of belonging and also find drug use as an outlet to mask the emotional pain of having such difficult childhoods. Mayock (2014 p. 6) identifies four pathways to homelessness for young people; history of state care, family instability, violence and neighbourhood stressors. She identifies criminality, substance abuse and mental health difficulties as being symptoms associated with young homeless people. These are also symptoms associated with ESL. Mayock (2014) makes the following suggestions; that youth homelessness should be targeted in schools, mediation services should be provided for parents and young people, where young people are taken into care efforts should be made to keep them in their own communities, and that state income supports should be adequate so that young people at risk can afford to live. Clare's vignette, presented in the last chapter, highlights somewhat the difficulties experienced by homeless youth.

Depression is a contributory factor in ESL and it was such a common topic in the RAP programme when ESLs were asked to research a problem affecting their own lives that steps were taken to deliberately reduce the number of participants who were going to tackle it. This was done so that there was a diversity of issues being researched by the participants. Fifty eight percent of respondents to the RAP regional survey also reported experiencing depression, for longer than two weeks. Depression is a complex phenomenon, in ESLs it might be a fatalistic response to continued exposure to adversity and the expectation that things will not ever get better. Though this researcher is unqualified to diagnose depression it is widely reported by ESLs as discussed in chapter four. PYD challenges this fatalistic narrative that things cannot get better and replaces it with a narrative of hope through empowering young people to take action on the issues that affect their lives.

5.2.3 Substance Abuse

Rates of substance abuse are much higher among ESLs and their attitude to drugs, particularly cannabis, is particularly permissive with many of them believing that cannabis is not really a drug in the same sense as other drugs. Cannabis use might be considered relatively benign when objectively compared with alcohol. This is often used as a rationalisation by ESLs for getting high at any time of the day. This attitude can lead ESLs to develop problematic use while they would understand quite well that getting drunk every day or early in the day would not be sensible or socially acceptable. Attitudes among some young people to cannabis verges on the absurd as highlighted by (Redmond and Dack 2014 p. 24), "Commenting on how normalised drug usage had become in the locality one project referred to young people taking joints like they would a packet of crisps". Teaching and learning with learners who are high is a futile exercise. A greater concern than cannabis use among ESLs is induction into drug culture whereby the young person is introduced into the criminal fraternity. Getting into debt and doing favours for dealers are the process of this induction as discussed in chapter five. A cultural tolerance of these types of activities among the working class and a mistrust of the state authorities make this a greater risk for ESLs than their middle class counterparts.

Substance abuse in ESLs is likely related to cultural factors associated with the working class as ESLs are more likely to come from areas of high unemployment where participation in the black economy is more necessary given a bleak economic outlook. Though drugs permeate through all social barriers and are used by both rich and poor alike serious addiction and more problematic use are more closely associated with the working class who lack the financial resources to attend rehab programmes, live in better resourced areas, and have greater social capital. Connolly and Donovan (2014, p. 34) highlight that though substance abuse is not confined to a particular social class some people are more likely to come to Garda attention "not all drug-dealers can be regarded as exclusively from a particular class or social background. The Garda National Drug Unit explains that those who come to the attention of the Garda Síochána tend to be from a particular social class".

Escapism is an important part of drug addiction. Alexander (1981) relates drug use to environmental factors and ESLs who come from deprived neighbourhoods with higher rates of crime are at greater risk of developing serious addiction problems. Alternative forms of escapism can therefore be offered to at risk youth in which they can form friendships while still pursuing a thrill in a safer healthier way.

5.2.4 Discrimination

Discrimination is frequently reported by ESLs as a problem they experience. As ESLs they are often ostracised within their communities having had the "bad apple" label applied to them and being removed from the mainstream. Being branded a "knacker" represents a stigma associated with membership of the working class or the Travelling community which also fuels this discrimination.[35] A mistrust of state authority is a factor in this regard as mistrust of the Gardaí seems to work both ways and ESLs frequently report feeling discriminated against by the police as discussed in chapter four.

Discrimination is an external manifestation of demonization and is the likely origin of the phenomenon. Through the creation of new narratives that challenge the no hoper loser stereotype ESLs can realise that these narratives are not true. They can make and have made positive contributions to their communities. Challenging false narratives is an important part of any PYD programme as the 3 programmes demonstrated.

5.2.5 Internalised Stereotypes

Internalised stereotypes cause people to behave as if though the stereotypes were true. At the beginning of every year when meeting my new learners for the first time I ask, "why is it you are all here in this room here today having left school what is it you all have in common?" and the inevitable yet persistent answer is "we are scumbags." Changing this perception is the challenge for ESL educators. ESLs believe that they have failed through flaws in their character because they are unworthy or bad. It never occurs to them that they are all from the same disadvantaged areas and bringing about a change in their explanatory style in essential to helping ESLs reach their full potential.

Seligman *et al.* (1965) initially conducted his experiments on animals and discovered the phenomenon of learned helplessness discussed in chapter 2. Seligman (2006) building on over 40 years of research refers to explanatory style. Explanatory style refers to how people explain their circumstances. A negative explanatory style results in adverse events been explained by a perceived error or failure on the part of the subject. A more positive explanatory style attributes adverse events to external circumstances or bad luck. Persistent exposure to negative events can lead to a pessimistic explanatory style. Though personal responsibility is important a more optimistic explanatory style shifts the focus from individual ineptitude which makes success impossible to

---

[35] Knacker – An insult used to dehumanise the working class and frequently levelled against members of the Travelling community.

bringing about the conditions by which success is possible. Negative explanatory style is a feature of learned helplessness; an optimistic explanatory style is a feature of resilience.

5.2.6 Membership of a Marginalised Group

This section will examine three particularly vulnerable groups of ESLs; young people in crisis, young people in care and Travellers. These groups have been identified as a subset of ESLs who are particularly vulnerable by Stokes (2004). This study included two members of particularly marginalised groups a member of the LGBT community and a member of the Traveller community and many of the participants had been in care (though it is true to say that all participants were marginalised). Repressive ideology in schools is not limited to class struggle. Religious ideology can alienate learners too. LGBT students can find themselves pushed out of the mainstream schools that are almost entirely Catholic and though their teachers may not agree that they are an abomination as the bible declares they are compelled to adhere to a religious ethos that transmits this value.[36]

Lesbian Gay Bisexual & Transgender Ireland comment on the difficultly LGBT learners face in Irish schools, "whilst there have been some improvements in LGBT students' school experiences since the Supporting LGBT Lives study in 2009, the LGBT Ireland study found that going to school continues to be a very difficult experience for many young LGBT people" (Higgins 2016). The report highlights that severe stress anxiety and depression were up to four times higher in LGBT young people. The Gay & Lesbian Equality Network comment on the difficulties experienced by LGBT people and the effect on their mental health, "psychological distress experienced by LGBT people was found to be strongly associated with external stressors in their environment such as presumed heterosexuality, homophobia, prejudice and victimisation." (GLEN 2014) The alienation experienced by LGBT youth would seem to have a negative effect on their mental health. It is important that ESL centres be welcoming environments for LGBT learners who may have left the mainstream because of bullying. Providing a safe environment for them and to trust their teachers and peers are necessary steps in reducing the susceptibility that LGBT learners have to mental health difficulties.

The effect of this widespread discrimination on Travellers is acknowledged by All Ireland Traveller Health Study (2010b), "Due to experiencing wide-spread discrimination and stereotyping, Travellers reported having internalised the negative views of them" (AITHS 2010b p. 5). Internalised negative beliefs of internalised stereotypes have a destructive effect on the lives of many young Travellers in Ireland. The AITHS (2010b) reports that Traveller men are 6.6 times more likely to kill themselves than members of the settled community.

---

[36] 'You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.' Leviticus chapter 18 verse 22

> The Traveller learners who were involved in the consultation process and the practitioners, in particular, emphasised the need for the often strong influence of their culture to be understood and taken into account by practitioners when working with Travellers. Among specific issues identified as problematic by the learners were the existence of discrimination, cultural practices such as early or arranged marriages, domestic violence and health problems.

(Gordon 2004 p. 32)

The discrimination faced by Travellers in their daily lives in Ireland verges on the extreme the effect this has on their psyche is destructive. The result of the deep discrimination against Travellers means they live in close knit family groups and often find it difficult to trust outsiders. This degree of social exclusion has a noticeable impact upon the psyche of Traveller people, the All Ireland Traveller Health Survey report, "there are a number of examples of fatalistic thinking in the narratives, particularly in trying to break the cycle of education and employability. There is ample evidence in these data of risk factors for mental ill-health, depression and suicide" (AITHS 2010b p. 19). Social depravation and exclusion create false beliefs in the minds of those affect by them, these false beliefs cause the person experiencing them pain and anguish affecting not only their hopes and dreams but lead them to question their very right to exist. They have a unique and robust culture that is closed off to "buffers" on the outside as it is possibly the only way to preserve their culture and stop it from being completely assimilated by the more dominant settled community.[37] Literacy is certainly a major obstacle for Travellers trying to gain employment in Ireland. Discrimination and suspicion from the settled community are also major concerns that needed to be addressed. When examining PYD programmes that involve Travellers and trying to ignite sparks it is important not to superimpose "Settled Sparks" on to Traveller youth. Identifying existing sparks that are already present within Traveller culture certainly seems easier that reinventing the wheel.[38] This is discussed further in potential for further research.

5.3 Critical Events

Many ESLs who attend Youthreach have left school because of some key event in their development; a death in the family, bullying, being expelled, serious illness in the family, being in care, etc. This was true of the participants in this research. These events are critical incidents in the life of the young person and may cause acting out behaviour as young people struggle to deal with the aftermath of these events. Substance abuse may begin as escapism exaggerating the problem. If

---

[37] Buffer – A word used by Irish Travellers to describe a member of the Settled community.
[38] "Sparks are described as a passion for a self-identified interest, skill or capacity that metaphorically lights a fire in an adolescent's life, providing energy, joy, purpose, and direction." (Scales & Benson 2010 p. 264)

events such as these can have such a negative effect on young people then positive events surely have a similar power to influence the trajectory of a young person's life. There were many events which took place as part of this research including; a presentation to the Road Safety Authority, a fundraiser for the local Community Centre, Mental Health awareness day and a fundraiser for Pieta House[39], a Drugs Consciousness day and the presentation of research findings to the community drugs worker, an adventure journey consisting of an overnight stay and 30 kilometre hike. These events allowed the participants to realise their own agency in mobilising agents within their communities and to play a role in responding to problems affecting their own lives.

If sparks are the energy that provide the stimulus for an event or process that ignites a passion in a young person allowing them to form, as Scales and Benson (2010) put it, "deep personal interests …. that are most often realised through significant relationships", then the energy that causes marginalisation and learned helplessness must also be named. Shocks are the opposite to sparks, sparks represent a cathartic significant life event that ignite a new passion, shocks are cathartic significant life events that dull passion and quench the taste of life and lead to anhedonia and learned helplessness. Dealing with ESLs discovering the shocks can be just as important as igniting the sparks. It is important to know their backgrounds, family situation, living conditions and circumstances that might trigger their sensitivities, which will result in acting out behaviour. When young people have suffered from adverse childhood experiences understanding these events can be quintessential in understanding their behaviour. Through joint activity dyads it can become possible to develop significant relationships where trust exists and proper understanding of the adverse experiences a young person might have had emerges so that it is possible to act as an effective mentor.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

Demonization causes ESLs to withdraw from education and from their communities a range of researchers refer to this effect. Though researched extensively by; (Durkheim 1893, Lukás 1923, Fannon 1952, Adams 1997, OECD 1999, Lamount 2000, Stokes 2003, Wood 2012, Reay 2017), the effect has been identified but not specifically named as it relates to ESL and there exists a gap in the knowledge about how this force might be challenged. These writers describing the effect of demonization highlight a belief system of inferiority and learned helplessness they describe the outsiders, the excluded, those who have been subjected to the "bad apple" label. These young people who self-identify as "knackers" and "scumbags" are simply isolated. Through learned

---

[39] Pieta House provides free therapy and respite accommodation to those at risk of suicide or in distress

helplessness they have come to magnify threats and potential catastrophes in the manner that Bandura (1995) suggests. Zimmerman (2000) argues that belief plays a role in achievement, challenging the false beliefs of demonization by disturbing these thoughts and providing ESLs with the opportunity to make meaningful connections. The existing research confirms that the phenomenon of demonization exists. The phenomenon has been well described in the literature but there is little in the literature proposing what is to be done about it.

The D Cycle expresses how demonization works, discrimination, depression and drug use are important issues affecting the lives of ESLs. As identified in the regional survey conducted during this research, drugs, depression and discrimination are issues affecting ESLs. The personal reflections of participants and the RAP programme confirm this. There is likely a cyclical effect in this regard, as discrimination and the narrative of the "working class loser" when internalised, can lead to depression and drug use as a way of dealing with these harsh realities. As discussed earlier Connolly and Donovan (2014, p. 34) suggest substance abuse is not confined to a particular social class some people are more likely to come to Garda attention. Drug Net Ireland (2017)report on comments made by An Taoiseach Leo Varadker, "treating substance abuse and drug addiction as a public health issue, rather than a criminal justice issue, helps individuals, helps families, and helps communities. It reduces crime because it rebuilds lives".[40] This shifting of perception from substance misuse as a criminal issue to a public health issue might help aid in the demonization of working class youth. There is a correlation between cannabis use and ESL, although this does not necessarily imply causality.

Truancy or continuous absence is a likely predictor of ESL. The research indicates that a high number of ESLs have been in care (17.9%) and that they may suffer emotionally as a result. The research suggests that ESLs are moulded by their social networks and their access to developmental assets. Gordon (2017) remarks, that the principal focus for the ESL teacher is the creation of a connection with the young person. Though this is not new, this research provides an examination of three programmes that help to foster this connection. The research confirms that through the mentorship of an adult ally, boundaries can be crossed into contact zones where social capital can be developed through mutual process with ESLs and in these spaces their access to developmental assets can be expanded. The research indicates that taking action on an issue affecting one's own life can help a young person to take power over it. Developmental validity can be achieved through PYD and may disrupt the D Cycle.

---

[40] An Taoiseach – The Irish Prime Minister

The research confirms that ESLs respond well to PYD and that PYD can be used in the design of educational programmes to overcome feelings of marginalisation. The research suggests that the 3 Ds of the D cycle can be successfully challenged by the '5 Cs' of PYD. To recapitulate, the 5 Cs of PYD are competence, confidence, connection, caring and character. Competence conveys the ability to master the other domains. Confidence relates to self- worth and self- efficacy. Connection relates to positive proximal relationships so that family supports, peer groups and school and community groups provide a sense of belonging. Caring relates to compassion, empathy and concern for others. Character concerns a moral dimension in which the young person demonstrates a moral code that is suited to membership of their social ecology so that they can determine the difference between right and wrong subject to the accepted social norms. Bowers *et al.* (2010) comments on the relevance of connectedness during adolescence: "as youths transition to new learning environments, experience new social situations, and autonomy becomes an important developmental goal, many adolescents may begin to doubt their academic and social abilities and, as well, may feel less connected to both parents, peers, and the larger ecological context" (Bowers *et al.* 2010 p. 733). The five Cs model is used by PYD practitioners to integrate young people into their social ecologies while promoting traits in them that have a positive effect within the communities, schools, and groups to which these young people belong. The 5 Cs are a useful model in the design and implementation of PYD programmes and this research indicates that they can be used to disrupt the D Cycle and establish what Merton (2004 p. 5) refers to as a "virtuous cycle" of achievement.

The research confirms that through research into problems affecting their own lives (YPAR) young people can take positive actions and take action to address issues affecting their own lives, and that it is an empowering experience which can help combat the phenomenon of learned helplessness. This confirms that Positive Youth Development can be used to challenge demonization. Claire spoke about how she no longer felt that the issues affecting her life needed to be a secret anymore. Mark realised that there were supports available to assist him with the issues affecting his life and felt proud about his contribution to the fundraiser. Darren was able to express how "he felt like a new man" and how the programme was useful to help him clear his head. PYD works best when it incorporates elements of service learning, the altruism intrinsic to service learning allows ESL to change their opinions about themselves.

Through using a model like the 5 Cs which seeks to develop the individual, and integrating it into a framework of developmental assets within the social ecology the ideal conditions for young people to thrive are created: "thriving young people epitomize the idea, found in the developmental contextual version of developmental systems theory, that individuals are producers of their own

development" (Lerner 2002 p. 25). This is an empowering notion, and when young people become conscious of it, they begin to actualise. Discipline and self-control provide the springboard from which young people can achieve their goals, for instance, "at the individual level, self-control is a prerequisite for goal-oriented behaviour across multiple domains" (Guerra and Bradshaw 2008 p. 9). Without self-control young people are too easily diverted from their goals and allow excuses to distract them. Maddux (2000) suggests that a sense of control over one's behaviour is essential for happiness and healthy relationships.

Substance abuse is a likely result of escapism from anxiety and depression. Natural highs intrinsic to outdoor education and adventure sport are more socially acceptable and healthier alternatives, while still providing an escape and a sense of connection and belonging to a group. According to one Youthreach learner, Darren, "as you improve the rush you get starts to fade, you want bigger and better stuff to get your rush." Darren's comments highlight the suitability of this kind of activity as a replacement for drug use. His comments might also describe an addict chasing a high. In this case he is chasing a chemical high, an adrenaline rush, and it is likely as addictive as many of the illicit substances available on the street but it is a safer healthier alternative and must be conducted as part of a team carefully assessing the risk. As discussed in chapter 4 he found it a great way to escape from his anxiety. ESLs suffer more frequently from anxiety and depression as identified by Mc Garr (2010) and Barnados (2009). This study also confirmed a correlation between substance abuse, depression and ESL, with further links being identified by the HSA (2008) and Haase (2010). Substance abuse is a likely entry point into criminality. Disadvantage and criminality are by no means newly introduced themes in ESL literature, however this research confirms that PYD interventions can be used to effectively challenge an ESLs beliefs about themselves and led to more positive participation in their communities.

The research confirms that ESLs respond well to outdoor education and that outdoor education can disrupt the D Cycle by providing an alternative thrill to the "buzz" they might otherwise seek in drug use. The research confirms that PYD can have a positive effect on the resilience scores of ESLs as indicated by the alteration in resilience scores of participants after their participation in the three PYD programmes. The research has shown that ESLs suffer from a great deal of adversity; the phenomenon of the demonization itself, poverty, discrimination, depression and drug use, the research suggests that it is the adverse effects of factors that lead to ESL rather than ineptitude on the part of the individual ESL. The regional survey confirms that ESLs are subject to greater adversity and evidence was presented in the last chapter from the other data sets including the mini research projects, the researcher diary and the personal reflections of the participants similarly confirm this.

The research confirms that ESLs are often marginalised and isolated, and that this isolation is intolerable to them so they engage in "acting-out" or antisocial behaviour and sometimes "acting-in" behaviour such as self-harm. The evidence would also seem to confirm that the more positive human connections a young person has, the healthier their development and that through the creation of contact zones ESLs can expand their social networks and activities to include more positive social nodes. The vignettes illustrate how the participants were energised by crossing into the contact zone and excited by moving in new social circles. This research confirms that PYD can have help ESLs develop positive social interactions when they are guided through the social doxa by an experienced and committed mentor. In this way the learners can borrow social capital from a mentor to open doors that might otherwise remain shut.

The research shows that the alienating effect of the narrative of the loser manifesting itself as the demonization needs to be challenged. The mini research projects, reflections and researcher diary allowed the participant to put forward "differends" or little narratives to challenge the dominant stereotypical narrative about ESLs which they seemed to have internalised. In challenging this narrative by seeking and finding no evidence to confirm it and finding evidence to the contrary they were able to overcome the phenomenon of demonization. Service learning offers a way for ESLs to challenge this narrative. Through making a positive contribution to the community ESLs can become aware of their personal competence. They can become more self-confident, their confidence, self-worth and personal efficacy can improve. A sense of connection with the other participants in the programme can create a sense of belonging. Through working on problems affecting their own lives ESLs can become aware that they share many of the same problems and that these problems are not necessarily limited to them but persist as problems in the wider community. Taking action on these issues for their own benefit can shift to taking action for the wider benefit of the community as ESLs realise that is they can take an action to benefit themselves these actions can benefit the wider community. Being a contributor defeats the narrative of the working class loser, and lead to a sense of belonging to the community. This research confirms that when ESLs do things for others and engage in altruistic behaviour their opinions about themselves change.

PYD builds resilience in ESLs and longer term programmes are more effective. ESLs enjoying working on problems that affect their own lives and efforts should be made to relate their course work to their lives. ESLs enjoy service learning and being allowed to make a contribution. ESLs enjoy being treated like adults. Caring is a feature of PYD that leads to greater compassion and empathy. In order to care about themselves or their communities ESLs must first feel cared for. Emotional support is essential to an individual feeling cared for.

ESLs frequently report that their teachers in the ESL centre are nicer to them. This is likely due to the higher levels of emotional support they receive in ESL centres as reported by Day (2013). "Emotional supports are protective supporting conditions too potentially counteract risk factors for ESL" (Downes 2001 p. 4). If ESLs feel that they are properly cared for they are less inclined to turn to drugs as a method of escape, they are less likely to engage in reckless or criminal behaviour if they realise that they are valued. Higher levels of psychiatric disorders and lower levels of emotional intelligence were reported by the Inspectorate (2008) and the Stokes (2002) comment on the need for counselling due to substance abuse and emotional supports. The level of adversity faced by ESLs is higher than that experienced by their counterparts in the mainstream. They face a considerable amount of emotional stress and often find themselves in crises that seem outside of their control. When this happens they need emotional support from an adult they know and trust.

The five Cs of PYD, competence, confidence, connection, caring, and character should be part of the design of any PYD programme with the greatest consideration given to allow young people to make a connection and feel like they belong. The amount of time spent on social networking sites by young people where they desperately seek approval and validation in the form of "likes" from their peer group are an indication of their need to connect. Isolation is one of our most extreme punishments, a way to punish those already being punished within the justice system. Belonging is among the most basic needs of any social animal. ESLs need to feel like they belong.

The interaction between social ecologies and the individuals within are importance to the development and sustainability of healthy communities and people. Lerner (2002) comments on the importance of understanding the importance of that this interplay has on human development, "from the beginning of their existence, then, humans have been linked to a social world for their survival. The social world the people and institutions of society needed individuals who learned to be committed to protecting, contributing to, and perpetuating the group" (Lerner 2002 p. 19). Human beings as social animals need to belong. Belonging or connection can occur at various levels; as a child it is enough to supported by a group but as young people enter adolescence to belong to the group young people need to feel they are making a contribution to it or may begin to lose their sense of connection. Young people must be allowed exercise their ability to make a contribution to a group in order to feel connected.

It is important for ESL teachers to have an understanding of the communities from which their learners come and to have some knowledge of their circumstances in the home. Though this hardly a new discovery but in many areas and centres a view exists among teachers allocated to

Youthreach centres that the learner's issues are none of their concern. More is required for the ESL teacher, the demand for care and concern for the learners is greater.

ESL teaching is different to the mainstream, it is not necessarily more difficult or rewarding though the types of difficulties ESL learners present with can often be overwhelming. ESLs deal with incredible levels of adversity in their lives and when constantly faced with such difficulties it is easy to become defensive, negative and to lose hope. ESLs need to feel supported by and connected to their communities in order to thrive. The role of resilience in allowing ESLs to recover from adverse life events or "shocks" is important and this research has shown that PYD programmes can increase resilience in ESLs. What is it about PYD programmes that promotes resilience? It is likely the crossing the borders of the contact zone, guided by a mentor, and being able to reconnect with and find their place within their community. The "fifth strand" of Youthreach, community integration through involvement in community-based and voluntary services, is likely the single most important element in challenging feelings of alienation, isolation and helplessness. The effectiveness of PYD programmes in promoting resilience is its focus on the provision of developmental assets, both internal and external, enriches the metaphorical soil in which ESLs grow. PYD allows young people to reconnect with their communities so that they can bloom and grow into to reach their full potential.

5.5 Potential for Further Research

This project has introduced a series of certified programmes that were not already available in the centre including GAISCE, Level 2 certificate in kayak skills, River Safety and Rescue 1, and Quality and Qualification Ireland Level 4 Award in Canoeing Skills. There was great difficulty involved in getting these programmes up and running particularly regarding funding and insurance. The year after the research concluded the programmes continued and were expanded, the Silver GAISCE award was undertaken but proved more difficult to complete and through ten participants enrolled in the programme only two managed to successfully complete the programme. It was much more difficult to recruit teachers from a small pool of teachers in the centre to give up their time for three days and two nights including the difficultly of the expedition being completed on the adventure journey itself. The canoeing continued and was extended to a twenty six week programme, one participant winning a gold medal at the Canoeing Ireland club championships. For these reasons research into how programmes might be coordinated between national governing bodies for adventure sports and Youthreach centres would be useful and might be conducted as part of a review of the Adventure Sports Framework.

There is scope for resilience testing to be undertaken in a wide range of PYD programmes. This research project used the GAISCE Bronze award, as one of the PYDs that was undertaken by learners in the centre similar programmes might be run in the future involving the Silver and Gold award to measure if these programmes provide a greater increase in the CYRM scores of ESLs. Increasing the length and the difficulty of the PYD programmes might have a greater effect on the resilience of the participants but might have a corresponding drop in the number of participants who successfully complete the programme. Further research into how these programmes might be integrated into existing programmes in Youthreach centres such as the Leaving Cert Applied might yield positive benefits particularly in relation to the personal achievement task, leisure and recreation, and active leisure studies. Physical education is at the time of this writing being trialled for inclusion in the Leaving Certificate as an examinable subject which might be undertaken as an integrated programme with the GAISCE awards.

The Canoeing Skills PYD was the shortest programme conducted as part of this research and it would be interesting to compare the effects of such a programme over a longer term. A similar programme took place in the centre the year after the research was complete lasting over twenty-six weeks. Overnight camping and self-supported expedition in a more remote setting with a greater degree of adversity might result in greater improvement in resilience (CYRM) scores.[41] This would create a greater diversity of social ecologies for participants as they push the boundaries of their comfort zones and meet new people. It is important to bear in mind that presenting young people with a challenge that is beyond their ability might have a negative effect on their resilience scores. Should physical education be adopted as a subject research into how a Canoeing Skills might be integrated into the curriculum could potentially yield positive results. There was not much potential for service learning in the Canoeing Skills programme, however if the programme were conducted over a longer time period participants could be trained to Level 1 instructor standard and acting as instructors would provide greater scope for service learning.

A social network analysis of the relationships that ESLs have and the people they interact with would be useful to clarify the positive and negative relationships they maintain. Relationships they maintain with positive social nodes that are gatekeepers to social capital. Negative social nodes undoubtedly are gatekeepers to social capital too but might act as gatekeepers to criminal fraternities, in a sense an anti-social capital. Key community members that act as gatekeepers could then be identified as there are great resources out there working independent of ESL centres and other state financed youth organisations.

---

[41] A self-supported expedition involves carrying all the food and equipment you will need to complete the expedition with you. This means all food stuffs must be carried and must not be perishable.

Effects other than resilience that result from participation in PYD programmes might be measured in greater detail, resilience is not the only trait that might be improved by PYD programmes; confidence, self-belief, discipline, commitment, reasonability, community involvement, and empathy are other characteristics that might be measured in a quantifiable way. Deardorff (2006) comments that empathy must be intentionally taught. In the first chapter of this thesis the idea of what is the responsibility of a teacher is explored. Combatting a sense of "otherness" is a worthwhile endeavour for any teacher interested in promoting peace. Empathy for the "other", the outsider, the community that is in a state of binary opposition, e.g. Catholics and Protestants, Settled and Traveller might be set to joint endeavour as a method of promoting resilience but also empathy for the "other". Developing PYD programme that have a joint purpose of promoting resilience and empathy for other marginalised groups that are traditionally hostile towards each other would further the community building aspects of youth development. This would create intersections in the social ecologies of young people and create new contact zones in which they could interact and in turn reduce the possibility of participants engaging in violent activity with one another.

5.6 Conclusion and Recommendations

The following recommendations are based in PYD and are made recognising the effects of a deficits based approach on ESLs who may already believe that they are somehow defective.

1. Training in emotional support
2. Challenge the dominant narrative
3. PYD as proactive promotion
4. External links
5. Service learning

PYD builds resilience in young people and as it can never be clear what challenges a young person may be faced with during the course of his life it is wise to foster resilience in them, Dale (2010) comments, "adversity is cumulative, and the risk young people experience derives from continuing disadvantaged circumstances rather from any irreversible effect in early childhood. We cannot make children immune to challenges they may be exposed to later" (Dale 2010, p. 38). Persistent adverse shocks or negative life events and cumulative adversity which lead to learned helplessness. The adverse effects of marginalisation act as a push factor in schools. Marginalised children often feel pushed out or ill placed in their schools and so they leave. These youths become idle while disengaged with their schooling and fall prey to criminal groups and can become involved in anti-social behaviour and engage in drug use. The adversities they are subjected to begin to mount and

while still in their teens they can have criminal records, substance abuse problems, literacy and numeracy difficulties and no qualifications so that they are unemployable and further suffer from marginalisation.

Systems play a role in shaping our social realities. For marginalised children who internalise the negative stereotypes a liberating element must be introduced into their pedagogy so that they can view these system with a critical lens and understand the false beliefs they have internalised, "as evidenced in class, gender and ethnic divisions and the need for broader changes in how education is generally shaped, but rather seeks to underscore the relational and psychosocial considerations and conditions that appeal to the everyday lived realities of young people distanced from mainstream education" (McGrath 2006, p. 611). YPAR is a useful tool in the development of a critical pedagogy that seeks to identify these systemic oppressors that lead to demonization. The purpose of YPAR is to examine these systems and confront oppressive elements within them, other PYD programmes may not be so direct in confronting the social consciousness of the learner but rather seek to develop a positive outlook and attitude so that they can break free from a cycle of negative psychology.

5.6.1 Training in Emotional Support

ESL Teachers should be trained in some form of emotional first aid as part of continuous professional development to be more ready to respond to the crisis experienced by ESLs. Teachers are not doctors but it is every common for teachers to complete first aid courses so that they can perform a patch up on an injured student when they suffer a minor injury or until more expert medical attention is available. Likewise, Teachers are not counsellors but should be able to perform an emotional patch up on a young person until a more skilled practitioner such as the counsellor is available. Similar to standard first aid this should be refreshed every few years. Connolly and Hussey (2013) discuss their experiences in adult education and reveal the extent of human suffering that was encountered.

> I meet with people who have had appalling suffering in their lives. Just look at the extent of rape, domestic violence, murder, men assaulting other men, child abuse, the exploitation of domestic workers in the private domain, sub-human housing; all those trafficked in the sex industry; the violence of organised crime; intimidation at community levels; the survivors of institutions such as Magdalene laundries; survivors of institutional childhood sexual abuse.

> (Connolly and Hussey 2013, p 79)

Connolly outlines the extent of human suffering she encountered in the field of adult education. As the list of suffering is so long it would seem advisable to prepare adult educators with some skills to

to respond to the emotional needs of their learners. It is no secret that ESLs are prone to acting out behaviour or that there are many unmet mental health issues in Youthreach centres, multiple studies indicate the need for greater emotional supports for ESLs; (Mc Garr 2010, NCAD 2014, Barnardos 2009, Downes 2011). Ryan (1998) comments, "in response to the needs of their trainees, 35% of respondents would like the facility of either a centre-based counsellor, or a full-time counsellor who would provide continuity of service". Mental health also emerged as an issue in the RAP project 58% of respondents to a regional survey of Youthreach learners reported experiencing clinical depression this is discussed in greater detail in chapter five. Friel and Coulter (2004) comments on teachers in Youthreach, *"it was found that the level of commitment by staff was dependent on staff values and beliefs. Some wanted to simply teach. Others were more willing to be involved in young people's issues", (Friel and Coulter 2004 p. 3). Given the wide range of issues and complexity of issues that ESLs attending Youthreach are dealing with simply teaching is not enough, a deeper level of care and emotional support is required for ESLs.

Seligman *et al.* (1965) discovered the phenomenon of learned helplessness after 40 years of research developed a model to challenge a pattern of negative psychology. Seligman (2006) suggests using the ABCDE (Adversity, Belief, Consequences, Disputation, Energization) model for challenging negative thoughts and responding to adversity. Adversity describes the situation that has led to the negativity, e.g. I can't read or write so everyone thinks I am stupid. Belief refers to the corresponding beliefs associated with the adversity, e.g. I am stupid and bad at school. Consequences relate to the corresponding result for the individual as a result of the adversity and corresponding belief e.g. I am stupid therefore there is no point trying hard at school, I won't try and find other ways to entertain myself instead. Disputation is important to challenge the belief and the resulting behaviour or consequence. When the belief is disputed a new more positive understanding of the situation can emerge, e.g. there are a lot of people in this school that have problems reading and writing some of them have dyslexia or a similar learning difficulty. It doesn't make them stupid. Energization refers to a way of turning the negative belief into a positive, e.g. I am not stupid I am just not good at reading and writing but I can be a good listener and contribute to class by saying things and making good points and I can work on my reading and writing. The ABCDE model is used to alter the explanatory style of the individual and to shift their perception of themselves and their future from pessimistic to optimistic.

5.6.2 Challenge the Dominant Narrative

ESL teachers should actively fight against the notion that ESLs are the Cinderellas of education. This metaphor is used by Connolly (2013 p 1), "Radical educators in Ireland considered adult education as the Cinderella of the education world, cleaning up in the basement, away from public domain of

privilege and pleasure". I experienced personal anguish when I realised that most of the learners I was responsible for in Youthreach would describe themselves as "scumbags" discussed in chapter 1. Friel and Coulter (2004) comment on the increasing level of complexity of issues faced by ESLs, "the issues faced by staff during the course of their work are increasing in seriousness and intensity" (Friel and Coulter 2004 p. 5). In recent years mainstream school are having greater success retaining young people and Youthreach centres are increasingly finding themselves recruiting the most marginalised.

The focus of an ESL centre should not solely be to impart marketable skills. While it is important that young people develop marketable skills so that they can contribute to the economic system they are unlikely to be able to but these skills to use unless they have been empowered to value themselves and have the confidence to put these skills to use. ESLs battling with the false beliefs generated by the phenomenon of the demonization will not believe they are suited to employment or active participation in the labour market without first gaining some sort of understanding of their own power of their own ability and agency in the world. "I can't get a job, who would give me a job?", was a question often heard in the centre just before they set out on their work experience placements. Many ESLs do not believe that they could get a job and be good at it. Therefore instilling a sense of belief in ESLs is important and ESL centres should have focus on the empowerment of young people to be at least as important as the transmission of marketable skills. Gordon (2010) suggests the use of the Soft Skills Framework to measure improvements in these areas. The Soft Skills Framework which is still currently being debated and introduced into Youthreach centres as part of the Centre Evaluation & Improvement Plan (CEIP) should incorporate elements of the developmental assets framework. Resilience measures should also be included, resilience is a soft skill however the CYRM offers a methodology for measuring it in a far more objective way than the soft skills framework.

A major difficulty with Gordon's (2010) Soft Skills Framework is the subjective nature of the measurement. This is a common feature in PYD as the expedition and the shared endeavour in the outdoor creates a space in which young people can feel empowered but also where young people might open up in a way not possible in the traditional classroom. Connolly (2013) poses the question, "Does the person need curing, redemption, saving or liberation?", she further comments that this type of thinking on the part of adult educators might be compared to the "white man's burden" that colonisers hold.[42] Adult education offers great potential to develop counter narratives that rejects the inequality of the status quo, however Connolly (2013) reminds us that the job of the

---

[42] An 1899 poem by Rudyard Kipling used to justify colonization the poem proposes that colonialism was motivated by high minded ideals of uplifting savage peoples rather than greed.

adult educator is to facilitate the co-creation of knowledge rather than act as a saviour. The development of what Lyotard (1979) refers to as "little narratives" could be used to allow ESLs to create their own counter narratives that challenge the over- arching super structure of neoliberal narrative which lead to demonization.

5.6.3 PYD as Proactive Health Promotion

A proactive approach to health promotion through outdoor education and PYD should benefit ESLs as this research has shown. The cost of Outdoor Activities can be quite prohibitive for Youthreach centres and might only last for a day. Graduates of Outdoor Education programmes might provide invaluable resources to Youthreach centres as they are qualified in a range of outdoor activities and are also the gate keepers to a wide range of activities and opportunities not usually available to ESLs. They have the potential to be prosocial nodes for ESLs to connect to. Youthreach centres should actively recruit these types of graduates. As this study demonstrated, outdoor education allows young people to gain a sense of group solidarity and belonging, as demonstrated by Joesphine and Tommy. It also forces them to rely on each other in new situations and experience fear together. As they overcome their fear as demonstrated by Darren and Charlie, what was once frightening becomes thrilling.

5.6.4 External Links

Greater links with national governing bodies for outdoor sports should be sought out by Youthreach centres as this research has shown. National governing bodies such as Canoeing Ireland, Climbing Ireland, Irish Sailing Association and Cycling Ireland to mention but a few have access to equipment and instructors that can deliver these programmes. In the case where ESL centres have hired Outdoor Education graduates they already have qualified instructors on staff with links to these organisations. Where possible equipment and instructors can be shared and costs of delivering such programmes can be greatly reduced so that while a centre may have an annual day trip to an outdoor activity centre this might be changed into an eight week course. Regional equipment stores and licensing agreements for equipment should be entered into between Youthreach centre coordinators regionally. A determinant factor in the funding these organisations receive is outreach to disadvantaged groups which opens up an opportunity that centre coordinators can exploit.

Youthreach centres are designed to have small student bodies and for good reason as discussed throughout this thesis. The major national sports in Ireland and the sporting culture in Ireland revolve around large team games. In many cases Youthreach centres find it difficult to field a team of fifteen girls or boys to engage in the staple sports of the mainstream schools in Ireland; Gaelic football, hurling, hockey, soccer and rugby. Though ESLs are free to be involved in these sports

outside of their participation in a Youthreach centre they then lack a connection to their school or centre that is available to their counterparts in the mainstream. Youthreach centres often engage in five-a-side soccer tournaments to compensate for their smaller numbers. These are very popular with learners but scope exists for a greater focus in outdoor and adventure sports in Youthreach centres as they are smaller groups and they provide a change from the mainstream schooling activities. Youthreach must be different from the mainstream. If it is not it merely reproduces the same push factors for ESL that exist in mainstream schooling. Though the equipment necessary to run these programmes can be expensive as current expenditure very little capital spending is required, as put simply, mountains, lakes, rivers and the sea do not need to be built.

Adventure Sports provide opportunities to develop prosocial links as demonstrated in this research. Young people can experience a "buzz" that they might otherwise seek from illicit substances. They provide an opportunity for young people to find a sense of belonging and connect to prosocial nodes as well as providing an escape that is more socially acceptable and certainly a healthier alternative to substance abuse. ESLs trapped in a cycle of negative psychology experiencing anhedonia might be reinvigorated by the thrill of Adventure sports. Young people can experience adversity through adventure sports as part of a team, learn how to deal with setbacks through expedition and become more resilient. Young people can learn essential life skills like risk management, safety procedure and learn that through hard work and dedication anything is possible. Fear is intrinsic to adventure sport, managing and overcoming fear is important to the young people in crisis. Dealing with big emotions and being supported by adult allies and other team members while doing so creates a sense of belonging and fraternity in young people.

Efforts have been made by the Office of the President to develop programmes that include elements of service learning and YPAR, i.e. the Young Social Innovators. This type of programme would complement the GAISCE programme extremely well especially for use with marginalised youth. Joesphine expressed reservations about the fee for GAISCE and in the experience of this researcher ESLs are reluctant to part with what little money they have, therefore I would suggest that they fee for this programme be dropped and publicly funded.

Though outside the scope of this research music and the arts are often over looked in vocational education, Conor started a music group within the centre at lunch time as part of his project which was very successful. The Music Generation project has been successfully rolled out in many Youthreach centres and is a great opportunity for Youthreach centres to welcome the arts into their centres. The Young SVP project which is currently being rolled out in some Youthreach centres also offers great opportunities for service learning.

5.6.5 Service Learning

Service learning was a feature of YPAR and the RAP project, and the GAISCE programme that was undertaken as part of this research. Service learning improves young people's self-conception of their value and worth and allows them to contribute to their communities. Service learning is essential to undermining the false beliefs caused by demonization. Creaven *et al.* (2017) suggest that volunteering can have a positive effect on people suffering from depression. Scales (2011) comments on the importance of service learning, "if a programme succeeds in raising youth assets, it is, by definition of the asset framework, having an impact beyond youth themselves: Asset scores for youth in a given programme are not likely to increase absent an impact on the broader ecology of young people's families, schools, peers, and communities". Young people who feel that they can exercise a positive influence over their communities, raise the level of developmental assets in their community are becoming pro social nodes themselves. Through service learning young people address their learning needs while simultaneously providing a service to their community. Service learning is an empowering part of community education. Connolly (2003) comments, "community education is often proposed as a means to reach marginal groups because of its success with developing relationships with people who are often silenced". Marginalised people need to be offered opportunities to contribute.

5.7 Summary of Recommendations

It is well recognised in the literature, as discussed above, that ESLs need greater emotional support from their teachers, though there is no specific training for Youthreach staff in how to provide this. The phenomenon of demonization discussed throughout this thesis, has a demoralising effect on ESLs, challenging this dismissal internalised narrative requires a catharsis. An experience from which a new truth emerges and the ESLs self-perception under goes a paradigm shift and begins to see themselves in a new more positive light. Positive health promotion and positive self-perceptions for learners should be key values in Youthreach centres. External links provide scope for ESLs to engage in developmental activities build positive purpose led relationships within their communities. Service learning provides an opportunity for young people to see themselves as contributors to society and offers Youthreach centres to chance to develop the "fifth strand" of Youthreach. The "fifth strand" is important to alienated youth as it allows them to form connections and develop a sense of purpose and belonging through involvement in community-based and voluntary services. For some ESLs trapped in a dismal cycle of negative psychology, a clinical therapeutic approach might be necessary to break the cycle. In the design of programmes developed to combat the phenomenon of ESL, the following elements should be considered:

1. Programmes designed for ESLs should offer viable alternatives.
2. They should involve taking action on issues relevant to the learners involved. Taking action is empowering and allows young people to demonstrate their competence.
3. Programmes designed for marginalised people should offer opportunities to challenge dominant narratives through evidence based research.
4. They should provide opportunities for young people to make a positive contribution to their community and be seen in a positive light.
5. They should be customisable so that learners can modify elements or modules of their learning to suit their needs or interests.
6. PYD programmes should be designed as long term programmes.
7. Outdoor education should be incorporated as part of PYD programmes.
8. PYD programmes should employ supportive adults who are prepared to act as mentors.
9. PYD programmes should seek to build solidarity in the group so that young people feel they have a sense of belonging.

Redmond and Dack (2014 p 22) comment that "acting pro-socially in a high crime environment can mark a young person out as being different". Involving young people in PYD programmes that are going to lead to them being bullied is not advisable. It is essential for any PYD programme being devised should take into account factors surrounding the participation of the young people involved. Mentorship is important when transgressing class boundaries in the contact zone as discussed in chapter 4. Participants in the Canoeing Skills programme who joined the University of Limerick Kayak Club were concerned that the people they would meet in the university would be "posh" or "stuck up". Conversely some of the members of the universities kayak club were worried that some of the participants would be "little knackers" and "would rob the place". The ESL centre and the University are two very different social field and navigating the doxa of both requires a mentor who has knowledge and expertise of both. Other PYD programmes might face similar difficulties transgressing social boundaries whether they are due to social class, geographic or cultural. When the two groups came together they did so as part of a shared interest, the sport of canoeing. This gave both groups a common ground to start from. Bowers et al. (2010) and NACDA (2014) suggest that participants who are "at risk" will benefit from exposure to new learning environments. The following quote from a learner who had just finished a late night session in the University of Limerick swimming pool provides insight into how ESLs feel themselves being perceived as opposed to their perception of university students.

"They are all the same age as us. Why is it they are so different? They have so much stuff, like who would give an Olympic size swimming pool to us to use by ourselves?"

These alternative PYD programmes should be something that is truly new to the learner and offer scope to develop a new passion under the supervision of a supportive mentor. Crossing boundaries like this can empower young people as they are transplanted into an environment that is rich in developmental assets. During this research the participants experienced community that values youth, a university environment that sees youth as resources rather than a future drain on the state. These types of activities, in the name of a shared interest or passion can cause perceptual shifts as each group learns to accept that their prejudices about the other group are untrue. In an a analysis of Greentown conducted by Redmond (2015) it seemed that in many of the criminal relationships mentorship was involved in grooming the next generation of criminals. If PYD is to successfully challenge the types of criminal behaviour associated with ESL, ESL teachers should be aware that they are competing with criminal elements within the community. The mentorship and example shown to young people in the ESL centre needs to be of a high standard and provide a real sense that participation will lead to opportunity. If we cannot accomplish this, unsavoury elements are willing to provide opportunities in the black economy that are likely destructive to the young person and their community.

Those dealing with marginalised people will encounter individuals that have accepted false narratives about themselves as true. Presenting evidence that these narratives are indeed false allows for the formation of counter narratives. These narratives can be presented by the research participants in their own words. This extract from Claire's mini research project offers insight into how she reconstructed a narrative in relation to youth justice and the care system.

These children may end up in trouble with the law through no fault of their own other than what has happened them or neglect.

- Clare, Extract from Clare's Mini Research Project

Through reflection young people can develop empathy for others as in Claire's case or see themselves in a different light as shown by Mark.

It is a horrible feeling to wish you would die. I feel great that I can help make money for Pieta House because they can help people who feel the same way I do.

-Mark, Extract from Research Diary

Through his mini research project, Mark was able to talk about his issues with other members of the group and they responded with empathy. Adult education has great scope to provide counter narratives for marginalised groups this is recognised by (2013). Redmond and Dack (2014) suggest that young people from marginalised communities sometimes have difficulty demonstrating empathy and that personal reflection is a useful way to develop this competence for empathy. Through the creation of these narratives in the form of reflections it is possible for marginalised young people to shift the perceptions of themselves from positive to negative.

Redmond (2009 p 146) discuss the literature on at risk youth "commentators advocating the importance of self-efficacy and drawing on theories of resilience argue that too much time is spent avoiding bad things happening and not enough time is spent enhancing the young person's opportunity for civic engagement, for example acts of altruism". There were 3 interventions included as part of my research; RAP (Research Action Programme), GAISCE, and Canoeing Skills. The GAISCE programme was the most effective programme in developing resilience. GAISCE is highly customisable. This is in keeping with the best practices in Adult and Community Education outlined by Knowles (1974) which point to the need for adult to be self-directed in their learning as discussed in chapter 1. Arguably the other 2 interventions could have been run as part of the GAISCE programme. There is a prestige factor in being involved with the Office of the President.

The three interventions used in this research had different characteristics. GAISCE is an established programme and can be easily modified to suit the needs of the learner. The RAP programme used a YPAR methodology. Through relatively new it is a somewhat established methodology in the United States however this research has demonstrated its effectiveness in an Irish context. It involves action, and covers many of the points listed. It and the GAISCE programme involve service learning and provide the opportunity for young people to make a contribution. Canoeing skills has a focus on developing personal skills. It is not an established PYD programme and was in comparison with the other interventions, short in duration. It could easily be altered to be longer and incorporate instructor training which would allow the participants to engage in some element of service learning. Participants might become Level 1 Canoeing Ireland Instructors which would involve first aid training and time spent logging hours assisting qualified instructors. An important element of programme design was that some activity would take place that would shift the perception of the participant from that of being a burden to a contributor. These activities should be empowering and improve social connectedness.

5.8 Summary of the Thesis

Chapter one of this thesis, provided an introduction to Youthreach and explored economic oppression as a factor in ESL. Following discussion about the key traits of the ESLs a series of desired research outcomes were outlined and research questions were presented. Chapter two examined some of the reasons for ESL including; criminality, substance abuse and systemic alienation. The habitus of the ESL was explored in this chapter and the social ecology of the ESL was identified as a contributory factor in ESL. The intergenerational effect of ESL was examined. Youth Participatory Action Research, Positive Youth Development, and Adventure Therapy were examined as models for promoting the development of internal and external ecological assets for Youth Development. It introduced the concept of critical theory as the philosophical underpinning of an emancipatory approach to research. ESLs were identified as fish out of water having left the mainstream due to a mismatch between themselves and the mainstream system. Social node theory was introduced as way of explaining the relationships of ESLs with actors within their socio-ecological spheres. The social capital available to ESLs was discussed and the interplay between ESL and identity was explored. The phenomenon of demonization and learned helplessness as negative factors at play within the psyche of the ESL were examined. The relationship between subjective and objective reality was explored to help illustrate effects of social unconsciousness. Critical theory, critical thinking and the role of ESL teachers have to play in dispelling false beliefs that ESLs have internalised about themselves were examined as the philosophical framework of the research project. The capacity of the ESL classroom to foster resilience and theories of learned helplessness were discussed. Theories of self-efficacy, resilience and critical thinking were discussed as possible methods of challenge the effect of demonization.

Chapter three outlined the research methodology for the project. The research sample was discussed for the three PYD programmes and the regional survey and ethical consideration were outlined. Action research was discussed as a research strategy and YPAR was chosen as a modified version of PAR as being the most appropriate for the group being studied. A community of practice for ESLs solving their own problems using YPAR methodology was examined. The role of adult allies in the YPAR process and examples of similar YPAR projects were discussed. Links between youth work and ESL teaching were examined. How YPAR might create a perceptual change in ESLs and effectively challenge demonization was discussed. Research tools such as the Child and Youth Resilience measure, and a regional survey were presented as tools for collecting and interpreting data were discussed as part of a research design using an YPAR methodology and rolled out across the three PYD programmes.

Chapter four of this thesis reported on the data findings of the research and reported that issues affecting the lives of ESLs related to physical and mental well-being, depression was common among ESLs as reported by youth researchers in one centre and confirmed by survey research from other centres in the nine selected counties in southern Ireland. Discrimination and negative self-identity were also identified as issues surrounding ESL. The resilience scores of the participants in three positive youth development programmes were calculated before and after their participation in the programmes and an aggregate improvement in resilience scores was recorded using the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM). Data collected from learners mini research projects, reflections and through informal conversations with them were presented in the form of vignettes.

Chapter five of this thesis examined how crises affect ESLs and how these crises can affect the workings of the ESL centre while discussing possible solutions for managing these crises. Mental health issues of marginalised groups in that exist with ESL centres were discussed. Suggestions such as training in emotional first aid for teachers as a means of providing emotional support for ESLs were proposed. Positive Youth Development was suggested as a methodology for exorcising the demonization from the minds of ESLs. Categories of ESLs who are particular risk were identified as those in care, in crises and members of the travelling community.

Learners became involved in fundraising and community work as part of the service learning element of this research project. They developed physical fitness through their participation in the GAISCE and Canoeing Skills programmes. There is empirical evidence that they developed resilience through their participation in the programmes as demonstrated by the improvement in their CYRM resilience scores. Learners became involved in a research community of practice and engaged in service learning by making contributions to their communities. This community of practice engaged with critical theory in order to gain a better understanding of the problem affecting their own lives and gain a crow's nest view of their situation within their social ecologies. They completed mini research projects which developed their research skills and lead to creation of a regional survey which helped compile a profile of ESLs in the region.

The profile of the ESL presented through this research does not conform to existing stereotypes of "scumbags" or "losers" instead a profile of a young person in distress, isolated, experiencing adversity and in need of emotional support and opportunities to contribute is presented. A re-examination of the narrative was required to challenge demonization in ESLs. ESLs who have internalised the morbid narrative of demonization need to undergo a paradigm shift in order to overcome marginalisation and break free from the D Cycle. Developmental validity can be achieved using PYD programmes and disrupt the D Cycle. The research confirms that through the mentorship

of an adult ally boundaries can be crossed into contact zones where social capital can be developed through mutual process with ESLs and in these spaces their access to developmental assets can be expanded. The research indicates that taking action on an issue affecting one's own life can help a young person to take power over it and not only overcome the problem but make a contribution to the problem in a way that helps others. Perhaps the most essential element in disrupting the D cycle for ESLs to form secure connections and achieve a sense of worth and a feeling of belonging.

Young people who attend second chance education institutions like Youthreach are under the false perception on entry into Youthreach centres that they are "scumbags and knackers". They can present with challenging behaviour and a range of learning difficulties. The role of teacher in a Youthreach centre is a difficult one, however if we can challenge this false perception so that by the time a young person completes the Youthreach programme they have changed this dismal self-concept then their time in the centre will have been a success.

Finally, running PYD programmes similar to working as a Youthreach teacher, requires a lot of effort and can be frustrating at the best of times. As the work develops and relationships of trust emerge it can be overwhelming for the mentor. The issues faced by ESLs outlined in this thesis are quite serious and require complex solutions. In facing complex and often overwhelming problems it is important for anyone who assumes the role of mentor to ESLs to try to treat each of their charges with unconditional positive regard.

Bibliography

Adams, M., Bell, L., Griffen, P. (1997). *Teaching for Diversity & Social Justice* New York, Routledge.

Adorno, T. W. and Horkheimer, M. (1972). *Dialectic of Enlightenment* New York, Herder and Herder.

Alexander, B.K., Beyerstein, B.L., Hadaway, P.F., and Coambs, R.B. (1981) 'Effect of early and later colony housing on oral ingestion of morphine in rats' Pharmacology Biochemistry and Behavior, Vol 15, 4:571–576.

Alexander, B.K. (1985) 'Drug use, dependence, and addiction at a British Columbia university: Good news and bad news' Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 15, 77–91.

Alexander, B.K. (1987) 'The disease and adaptive models of addiction: A framework evaluation' Journal of Drug Issues 17, pp. 47–66.

Alexander, B.K. (1990) 'Peaceful measures: Canada's way out of the War on Drugs', Toronto University Press.

Alexander, B.K. (2000) 'The Globalization of Addiction' Addiction Research Vol. 8, Iss. 6, 2000 https://doi.org/10.3109/16066350008998987

Alexander, B.K. (2001) 'The Roots of Addiction in Free Market Society' Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

Alexander, B.K. (2012) 'The Myth of Drug Induced Addiction' Testimony to the Candian Parliament https://canadianharmreduction.com/sites/default/files/The%20myth%20of%20drug%20induced%20addiction.pdf [Accessed online 05/02/2018]

Anyon, Y. and Naughton, S. (2003). 'Youth Empowerment The Contributions and Challenges of Youth-Led Research in a High-Poverty', Urban Community. JGC Issue Brief: Youth Empowerment. Stanford, John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities

AITHS (2010b) 'All Ireland Traveller Health Study Our Geels' Dublin, All Ireland Traveller Health Study Team

Apple, M. (1996). *Cultural politics and Education.* Buckingham, England, Open University Press.

Associates, L. C. (2012). 'Youth Engagement Evaluation: Summary and Final Report'. California Network for Healthy California

Bandura, A. (1995). *Self-efficacy in changing societies.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Barkley, E. F., K. P. Cross and C. H. Major (2005). *Collaborative Learning Techniques.* San Francisco, Jossey – Bass

Barnardos (2009). 'Writen Out Written Off'. Dublin, Barnardos.

Bell B.J., Gass M.A., Christopher S., Nafziger C.S., and J. David Starbuck (2014) 'Adventure Therapy With Youth, Journal of Experiential Education' 2014, Vol. 37(1) 31–45 DOI: 10.1177/1053825913518891

Benjamin, W. (1936) *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* London. Penguin Books

Benson, P., Leffert, N., Scales, P., Blyth, D. (1990)'Beyond the Village Rhetoric: Creating Healthy Communities for Children and Adolescents' Applied Developmental Science Vol. 2. No. 3. p. 138-159

Benson, P., Scales, P., and Syvertsen, A. (2010) 'The Contribution of the Developmental Assets Framework to Positive Youth Development Theory and Practice' Advances in Childhood Development and Behaviour Vol. 41 p. 197-230

Berg, M., E. Coman and J. J. Schensul (2009). 'Youth Action Research for Prevention: A Multi-level Intervention Designed to Increase Efficacy and Empowerment Among Urban Youth'. American Journal of Community Psychology 43: pp. 345–359.

Biggs, J. (1999). 'What the student does: teaching for enhanced learning'. Higher Education Research & Development 18(1): 57-75.

Biggs, J. B. and K. Collis (1982). *Evaluating the Quality of Learning: the SOLO taxonomy*. New York, New York Academic Press.

Blackett, D. (2016) *Voices from 'the back of the class: An examination of the potential role of education for regeneration from the perspective of residents from Limerick's regeneration communities.* Doctoral thesis, submitted to Mary immaculate College.

Bloom, B. S., M. D. Engelhart, E. J. Furst, W. H. Hill and D. R. Krathwohl (1956). *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.* London, Longmans.

Borg, W. R. and Gall M. D. (1989). *Educational Research.* London, Longman.

Bourdieu, P. (1998). *Practical Reason On the Theory of Action.* Canbridge Polity press

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction A Social Critique on the Judgement of Taste.* Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Bourdieu, P. (1973a) *Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction*, in Richard Brown (ed.) *Knowledge, Education, and Cultural Change*, pp. 71-112. London: Tavistock.

Bowers, E., Li, Y., Kiely, M., Brittian, A., Lerner, J., Lerner, R. (2010) 'The Five Cs Model of Positive Youth Development: A Longitudinal Analysis of Confirmatory Factor Structure and Measurement Invariance'. Journal of Youth Adolescence (2010) 39:720–735

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development.* London, Harvard University Press.

Brookfield, S. D. (2005). *The Power of Critical Theory for Adult Learning and Teaching.* New york, Open University Press.

Brown, J. (2005). 'Developing a Strategy for Crisis Intervention In Youthreach'. Dublin, Donegal Vocational Education Committee

Brownfield, D. and Sorenson., A (1993) 'Self-control and juvenile delinquency: Theoretical issues and an empirical assessment of selected elements of a general theory of crime'. Deviant Behaviour. Volume 14, 1993 - Issue 3

Bronner, S.E. (2011). *Critical Theory A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford. Oxford University Press.

Brunsma, D. & Rockquemore, K. (1998) 'Effects of Student Uniforms on Attendance, Behaviour Problems, Substance Use, and Academic Achievement'. The Journal of Educational Research, 92:1, p.53-62

Butler A.C., Chapman J.E., Forman E.M., Beck A. T., (2006) 'The empirical status of cognitive-behavioural therapy: A review of meta-analyses'. Clinical Psychology Review 26 (2006) 17 – 31

Byrne, D. and E. Smith (2010). 'No Way Back? The Dynamics of Early School Leaving'. Dublin, The ESRI**:** p. 66,p. 72, p. 18

California, Department, of, Public and Health (2012). 'Inspiring Youth, Growing Change, Nurturing MInds for a Health Community'. California, Califonia Deparftment of Public Health.

Cammatota, J. and Romero A. (2014). *Raza Studies The Option for Educational Revolution Arizona*, The University of Arizona Press

Canoeing Ireland (2009) 'Irish Canoe Union Kayak Instructor Course Notes'. Irish Canoe Union, Dublin p. 27

Carroll, L. (1871). *Through the Looking Glass.* London, Macmillan.

Checkoway, B. and Aldana A. (2013) 'Four forms of youth civic engagement for diverse democracy', Children and Youth Services Review 35 (2013) pp.1894–1899

Cheney, C. Latrance, J. and Quinteros, T., (2006). 'Tri-Country Domestic and Sexual Violence Intervention Network Anti Oppressive Training for Trainers. Institutionalised oppression tool for diversity'. https://www.pcc.edu/resources/illumination/documents/institutionalized-oppression-definitions.pdf [Accessed 13/6/2017].

Cherubini, J. (2013). 'Positive Psychology and Quality Physical Education'. Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance 80(7): 42-51.

Christensen H., Griffiths K.M., Korten A., (2002) 'Web-based Cognitive Behaviour Therapy: Analysis of Site Usage and Changes in Depression and Anxiety Scores'. Journal of Internet Medical Research http://www.jmir.org/2002/1/e3/ [Accessed online 31/01/2018]

Cohen, L. (1993) Anthem, The Future, Montreal: Columbia Records.

Cohen L., Manion L., and Morrison K. (2011) *Research Methods in Education*, 7th Edition, London, Routledge.

Cohen, L. and Manion L. (1989). *Research Methods in Education*. London, Routledge.

Cohen L., Manion L., and Morrison K. (2000) *Research Methods in Education* Fifth Edition. London, Routledge Falmer.

Cohen, M. M. and Kirkpatrick S. (2001). *Ethical Issues in Practioner Research.* New York, Teachers College Press.

Connolly, B. and Hussey, H. (2013) 'The War Against People: Adult Education Practice for Critical Democracy'. *The Adult Learner*, 1 :76-89

Connolly, B. (2013) 'Adult education in times of crises: from Trojan Horses to new Ethics', Explore: The quarterly magazine from AONTAS, the National Adult Learning Organisation, 24. pp. 15-17. ISSN 1649-8259

Connolly, B. (2003) 'Community education: Listening to the voices'. *The Adult Learner*, 10 :9-19

Connolly, J. and Donovan, A. (2014) 'Illicit Drug Markets In Ireland'. National Advisory Committee on drugs and Alcohol.

Connolly, B. (2013)'Theorising Creative Critical Pedagogy: the art of politicised agency'. Rizoma freireano, 14 :1-15

Connolly, B. (2003) 'Community education: Listening to the voices'. *The Adult Learner*, 10 :9-19

Cole, R. E. (1991). Participant Observer Research An Activist Role Participant Action research. W. F. Whyte. London, Sage**:** pp. 161-165.

Collie R.J., Martin, A.J., Bottrell D., Armstrong, D., Ungar, M., Liebenberg, L., (2013) 'Social support, academic adversity and academic buoyancy: a person-centred analysis and implications for academic outcomes'. Educational Psychology An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology.

Coomber R. (2003) 'There's no such thing as a free lunch: How "freebies" and "credit" operate as part of rational drug market activity'. Journal of Drug Issues 0022-0426/03/04 939-962

Comiskey, C. (2003). 'Young People, Drug Use and Early School Leaving: estimating the prevalence, assessing the impact and assisting policy and planning'. Drugs: education, prevention and policy. 10: p. 159 - 168.

Creaven A., Healy A., Howard S. (2017) 'Social connectedness and depression: Is there added value in volunteering?' Journal of Social and Personal Relationships.

Creswell, J. (2009). *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches.* London, Sage Publications

Crisp, S. (1998). 'International Models in Best Practice and Adventure Therapy Exploring the Boundaries of Adventure Therapy: International Perspectives'. Proceedings of the InternationalAdventure Therapy Conference. Perth.

CSO (2006). 'Community Involvement and social Networks'. Dublin Central Statistics Office.

Dale, R. (2010). 'Early School Leaving, Lessons from Research for Policy Makers', European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture.

Daniel B., Bobilya A.J., Kalisch K.R., and McAvoy L.H. (2014) 'Autonomous Student Experiences in Outdoor and Adventure Education'. Journal of Experiential Education 2014, Vol. 37(1) 4–17. DOI: 10.1177/1053825913518892

Darmody, M., McMahon L, Banks, J., Gilligan R. (2013) 'Education of Children in Care in Ireland: An Exploratory Study', The Economic and Social Research Institute, Children's Research Centre, Trinity College, Dublin.

Day L., Mozuraityte N., Redgrave K., Mc Coshan A. (2013) 'Preventing Early School Leaving in Europe, Lessons Learned from Second Chance Education'. Publications Office of the European Union.

Deardorff, D.K. (2006). 'The identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization at institutions of higher education in the United States'. Journal of Studies in International Education, 10(3), 241-266.

Department of Education and Science (2000) 'Learning Support Guidelines for Primary Schools', Dublin: Department of Education and Science.

Department of Education and Science (2002) 'Guidelines on Traveller Education in Primary Schools', Dublin: Department of Education and Science.

Department of Education and Science (2002) 'Guidelines on Traveller Education in Second-Level Schools', Dublin: Department of Education and Science.

Department of Education and Science (2003) 'Pre-Schools for Travellers: National Evaluation Report', Dublin: Department of Education and Science.

Department of Education and Science(2005) 'Literacy and Numeracy in Disadvantaged Schools: Challenges for Teachers and Learners', Dublin: Department of Education and Science.

Department of Education and Science (2006) 'Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy', Dublin: Department of Education and Science.

Department of Education and Science (2006) 'Youthreach and Senior Traveller Training Centre Programmes funded by the Department of Education and Science Value For Money Review' Dublin: Department of Education and Science.

Derrida, J. (1974). *Of Grammatology.* Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Descartes, R. (1641). *Meditations on First Philosophy in which are demonstrated the existence of God and the distinction between the human soul and the body.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

DiMaggio, P (1982) 'Cultural Capital and School Success: The Impact of Status Culture Participation on the Grades of U.S. High School Students', American Sociological Review, Vol. 47, No. 2 (Apr., 1982), pp. 189-201

Dotterweich, J. (2015) 'Positive Youth Development for Youth Work Professionals ACT for Youth', Center of Excellence, Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research, Cornell University Ithaca, New York p.11

Downes, P. (2011). 'The neglected shadow: European perspectives on emotional supports for early school leaving prevention ' The International Journal of Emotional Education 3(2): 3-36.

Drug Net Ireland (2017)'New National Drug Strategy Launched' Issue 63 Autumn 2017 Health Research Board, Dublin.

Durkheim, E. (1893). *The Divison of Labour in Society.*London, Free Press.

Eckert, P. (1989). *Jocks and burnouts: Social categories and identity in the high school.* New York, Teachers College Press.

European Commission (2010). 'Reducing Early School Leaving'. Brussels, European Commission

European Commission (2013). 'Preventing Early School Leaving in Europe - Lessons Learned from Second Chance Education'. Brussels, European Commission

Fannon, F. (1952). *Black Skin, White Masks.* France, Editions de Seuil.

Fernández, M. A. (2002). Creating Community Change: Challenges and Tensions in Community Youth Research. Stanford, John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities.

Fine, M. (2008). *Revolutionizing Education Youth Participatory Action Research in Motion.* London, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.

Focus Ireland (2014) 'Focus Ireland Annual Report' Dublin, Focus Ireland p. 14

Forman E.M., Herbert J.D., Moitra E., Yeomans P.D., Geller P.A., (2007) 'A Randomized Controlled Effectiveness Trial of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Cognitive Therapy for Anxiety and Depression'. Behaviour Modification DOI: 10.1177/0145445507302202 Behaviour Modification 2007 31: 772

Foucault, M. (1969). *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language.* New York. Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison.* London, Penguin.

Foucault, M. (1994). *Michel Foucault Power Essentail Works of Foucault 1954 - 1984* London, Penguin Books.

Fowler, B. (1997). *Pierre Bourdieu and Cultural Theory*. London, Sage.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed London*, Penguin Books.

Friel, B. and Coulter C. (2004) 'Evaluation of Support & Counselling Services in YOUTHREACH Centres & the Senior Traveller Training Centre in County Donegal' Dublin, Crisis Pregnancy Agency

Freud, S. (1921). *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, International Psychoanalytic Publishing House, Vienna

Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of Mind.* New York: Basic Book Inc.

Guerra N. & Bradshaw C. (2008) 'Linking the prevention of problem behaviors and positive youth development: Core competencies for positive youth development and risk prevention' New Directions for Child & Adolescents Development, Vol. 8, Issue 122, p. 1 -17

Gleeson, J. (2004). *Cultural and Political Contexts of the Irish Post Primary Curriculum: Influences, Interests and Issues.* Dublin The Liffey Press.

Gordon, M. (2004). 'Survey of Guidance, Counselling and Psychological Service Provision in Youthreach, Community and Senior Traveller Centres for Education Dublin', Office of the Senior Psychologist Further Education Section 34.

Gordon, M. (2017) 'A profile of learners in Youthreach, Research Study Report'. National Educational Psychological Service.

Gordon, M. (2011). 'Youthreach Soft Skills Framework', National Educational & Psychological Service Meath VEC.

Gore, S. and J. Eckenrode (1996). 'Stress, risk, and resilience in children and adolesents. Processes, mechanisms, and interventions'. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Gramsci, A. (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, New York, International Publishers.

Grenfell, M. (2004). *Pierre Bourdieu Agent Provocateur.* New York, Continuum.

Haase, T. (2010). 'Risk and Protection Factors for Substance Use Among Young People', A Comparative Study of Early School-Leavers and School-Attending Students. Dublin, National Advisory Committee on Drugs p. 8, p. 94.

Hahn, K. (1934b). The practical child and the bookworm. Kurt Hahn Archive reproduction of an article in the Listener (28, November, 1934) which was itself a copy of a talk given by Hahn to the BBC on 22 November, 1934. Available from Kurt Hahn Archive, Salem International College, Schloss Spetzgart, 88662 Überlingen, Germany.

Haney, C., Banks, W. C., & Zimbardo, P. G. (1973). 'A study of prisoners and guards in a simulated prison'. Naval Research Review, 30, 4-17.

Hall P.A. and Lamont M. (2012) *Social Resilience in the Neo-Liberal Era* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Hall, Stuart. (1988 b.) 'The Toad in the Garden: Thatcherism among the Theorists'. In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, 35-73. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Halpern, D. F. (2003). *Thought and Knoweledge, An Introduction to Ciritical Thinking.* London, Lawerence Erlbaum Associates

Hargreaves, A. and P. Woods (1984). *Classrooms and Staffrooms The Sociology of Teachers and Teaching* Milton Keynes, Open University Press.

Henry, M. (1996). *Parent School Collaboration, Feminist Organisational Structures and School Leadership*. Albany, State University of New York Press.

Higgins, A. (2016). 'The LGBT Ireland Report'. Dublin, Gay and Lesbian Equality Network and Belong To Youth Services.

Hofmann S.G. and Jasper A.J. Smith (2008) 'Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Adult Anxiety Disorders: A Meta-Analysis of Randomized Placebo-Controlled Trials'. Journal of Clinical Psychiatry. 2008 April; 69(4): 621–632.

hooks, b. (1984). *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center.* Cambridge, Southend Press.

hooks, b. (1994). *Outlaw Culture.* New York, Routledge Classics.

Hourigan, N. (2011). 'Understanding Limerick Social Exclusion and Change'. Cork, Cork University Press.

How, A. (2003). *Critical Theory Traditions in Social Theory*. Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan.

HSA (2008). 'Health Impact Assessment of Early School Leaving, Absenteeism and Truancy'. Limerick, Limerick Regeration and Health Service Administration

Husserl, E. (1999). The Mathematization of Nature. The Essential Husserl. D. Welton. Indiana, Indiana University Press**:** pp. 377-363.

Hunt M.K. and Hopko D.R. (2009) 'Predicting High School Truancy Among Students in the Appalachian South'. Journal of Primary Prevention (2009) 30:549–567

Inspectorate (2010). 'An Evaluation of Youthreach'. Dublin, Evaluation Support and Research Unit.

Kant, I. (1781). *Critique of Pure Reason.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Kellaghan, T. (1993). *The Home Environment and School Learning: Promoting Parental Involvement in the Education of Children.* San Francisco, Jossy- Bass Publishers.

Kemmis, S. (1991). *Improving Education through Action Research. Action Research for Change and Development.* O. Zuber-Skerritt. Aldershot, Avebury p. 65.

Kemmis, S. and Carr, W. (2003). *Becoming Critical: Education Knoweledge and Action Research*. London, Routledge University Press p. 130

Kemmis, S. (2008). *Critical Theory and Participatory Action Research.* In: The Sage Handbook of Participatory Action Research Participative Inquiry and Practice Reason P. and H. Bradbury. London, Sage**:** pp. 121-138.

Kemmis S. & McTaggart, R. (2005). *Participatory Action Research, Communicative Action and the Public Sphere.* London, Sage. In: Denzin, Norman K., and Lincoln, Yvonna S., (eds.) The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, California, USA, pp. 559-603.

Kendall, G. and G. Wickham (1999). *Using Focault's Methods.* London, Sage.

Khanna, N. and S. McCart (2007). 'Adult Allies in Action Ontario', Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada.

Kinder, K., Wakefield, A. and Wilkin, A. (1996). 'Talking back: Pupil views on Disaffection', Slough, National Foundation for Educational Research.

Kohn M. and Schooler C. (1973). 'Occupational Experience and Psychological Functioning: An Assessment of Reciperocal Effects'. American Sociological Review, Vol 38, No. 1 p 97 -118

Knowles, M. (1970). *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species 1ˢᵗ Edition,* Texas, Gulf Publishing Company.

Knowles, M. (1984). *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species 3ʳᵈ Edition*, Texas, Gulf Publishing Company.

Lamont, M. (2000). *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class, and Immigration.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Lal, S., Ungar M., Malla, A., Leggo, C., Suto, M., (2015) 'Impact of Mental Health Services on Resilience in Youth with First Episode Psychosis: A Qualitative Study'. Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research, January 2017, Volume 44, Issue 1, pp 92–102 DOI 10.1007/s10488-015-0703-4

Lave, J. and E. Wenger (1991). *Situated Learning Legtimate Peripheral Participation.* New York Cambridge University Press.

Lerner (2002) 'Positive Youth Development: Thriving as the Basis of Personhood and Civil Society New Directions for Youth Development', New Directions in Student Leadership, Volume 2002, Issue 95 Autumn (Fall) 2002 p. 11–34

Lerner (2005) 'Promoting Positive Youth Development: Theoretical and Empirical Bases' White paper: Workshop on the Science of Adolescent Health & Development, NRC/Institute of Medicine . Washington, DC: National Academies of Science

Leonard, D. (1998). "Listening to Early School Leavers and their Teachers." Retrieved 04/10/2014, 2014, from **http://www3.ul.ie/epsresources/biblio/dlarticle.htm**. (No longer available online see Appendix O)

Levitt, S. and S. Dubner (2005). *Freakonomics* London, Allen Lane.

Levitt, S. D., J. A. List, S. Neckermann and S. Sadoff (2011). 'The Impact of Short-term Incentives on Student Performance.' Oxford Quaterly Journal of Economics 126(4): 1755-1798.

Lewin Bizan, S., Bowers, E., Lerner, R. (2010) 'One good thing leads to another: Cascades of positive youth development among American adolescents', Development and Psychopathology 22 (2010), 759–770

Lewin, K. (1947). 'Change Frontiers in Group Dynamics: Concept, Method and Reality in Social Science; Social Equilibria and Social.' Human Relations 1(5).

Liebenberg, L., M. Ungar and J. C. LeBlanc (2013). 'The CYRM-12: A Brief Measure of Resilience.' Canadian Journal of Public Health 104(2): 131-135.

Liebenberg, L., Theron, L., Sanders, J., Munford, R., van Rensburg, A., Rothmann, S., Ungar, M. (2015) 'Bolstering resilience through teacher-student interaction: Lessons for school psychologists'. School Psychology International 2016, Vol. 37(2) 140–154

London, J. K., Zimmerman K. and N. Erbstein (2003). 'Youth-Led Research and Evaluation:Tools for Youth', Organizational, and Community Development, Wiley Publications.

Looney, A. (2001). 'Curriculum as policy: some implications of contemporary policy studies for the analysis of curriculum policy, with particular reference to postprimary curriculum policy in the Republic of Ireland.' The Curriculum Journal 12(2): pp. 149 - 162.

Luke, M. and Goodrich, K. (2015) 'Working with Family, Friends, and Allies of LGBT Youth', Journal for Social Action in Counselling and Psychology, Volume 7, Number 1, Summer 2015

Lynch, K. (1989). *The Hidden Curriculum: Reproduction in Education, A Reapprisal* London, The Falmer Press.

Lynn Norton C., Tucker A., Russell K.C. , Bettmann J.E., Gass M.A., Gillis H.L., and Behrens E. (2014) 'Adventure Therapy With Youth'. Journal of Experiential Education 2014, Vol. 37(1) 46–59 DOI: 10.1177/1053825913518895

Lyotard, J.F. (1979) 'The Post Modern Condition: A Report on Knoweledge'. UK, Manchester University Press.

MacMahon, N. C. and G. O'Reilly (2015). 'Does Gaisce - The President's Award act as a catalyst in the enhancement of the psychological attributes of: hope, self-efficacy, self- esteem, hapiness, and pyschological well-being in its participants?' Dublin, Office of The President**:** p. 46.

Maddux, J.E. (2000). 'Self-Efficacy The Power of Believing You Can' In: *Handbook of Positive Psychology.* C. R. Snyder, & Lopez, S. J. New York, Oxford University Press.

Houge Mackenzie S., Son J.S., and Hollenhorst S. (2014) 'Unifying Psychology and Experiential Education: Toward an Integrated Understanding of Why It Works'. Journal of Experiential Education 2014, Vol. 37(1) 75–88 DOI: 10.1177/1053825913518894

Manzo, L. C. and N. Brightbill (2007). 'Towards a participatory ethics'. In: *Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods*. Kindon S., Pain R. and Kesby M. New York, Routledge**:** p. 33.

Marx, K. and F. Engels (1848). *The Communist Manifesto*. Moscow.

Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and Personality*. New York, Harper & Row

Mayock, P. and T. Byrne (2004). 'A study of sexual health issues, attitudes and behaviours: The views of early school leavers'. Dublin, The Crisis Pregnancy Agency**:** p. 24.

Mendlowitz, S.L., Manassis K., Bradley S., Scapillato D., Mieztis S., Shaw B.E., (1999) 'Cognitive-Behavioral Group Treatments in Childhood Anxiety Disorders: The Role of Parental Involvement'. Journal of American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry 38:10 October

McCoy, S., Smyth, S., Watson, D., Darmody, M., (2014) 'Leaving School in Ireland: A Longitudinal Study of Post-School Transitions'. Dublin, The Economic and Social Research Institute.

McGarr, J. (2010). 'Early School Leaving: An Exploration of the Factors Contributing to Early School Leaving' Masters in Child, Family, and Community Studies Dublin Institute of Technology.

McGrath, B. (2006). 'Everything is different here …: mobilizing capabilities through inclusive education practices and relationships'. International Journal of Inclusive Education Vol. 10(No. 6): pp. 595–614.

Mc Hugh, K. (2014) "A Road Less Spoken, The experiences of Youthreach participants", Published Thesis (PhD.), National University of Ireland Maynooth, Faculty of Social Sciences, Available http://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/5437/1/Complete%20Thesis%20DEd%20KMcHugh.pdf

McKernan, J. (2008). *Curriculum and Imagination* London, Routledge.

McNiff, J. (2002). *Action Research, Principles and Practice*. London, Routledge Falmer.

Merton, B. (2004). 'An Evaluation of the Impact of youth Work In England'. Leicester, Department of Education and Skills England**:** p. 5.

Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning.* San Francisco, Jossey Bass.

Miskovic M. & Hoop K., (2006) 'Action Research Meets Critical Pedadgogy Theory, Practice, and Reflection'. Qualitive Inquiry Volume 12 Number 2 Sage p 269 -291

Minsky P. Hyman (1992) 'The Financial Instability Hypothesis' The Jerome Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, Prepared for *Handbook of Radical Political Economy*, edited by Philip Arestis and Malcolm Sawyer, Edward Elgar: Aldershot, 1993.

Moreno, J. L. (1951). *Sociometry, Experimental Method and the Science of Society: An Approach to a New Political Orientation.* New York, Beacon House.

Moreno, J.L., (1960). *The Sociometry Reader.* New York, The Free Press.

NACDA (2014). 'Drug Use in Ireland and Northern Ireland Dublin', National Advisory Committee on Drugs and Alcohol.

NALA (206), " Impact and Implementation of Family Literacy Programmes: Review and Recommendations", Dublin, National Adult Literacy Agency.

NESF (2002). 'Early School Leavers'. Dublin, National Economic and Social Forum**:** pp. 68-69.

Network for a Healthy California (2012) 'Inspiring Youth, Growing Change', California Department of Health.

Nietzsche, F. (1885). *Thus Spake Zarathustra, A Book for All and None.* Germany, The Gutenburg Project.

O'Connor, N. and C. Stauton (2015). 'Cherishing All Equally: Economic Inequality in Ireland'. Dublin, Think Tank for Action on Social Change

OECD (1999). *Overcomming Exclusion Through Adult Learning.* Paris, OECD Publications.

O'Higgins, K. (1998) 'Review of the literature and policy on the links between poverty and drug abuse' Economic and Social Research Institue, Dublin

O' Neil (2014) 'Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Patients: The Issues for Mental Health Practice Dublin', Gay & Lesbian Eqaulity Network, The College of Psychiatry Ireland, National Office for Suicide Prevention

O'Neil, L. (1999). *Contradictions of Control.* New Yourk Routledge Farmer.p .7

Orwell, G. (2004). *Nineteen Eighty Four.* London, Penguin Modern Classics

O'Shea, E. and Brendan Kennelly (2008). 'The Economics of Mental Health Care In Ireland' Irish Centre for Social Gerontology and Department of Economics, NUI Galway p. 16

Overmier, B. J. and R. C. Leaf (1965). 'Effects of discriminative Pavlovian fear conditioning upon previously or subsequently acquired avoidance responding'. Journal of Comparative and Physiological Psychology 60(2): pp. 213-217.

Palmer, P. (1998). *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscapes of a Teacher's Life.* San Francisco, Jossey Bass.

Park, P. (2002). 'Knoweledge and Participatory research'. In: *Handbook of Action research Participative Inquiry and Practice* Reason P. and Bradbury H. London, Sage**:** p. 86.

Pearse, P. (1914). 'An Education Ideal: The Murder Machine'. Dublin, The Irish Review.

Peter Mc Very Trust (2014) 'Annual Report 2014', Dublin, Peter Mc Very Trust.

Peterson, C., S. F. Maier and M. E. P. Seligman (1993). *Learned Helplessness A theory for the Age of Personal Control.* New York, Oxford University Press.

Piaget, J. (1952). *The Origins of Intelligence in Children.* New York, International Universities Press.

Pimentel, A. (2016). 'Psychological Nutrition'. Psychology, 7, 1104-1109. http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/psych.2016.78110

Plato (380 BC). *The Republic.* Ancient Greece.

Power, M. J., M. O'Flynn, A. Courtois and M. Kennedy (2013). *Neoliberal Capitalism and Education in Ireland,* University of Limerick.

Powers, C. B. and E. Allaman (2012). 'How Participatory Action Research Can Promote Social Change and Help Youth Development'. Harvard, Born This Way Foundation. Berkman Center for Internet &

Society at Harvard University. John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The Kinder and Braver World Foundation

Powers, J. L. and J. S. Tiffany (2006). 'Engaging Youth in Participatory Research and Evaluation'. Journal of Public Health Management Practice November Supplement: S79 - S87.

Pratt, M. L. (1991). 'Arts of the Contact Zone'. Profession Modern languague Association, pp. 33-40

Proudfoot J., Ryden C., Everitt B., Shapiro D.A., Goldberg B., Mann A., Tylee A., Marks I., Gray J.A., (2004) 'Clinical efficacy of computerised cognitive behavioural therapy for anxiety cognitive behavioural therapy for anxiety and depression in primary care: randomised and depression in primary care: randomised controlled trial controlled trial'. British journal of Psychiatry 185, 46- 54.

Pryor, A., C. Carpenter and M. Townsend (2005). 'Outdoor education and bush adventure therapy: A social-ecological approach to health and wellbeing'. Australian Journal of Outdoor Education, 9(1): 3-13.

Punch K.F. and Oancea A. (2014). *Introduction to Research Methods in Education* 2nd edition, London, Sage.

Reay, D. (2017) *Miseducation, Inequality, education and the working class*. Bristol, Policy Press .

Reay, D. (2016) 'The Zombie Stalking English Schools: Social Class and Educational Inequality' British Journal of Educational Studies, ISSN 0007-1005 DOI number: 10.1111/j.1467-8527.2006.00351.x Vol. 54, No. 3, September 2006, pp 288 –307

Reay, D. (2001) 'Finding or losing yourself?: Working-class relationships to education', Journal of Education Policy, 2001, vol. 16, no. 4, 333±346

Redmond, S. and Dack, B. (2014) 'Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Programmes' - Report published 2014 Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Reed, K., Duncan, J. M., Lucier-Greer, M., Fixelle, C., & Ferraro, A. J. (2016). 'Helicopter Parenting and Emerging Adult Self-Efficacy: Implications for Mental and Physical Health.' Journal of Child and Family Studies, 25(10), 3136–3149. doi:10.1007/s10826-016-0466-x

Reich, J. W., A. J. Zautra and J. S. Hall (2010). *Handbook of Adult Resilience*. London The Guilford Press.

Reilly, M. (2009). 'Report on an Inspection of Mountjoy Prison by the Inspector of Prisons'
 Office of the Inspector of Prisons, Nenagh, County Tipperary.

Rios-Moore, I., Allen, E. Arenas, J. Contreras, N. Jing, T. Threats and C. Cahill (2004). 'Makes Me Mad Report'. New york, Center for Human Environments.

Riviere, J. (1929). 'Womanliness as Masquarade ' International Journal of Phycoanalysis 10.

Russell, B. (1950). *Unpopular Essays* New York, Simon and Schuster

Ryan, S. (1998) 'Perceived Needs for Guidance, Counselling and Psychological Services in Youthreach, Community Training Workshops and Senior Traveller Training Centres'. National Co-ordinator Youthreach Department of Education & Science and the National Co-ordinator

Scales, P.C., & Leffert, N. (1999). *Developmental assets: A synthesis of the scientific research on adolescent development*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Search Institute

Scales, P. C., & Leffert, N. (2004). *Developmental assets: A synthesis of the scientific research on adolescent development (2nd ed.)* Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.

Schaffer, H. R. (2004). *Introducing Child Psychology.* Massachusetts, Blackwell Publishing. p. 96

Schensul, J. J. and M. Berg (2004). 'Youth Participatory Action Research: A Transformative Approach to Service-Learning.' Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning: pp. 76-88.

Schunk, D. H. (1991). 'Self-efficacy and academic motivation'. Educational Psychologist 26: pp. 207-231.

Scott, J. (2000). *Social Network Analysis.* London, Sage.

Seeman, M., (1959). 'On the Meaning of Alienation'. American Sociological Review Vol. 24 No. 6 p 783 -791

Seligman, M. E. (2006) *Learned Optimism, How to Change Your Mind and Youe Life.* United States, Vintage Books

Seligman, M. E., Maier, S. F. and Geer, J. H. (1968). 'Alleviation of Learned Helplessness in the Dog'. Journal of Abnormal Psychology 73(3): pp. 256-262.

Seligman, M. E., (2011) *Flourish A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being.* New York. Free Press.

Shakespere, W. (1606). *King Lear.* London, The Gutenburg Project.

Shepard, J., (1977). 'Technology, Alienation, and Job Satisfaction' Annual Review of Sociology, Vol 3, p. 1-21

Silva E., and Warde A., (2010). *Cultural Analysis and Bourdieu's Leagacy Setting Accounts and Developing alternatives.* London, Routledge.

Sliegman, M. (2002). *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fufillment.* New York, The Free Press.

Spek V., Cuijpers, Nyklícek I., Riper H., Keyzer J., Pop V., (2007) 'Internet-based cognitive behaviour therapy for symptoms of depression and anxiety: a meta-analysis'. Psychological Medicine, 2007, 37, 319–328.

Stokes, D. (2000). 'YOUTHREACH 2000: A Consultative process - a report on the outcomes.' Dublin: National Coordinators, YOUTHREACH.

Stokes, D. (2003). 'Early School leaving in Ireland the Matrix of Influences Explored'. PhD, NUI Maynooth

Stokes, D. (2004) 'Traveller Education Strategy Submission'. National Co-ordinator YOUTHREACH, Department of Education and Science, March 2004 http://www.youthreach.ie/academic-research-archives/other-documents/traveller-education-strategy-submission/ [Accessed online 05/04/2017]

Taylor, C.S., Lerner, R., von Eye, A., Bilalbegovic Balsano, A., Dowling, E. M., Anderson, P. M., Bobek, D. L., Bjelobrk, D. (2002) 'Individual and ecological assets and positive developmental trajectories among gang and community-based organization youth'. New Directions for Youth Development Special Issue: Pathways to Positive Development Among Diverse Youth. Autumn (Fall) 2002. Volume 2002, Issue 95

Thomassen, L. (2006). *The Derrida-Habermas Reader.* Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

Tough, A. (1971). *The Adult's Learners Projects: A Fresh Approach to Theory and Practice in Adult Learning.* Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Tyler, R. (1949). *Basic Principles of Cirriculum and Instruction* Chicago University of Chicago Press.

Ungar M. (2013). 'The Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM) Youth Version User's Manual', Resilience Research Centre**: 5.**

Ungar M., (2013). 'The impact of youth-adult relationships on resilience'. International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies (2013) 3: 328–336

Ungar M. & Lienbenberg L. (2013) 'Contextual Factors Related to School Engagement and Resilience: A Study of Canadian Youth with Complex Needs'. Journal of Child and Youth Development (JCYD) Vol 1, No 1 (2013) 3 -26.

Van Amsterdam L.B. (2018) *Fear, How Advanced River Kayak Instructors understand, experience and manage fear in both personal kayaking and in the teaching of river kayaking*, Submitted in part fufilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts Degree in Outdoor Education at the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology.

Veevers, N. and P. Allison (2011). *Kurt Hahn, Inspirational, Visionary, Outdoor and Experiential Educator.* Rotterdam, Sense Publishers.

Voltaire (1759). *Candide.* London, Penguin

Vygostsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* London: Harvard University Press

Wachowski, L. and L. Wachowski (1999). The Matrix. USA, Warner Brothers.

Webb, J., T. Schirato and G. Danaher (2002). *Understanding Bordieu* Los Angles Sage.

Welton, A. (2011). 'The Courage to Critique Policies and Practices from Within: Youth Participatory Action Research as Critical Policy Analysis.' Democracy and Education 19(1).

Wenger, E. (2000). 'Communities of Practice and Social learning Systems.' Organization 7(2): pp. 225-246.

Williams, J., Polly, H., Jeffery, C., Ramierz, G., and Pignone, M., (2002). 'Is the Patient Clinically Depressed?', Journal of the American Medical Association Vol. 287 No. 9

Wood J.L., and Essien Wood I., (2012) 'Capital identity projection: Understanding the psychosocial effects of capitalism on Black male community college students'. Journal of Economic Psychology 33 (2012) 984–995

Wrigley, J. (1982). *Class Politics and Public Schools: Chicago 1900-1950.* New York, Rutgers University Press.

Zautra, A. J., J. S. Hall and K. E. Murray (2010). *Handbook of Adult Resilence* New York, The Guilford Press.

Zeldin, S., L. Bestul and J. Powers (2012). *Youth Adult Partnerships in Evaluation* Ithca, New York, Cornell University.

Zimmerman, B. J. (2000). 'Self-Efficacy: An Essential Motive to Learn'. Contemporary Educational Psychology **25**: pp. 82-91.

Websites

Irish National Teachers Organisation http://www.into.ie/NI/Schools/Education/ClassSizes/ [Accessed online 21/12/2016]

Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland http://www.asti.ie/about-asti/policy/class-sizes/ [Accessed online 21/12/2016]

Teachers Union of Ireland http://www.tui.ie/directives/directive-on-class-size.203.html [Accessed online 21/12/2016]

Appendix A: Child and Youth Resilience Measure

DIRECTIONS Listed below are a number of questions about you, your family, your community, and your relationships with people. These questions are designed to help us better understand how you cope with daily life and what role the people around you play in how you deal with daily challenges. There are no right or wrong answers.

Section A: Please complete the questions below.

1. Who do you live with?

_____

2. How long have you lived with these people?

_____

3. How many times have you moved homes in the past 5 years?

_____

4. Please describe who you consider to be your family (for example, 1 or 2 biological parents, siblings, friends on the street, a foster family, an adopted family, etc.).

_____

_____

_____

Section B Child and Youth Resilience Model

I am smart

Not at All   A Little   Somewhat   Quite a Bit   A Lot

I fit in

Not at All   A Little   Somewhat   Quite a Bit   A Lot

I am good company

Not at All   A Little   Somewhat   Quite a Bit   A Lot

People can rely on me

Not at All   A Little   Somewhat   Quite a Bit   A Lot

I can control my anger

Not at All   A Little   Somewhat   Quite a Bit   A Lot

When I am older I can get a job I like

Not at All   A Little   Somewhat   Quite a Bit   A Lot

I like being in Youthreach

Not at All   A Little   Somewhat   Quite a Bit   A Lot

People like me

Not at All   A Little   Somewhat   Quite a Bit   A Lot

I think I will finish the LCA

Not at All   A Little   Somewhat   Quite a Bit   A Lot

My life is good

Not at All   A Little   Somewhat   Quite a Bit   A Lot

Section C Child & Youth Resilience Model

To what extent do the sentences below describe you?

Circle one answer for each statement.

No   Sometimes   Yes

1. I have people I want to be like

No   Sometimes   Yes

2. Getting an education is important to me

No   Sometimes   Yes

3. I feel that my parent(s)/ caregiver(s) know a lot about me (for example, who my friends are, what I like to do)

No   Sometimes   Yes

4. I try to finish activities that I start

No   Sometimes   Yes

5. When things don't go my way, I can fix it without hurting myself or other people (for example hitting others or saying nasty things)

No   Sometimes   Yes

6. I know where to go to get help

No   Sometimes   Yes

7. I feel that I belong at my school

No   Sometimes   Yes

8. I think my family cares about me when times are hard (for example if I am sick or have done something wrong)

No   Sometimes   Yes

9. I think my friends care about me when times are hard (for example if I am sick or have done something wrong)

No   Sometimes   Yes

10. I am treated fairly

No   Sometimes   Yes

11. I have chances to learn things that will be useful when I am older (like cooking, working, and helping others)

      No   Sometimes   Yes

12. I like the way my community celebrates things (like holidays, festivals)

      No   Sometimes   Yes

Appendix B: Map of Youthreach centres in Ireland

Appendix C: List of Youthreach Centres

Gortahork Youthreach	Adult Education and Training Centre, Gort a Choirce, Co Donegal
Glengad Youthreach	
Buncrana Youthreach	Adult Education & Training Centre, Shore Road, Buncrana, Co. Donegal
Letterkenny Youthreach	Centre for Education, Kilmacrennan Road, Letterkenny, Co Donegal
Lifford Youthreach	The Diamond, Lifford, Co Donegal
Ballyshannon Youthreach	Adult Education & Training Centre, College Street, Ballyshannon
Sligo Youthreach	Unit 10, Cleveragh Business Centre, Sligo
Youthreach Ballina	Further Education Centre, Cathedral Road, Ballina
Ballaghaderreen Youthreach	Old Vocational School, Ballaghaderreen, Co Roscommon,
Kiltimagh Youthreach	Colaiste Raifteiri, Kiltimagh, Co Mayo
Letterfrack Youthreach	Letterfrack Education Centre, Letterfrack, Co. Galway
Ballinrobe Youthreach	Old Vocational School, Neale Road, Ballinrobe, Co Mayo
Tuam Youthreach	Ballygaddy Rd., Tuam, Co.Galway
Leitir Móir Teagmháil na nÓg	Leitir Moir, Co na Gaillimhe
Galway Youthreach	Aonad 22A Pháirc Gnó an Leasa Bháin /22A Liosban Business Park, Bóthar Thuama/Tuam Road, Gail
Longford Youthreach	Battery Rd, Longford, Co. Longford
Ballymahon Youthreach	Upper Main Street, Ballymahon, Co. Longford
Roscommon Town Youthreach	Lisnamult, Roscommon
Ballinasloe Youthreach	Cullen's Yard, Main Street, Ballinasloe, Co Galway
Clara Youthreach	Railway House, River Street, Clara
Youthreach Banagher	St Rynaghs College of Further Education, Main St, Banagher
Portumna Youthreach	Portumna, Co Galway
Birr Youthreach	c/o Outdoor Education Centre, Roscrea Road, Birr, Co Offaly
Roscrea Youthreach	Roscrea Education Centre, Old Dublin Road, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary
Templemore Ceim Eile Progression Project	Ceim Eile, St Sheelan's College, Templemore, Co Tipperary
East Clare Youthreach	Brian Boru Centre Tuamgraney, Co. Clare
Ennis Youthreach	Progression programme, Ennis Adult & Community Education Centre, Clonroad Business Park, Clonro Clare
Miltown Malbay	West Clare Resource Centre, Ballard Road, Miltown Malbay
South Clare Youthreach	Palmgrove, Smithstown, Shannon, Co. Clare
Kilrush Youthreach	Adult Learning Centre, Cooraclare Road, Kilrush
Youthreach Shanagolden	Shanagolden Education Resource Centre, Shanagolden
Listowel Youthreach	DYS Youth Centre, Upper Church Street, Listowel, Co. Kerry
Hospital Youthreach	Main Street, Hospital, Co Limerick
Kilkenny Youthreach	Desart Hall, New Street, Kilkenny
Carlow Youthreach	Tullow Road, Carlow.
Arklow Youthreach	Fernhill Plaza, Wexford Road, Arklow, Co. Wicklow
Enniscorthy Youthreach	8 Castle Street, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford
Wexford Youthreach	Keelogues, Barntown, Co. Wexford.
New Ross Youthreach	Education and Training Centre, Irishtown, New Ross, Co Wexford
Waterford Youthreach	66 O'Connell Street, Waterford
Subla Youthreach	Unit 3, Block 1, Lacken Road Business Park, Lacken Road, Waterford.
Tramore Youthreach	Unit No 2, Seapoint Business Park, Tramore, Co. Waterford
Dungarvan Youthreach	Rinnasillogue, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford

East Cork Youthreach	East Cork Further Education & Youthreach Centre, Colaiste Eoin, Golf Links Road, Youghal, Co. Cork
Fermoy Youthreach	College Road, Fermoy, Co. Cork
Mallow Youthreach	Ballyellis, Mallow, Co. Cork
Killarney Youthreach	KDYS Youth Centre, Fairhill, Killarney, Co. Kerry
Killorglin Youthreach	The Lodge, Killorglin Adult Learning Centre, Market Street, Killorglin, Co Kerry
Macroom Youthreach	Millstreet Road, Macroom
Ballincollig Youthreach	Unit 4/5, Great Island Enterprise Park, Inishmore, Ballincollig, Co Cork
Dean Street Youthreach	Teach Barra, Dean Street, Cork City
Cork City Learning Support Services	6 Fr. Mathew Street, Cork
Bandon Youthreach	Station Road, Bandon, Co Cork
Bantry Youthreach	Lahadane, Bantry, Co Cork
The Glen Youthreach	The Glen Sports & Resource Centre, Glen Avenue, The Glen, Cork
Knocknaheeny Youthreach	c/o Terence McSwiney Community College, Knocknaheeny, Cork City
Athy Youthreach	Old Model School, 2 Model Court, Athy, Co Kildare
Laois Youthreach	Harbour Street, Mountmellick
Kilbeggan Youthreach	Midland Gateway Business Park, Kilbeggan, Co Westmeath
Edenderry Youthreach	St Mary's Rd, Edenderry
Naas Youthreach	Jigginstown, Limerick Rd, Naas, Co Kildare
Blessington Youthreach	Community Education Centre, Old Vocational School, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Wicklow Youthreach	The Murrough, Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow
Naas Youthreach	Jigginstown, Limerick Rd, Naas, Co Kildare
Bray & North Wicklow Youthreach	Sunbeam House, Vevay Road, Bray, County Wicklow
Sallynoggin Youthreach	St. Josephs Boys AFC, Pearse Park, Sallynoggin
Rathfarnham Youthreach	Mountainview House, Meadow Park Avenue, Rathfarnham
Killinarden Youthreach	Whitestown Industrial Estate, Killinarden, Dublin 24
Priory Youthreach	Greenhill's Road, Tallaght, Dublin24.
Crumlin Youthreach	Armagh Road, Crumlin, Dublin 12
Clondalkin Youthreach	Monastery Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22
Clondalkin Youth Support and Training Unit	Unit 5, Clondalkin, Dublin 22
Ballyfermot Youthreach	49 Rossmore Avenue, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10
Pleasants St Youthreach	CDVEC Training Centre, 16 Pleasants Street, Dublin 8.
Leixlip Youthreach	Mill Lane, Leixlip
Ballyfermot Youthreach	49 Rossmore Avenue, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10
Transition Youthreach Centre	10/10A Parnell Square, Dublin 1
Nth Gt George's St Youthreach	20 North Great George's Street, Dublin 1
Sherrard St. Youthreach	7 Sherrard Street, Dublin 1
Cabra Youthreach	(grounds of Marian Language School), Rathoath Road, Cabra, Dublin 7
Blanchardstown Youthreach	Youthreach, The Brace Centre, Main St., Blanchardstown, Dublin 15
Ballymun Youthreach	Shangan Road, Ballymun, Dublin 9
Kilmore Road Youthreach	St. John of God Campus, Kilmore Road, Artane, Dublin 5
Harmonstown Youthreach	142 Harmonstown Road, Dublin 5
Ashbourne Youthreach	140 Ashbourne Industrial Estate, Ashbourne, Co. Meath
Rush Youthreach	Convent Lane, Rush, Co Dublin
Balbriggan Youthreach	Sarsfield House (First Floor), Mill Street, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin
Laytown/Bettystown Youthreach	1 Neptune Terrace, Bettystown, Co. Meath

Drogheda Youthreach	Centre for Continuing Education, King St., Drogheda, Co Louth
Navan Youthreach	Abbey Road, Navan, Co Meath
Trim Youthreach	Old Vocational School, New Haggard Road, Trim, Co. Meath
Delvin Youthreach	Main Street, Delvin, Co Westmeath
Kells Youthreach	O'Growney Terrace, Kells, Co Meath
Kingscourt Youthreach	Lower Main St., Kingscourt, Co Cavan
Carrickmacross Youthreach	Holy Family Hall, Church Street, Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan
Castleblayney Youthreach	Moraghy, Monaghan Road, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan
Cootehill Youthreach	Market Street, Cootehill, Co. Cavan
Monaghan Youthreach	VEC Training Centre, Knockaconny, Monaghan, Co Monaghan

Critical Theory
Workshop 1

Nature V Nurture
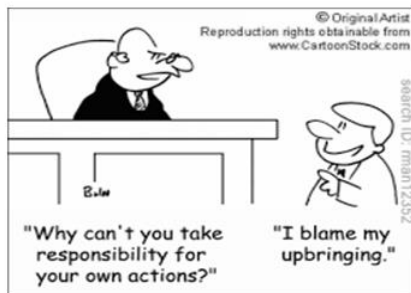

Nature V Nurture

WHICH IS THE MORE
MONUMENTAL FACTOR IN
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT NATURE
OR NURTURE

Nature V Nurture

Genes V Environment

Stanford Experiment

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8McGyYAwcU
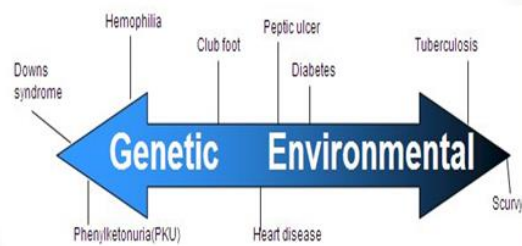
Critical Theory Workshop 2

Perception

Perception

Perception

Plato's Cave

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2afuTvUzBQ

The Matrix

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zE7PKRjrid4

Descartes

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHihkRwisbE

Critical Theory Workshop 3

Economic Inequality

Marx

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0GFSUu5UzA

Economic Systems

- Capitalism and Communism
- Adam Smith and Karl Marx
- Consumerism

Alienation

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZ4VzhIuKCQ

Critical Theory Workshop 4

Social Inequality

Inequality

Social Reproduction

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ShJqEBcyiBg
- What does the education system value?
- What does society value?
- What culture is ignored or devalued?

Exclusion & Isolation

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eejmYz0O3YE

Appendix E: Suggested Questions for Learner Reflections

How would you describe yourself?

Things you would change about yourself?

How would others describe you?

Things that changed your life?

Are you sociable?

What are the positives/negatives about Youthreach?

What would you like to have achieved by the time you finish in Youthreach?

Aspects of Youthreach that you would like to change and things you would like to change?

Aspects of Youth culture that you love hate and things you would like to see changed?

Is Youthreach what you expected it to be? In what way?

Are there new subjects that you are doing and like? Which ones and why?

What are the differences between Youthreach and school for you?

Have you thought about where you would like to do work experience? When/Why?

Is there anything you would like to change about Youthreach?

What are my strengths?

What are you good at outside of school? How do you know you are good at it? Give an example?

What frustrates you? How do you react when it happens?

What makes you feel uncomfortable?

Describe an event and a person you know who has had a strong influence on you? Did you learn from them? What did you learn?

What skills have you developed since coming to Youthreach?

One thing I would like to improve in school and outside school?

Describe one thing another learner has done and that you would like to do.

What would you like to learn more about in Youthreach in the future?

If you had to describe yourself in three words what would they be and why?

What are you most proud of?

What was the most important lesson you learned last year?

What was your favourite compliment last year?

What was your favourite moment in Youthreach last year?

What advice would you give yourself if you met yourself 1 year ago?

What would you like to achieve career wise?

How would you like to remember 2015 looking back at it?

Was there anything you did for the first time last year?

What worries me most about the future?

What matters most in my life?

When did I last push the boundaries of my comfort zone? Describe.

What do I need to change about myself?

Appendix F Map of the Regional Survey Area
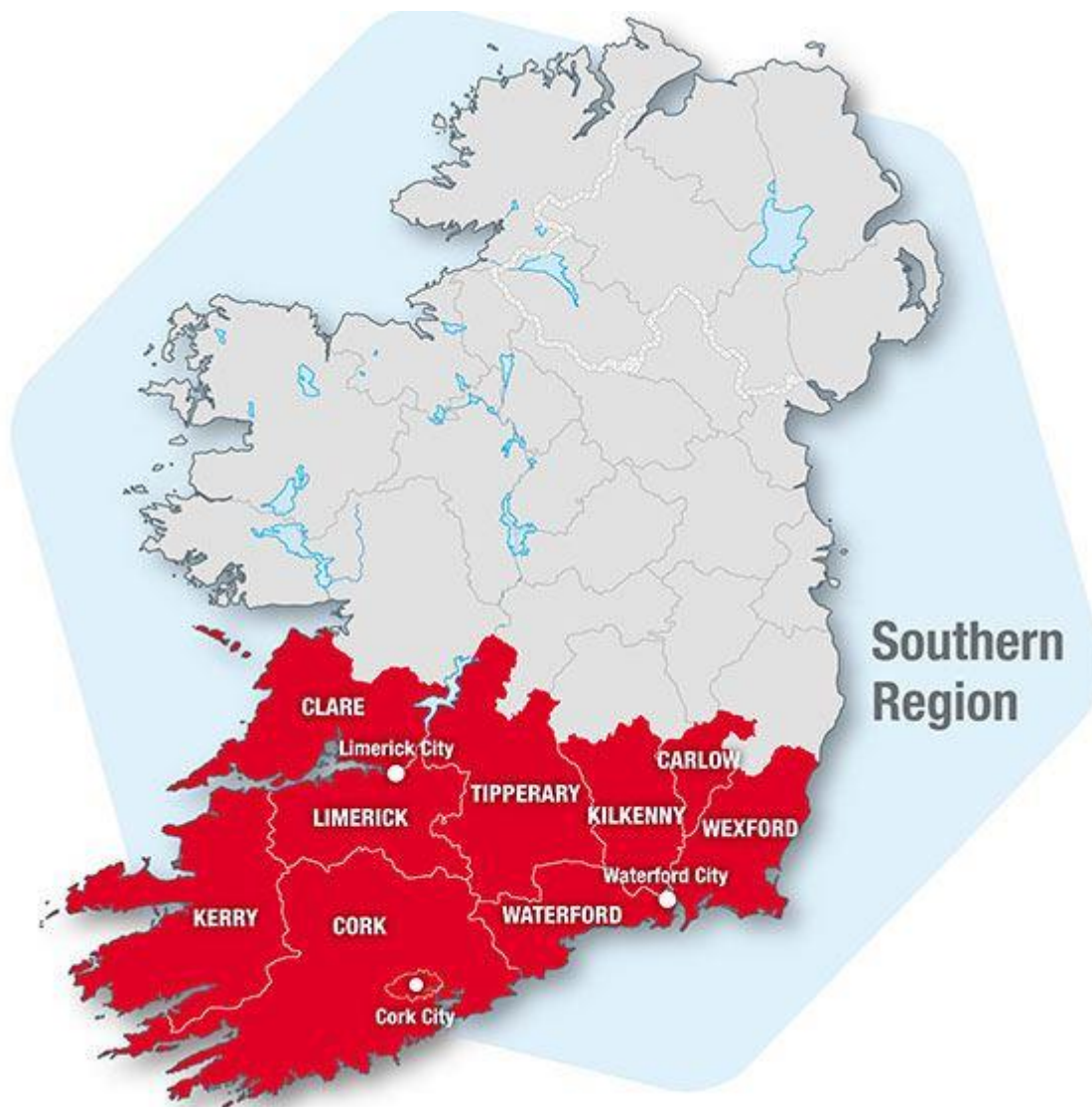
Appendix G Centres Included in Survey

East Clare Youthreach

Ennis Youthreach

Kilrush Youthreach

Youthreach Miltown Malbay

South Clare Youthreach

Roscrea

Templemore

Cappawhite

Youthreach Education Centre
Glentworth Street

Youthreach Hospital
Moyross
O'Connell Avenue, Limerick

Coiscéim Education Centre

Youthreach Shanagolden

Killarney Youthreach

South Kerry Youthreach

Listowel Youthreach

Tralee Youthreach LCA

Transforum Alley
Youthreach Tralee

Ballincollig

Youthreach Bandon

Bantry

Cork City Learning Support
Services

Centre for Education Dean St

East Cork Youthreach

Fermoy Youthreach

The Glen Youthreach

Knocknaheeny

Macroom

Mahon

Mallow

Dungarven

Subla

Tramore

Waterford

Kilkenny

Carlow

Enniscorthy Youthreach

New Ross
Wexford

Show Racism the Red Card

Art Competition, Drawing, Video, Animation or any other piece of art.

Closing date: Friday 22nd 3 o'clock sharp

€30 Prize

Appendix J Bike Flyer

YOUTHREACH

We want your bikes!

If you have a bike gathering dust in a shed.
Please donate it to Youthreach

Youthreach provides second chance education to early school leavers aged 15 to 20 years old.

If you have a bike you would like to donate to Youthreach we would be very grateful.

Furthermore we promise to put it to good use. So if you have a bike gathering dust in a shed give it to us and we will make sure a young person makes good use of it.

YOUTHREACH

Call us in the centre

I ♥

YOUTHREACH

Even if your bike is in need of a little maintenance we have plenty of enthusiastic young people who can get it roadworthy again and put it to good use.

YOUTHREACH

Thank you!

Appendix K Birmingham Multiple Intelligences Test

I am observant. I often see things that others miss.

I get restless easily.

I enjoy writing things down.

I enjoy being outdoors when I learn.

I like to think through problems while I walk or run.

I learn best when I have to get up and do it for myself.

I can sort out arguments between friends.

Pollution makes me angry.

I enjoy social events like parties.

I am good at mathematical problems and using numbers.

I remember things like telephone numbers by repeating them to a rhythm.

I am sensitive to the moods and feelings of others.

My mood changes when I listen to music.

I find it easy to explain to others.

I like to work with a team.

I can take things apart and put them back together easily.

I can recognise and name different types of birds, trees and plants.

I can remember pieces of music easily.

I always do things one-step at a time.

I can link things together and pick out patterns easily.

I can pick out different instruments when I listen to a piece of music.

I enjoy making music.

I am interested in why people do the things they do.

I keep or like pets.

I know myself well.

I need to see something in it for me before I want to learn something.

I like to work with my hands.

I enjoy games involving other people.

I have a good sense of balance and like to move around a lot.

I like to make lists.

I am an independent thinker. I know my own mind.

I like to think out loud.

I learn well from listening to others.

I enjoy working on my own.

I enjoy logic problems and puzzles.

I can picture scenes in my head when I remember things.

I like to use charts and diagrams in my learning.

I can use lots of different words to express myself.

I have a good sense of direction.

I like working and thinking on my own and quietly.

Appendix L Phase 1 Mini Research Projects

Youth Drug Use, Drugs in Sport, Drugs

Engagement

Combination of three Mini Research Projects; Youth Drug Use, Drugs in Sport, Drugs and the respective Youth Researchers working together in the preparation of findings for presentation.

Debate on whether or not drug use should be treated as a health or a criminal issue.

Imagination

Research conducted within the research community itself in the first case and expanded to a regional survey of ESLs in the second.

Electronic Surveys/Paper based survey

Interviews

Alignment

Websites

Reports

Video Production

Presentation of findings to a Community Drugs Worker

Suicide, Young people and Suicide

Engagement

Combination of two Mini Research Projects; Suicide, Young people and Suicide and the respective Youth Researchers working together in the preparation of findings for presentation.

Imagination

Research conducted within the research community itself in the first case and expanded to a regional survey of ESLs in the second.

Interviews with Mental Health Campaigners/Community Organisers

Alignment

Presentation of findings to a community organiser raising awareness about depression

Mental Health Awareness Day

Fundraiser for the charity Pieta House which provides support to those at risk of suicide or suffering from depression

Road Racing and Road Safety

Engagement

Combination of two Mini Research Projects; Road Racing and Road Safety and the respective Youth Researchers working together in the preparation of findings for presentation.

Imagination

Research conducted within the research community itself in the first case and expanded to a regional survey of ESLs in the second.

Focus Groups

Electronic Surveys/Paper Surveys

Alignment

Presentation of findings to the Education Officer of the Road Safety Authority

Appeal to the community for bicycles

Cycling programme for learners started in the centre

Racism and Traveller Discrimination

Engagement

Combination of two Mini Research Projects; Racism and Traveller Discrimination and the respective Youth Researchers working together in the preparation of findings for presentation.

Imagination

Research conducted within the research community itself in the first case and expanded to a regional survey of ESLs in the second.

Interviews with members of the Travelling Community

Electronic Surveys

Alignment

Organisation of an art competition within the centre for inclusion in a National art completion run by the charity "Show Racism the Red Card"

The presentation of findings to the research community

<u>Animal Cruelty</u>

Engagement

Working with other learners to participate in a sticker campaign

Imagination

Research conducted within the research community itself in the first case and expanded to a regional survey of ESLs in the second.

Electronic Surveys

Alignment

Presentation of findings to the Research Community

Screening of the film "Blackfish", which highlights the mistreatment of Orcas

Sticker Campaign and connections made with the Ocean Initiatives programme to reduce marine litter

Young People in Care

Engagement

Conducting surveys with the research community

Imagination

Interviews with carers/social workers

Electronic Surveys

Alignment

Presentation of findings to the Research Community

Organisation of a team to participate in a Street League soccer competition for homeless people

Childhood Obesity

Engagement

Surveys conducted about the health of the learners in the centre

Imagination

Research conducted within the research community itself in the first case and expanded to a regional survey of ESLs in the second.

Alignment

Presentation about the amount of sugar used in soft drinks and soft drinks to learners within the centre

Human Trafficking

Engagement

Organising learners in the centre to send emails to their local representatives

Imagination

Research conducted within the research community itself in the first case and expanded to a regional survey of ESLs in the second.

Alignment

Presentation about the trafficking of women for the sex trade and the plight of refugees being trafficked made to learners in the centre

Mobilising the research community to lobby public representatives to criminalise the buyers of sex

Vocational Education

Engagement

Starting a Music Society in the centre

Imagination

Research conducted within the research community itself in the first case and expanded to a regional survey of ESLs in the second.

Reaching out to the community to appeal for used instruments

Alignment

Production of a CD featuring the group's music

Appendix M SPSS Analysis of Child and Youth Resilience Model

Descriptive Statistics

Frequency

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	5	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Male	10	66.7	66.7	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Before

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	49.00	1	6.7	6.7	6.7
	51.00	1	6.7	6.7	13.3
	57.00	1	6.7	6.7	20.0
	61.00	1	6.7	6.7	26.7
	63.00	1	6.7	6.7	33.3
	64.00	3	20.0	20.0	53.3
	66.00	1	6.7	6.7	60.0
	68.00	1	6.7	6.7	66.7
	69.00	1	6.7	6.7	73.3
	70.00	1	6.7	6.7	80.0
	71.00	1	6.7	6.7	86.7
	73.00	1	6.7	6.7	93.3
	75.00	1	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

After

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	53.00	1	6.7	6.7	6.7
	62.00	1	6.7	6.7	13.3
	64.00	1	6.7	6.7	20.0
	66.00	2	13.3	13.3	33.3
	67.00	2	13.3	13.3	46.7
	68.00	1	6.7	6.7	53.3
	69.00	1	6.7	6.7	60.0
	72.00	1	6.7	6.7	66.7
	74.00	1	6.7	6.7	73.3
	75.00	1	6.7	6.7	80.0
	77.00	1	6.7	6.7	86.7
	80.00	1	6.7	6.7	93.3
	86.00	1	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Change

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	-11.00	1	6.7	6.7	6.7
	-6.00	1	6.7	6.7	13.3
	-1.00	1	6.7	6.7	20.0
	.00	1	6.7	6.7	26.7
	1.00	1	6.7	6.7	33.3
	2.00	1	6.7	6.7	40.0
	3.00	1	6.7	6.7	46.7
	5.00	3	20.0	20.0	66.7
	8.00	1	6.7	6.7	73.3
	12.00	1	6.7	6.7	80.0
	16.00	2	13.3	13.3	93.3
	26.00	1	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	15	100.0	100.0	

Histograms

Before

Mean = 64.33
Std. Dev. = 7.48
N = 15

After

Mean = 69.73
Std. Dev. = 7.986
N = 15

Change

Mean = 5.40
Std. Dev. = 9.28
N = 15
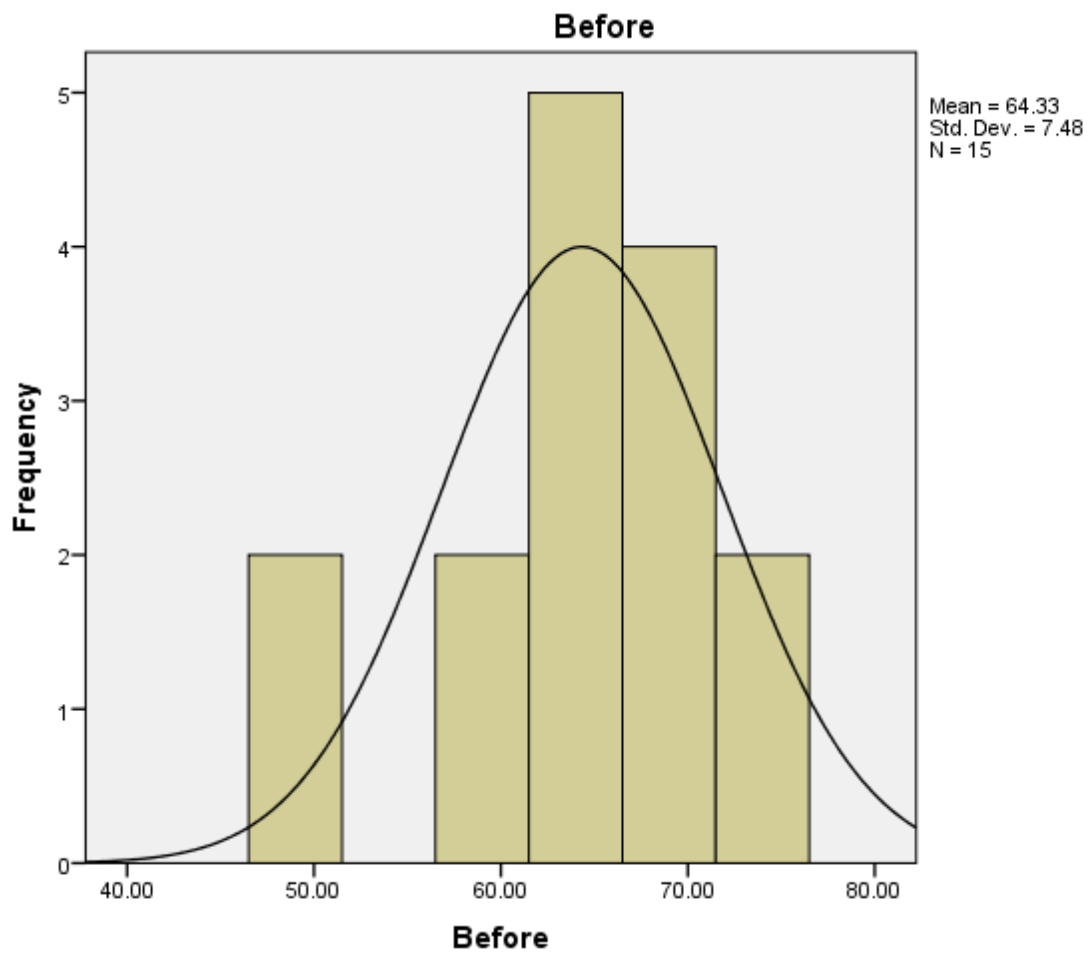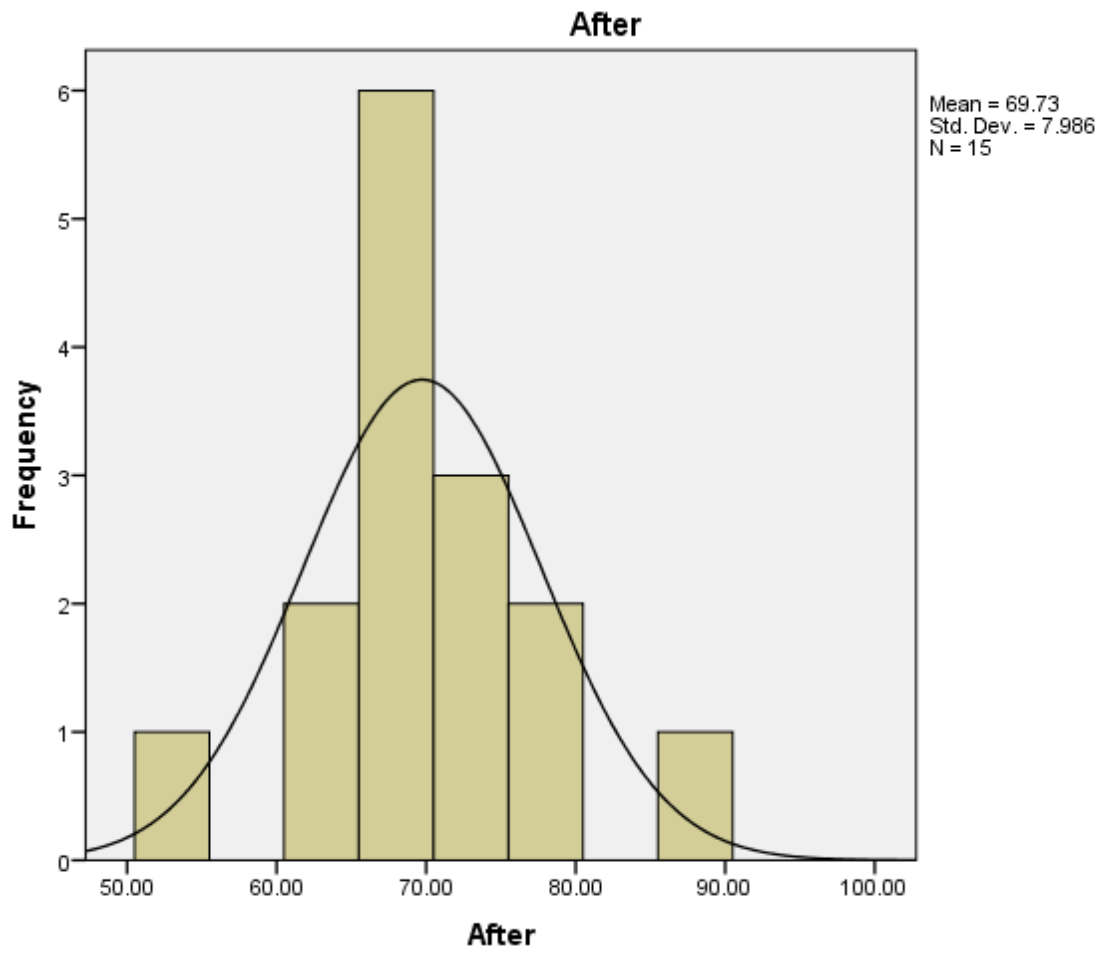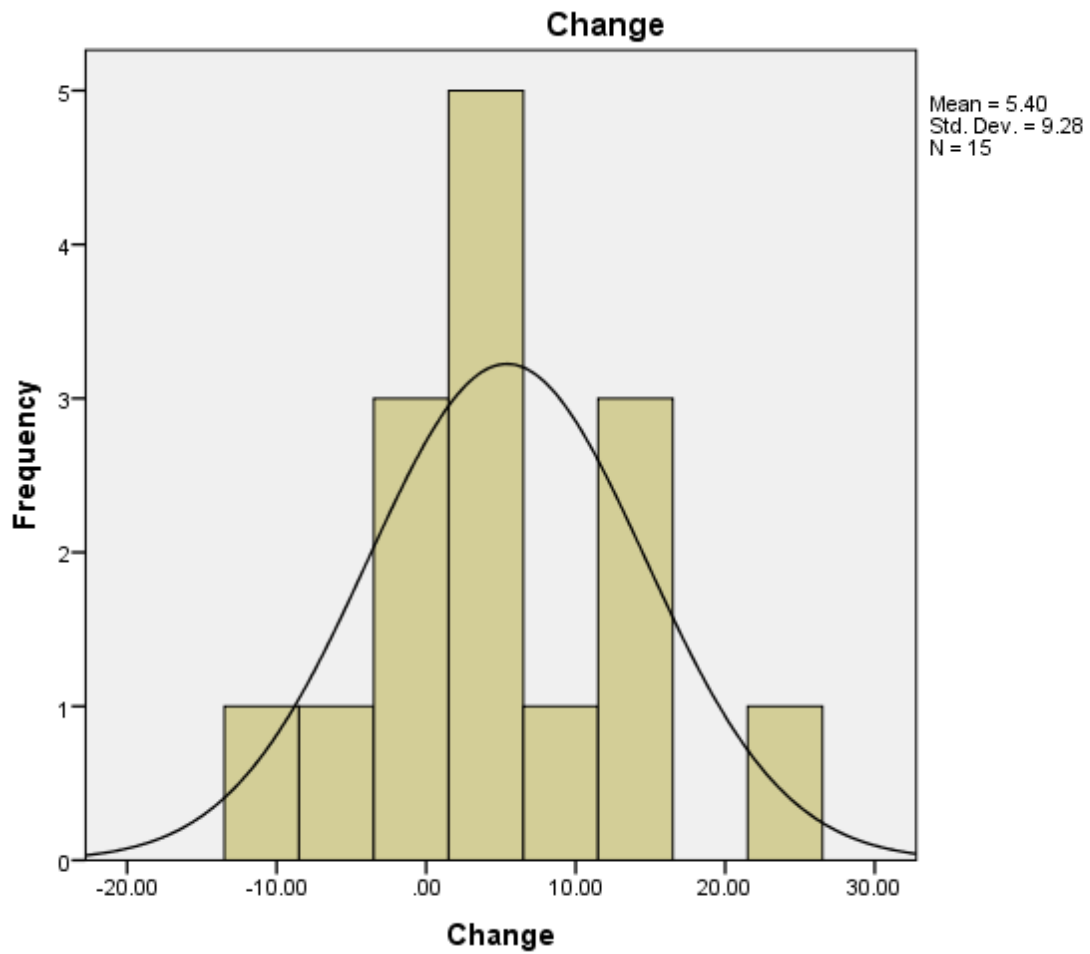
Means

Report

Gender		Before	After	Change
Female	Mean	68.4000	70.6000	2.2000
	N	5	5	5
	Std. Deviation	5.27257	5.45894	3.56371
Male	Mean	62.3000	69.3000	7.0000
	N	10	10	10
	Std. Deviation	7.80385	9.23821	10.94430
Total	Mean	64.3333	69.7333	5.4000
	N	15	15	15
	Std. Deviation	7.48013	7.98630	9.27978

Appendix N Canoe Skills Syllabus

Part 1 Level 2 Kayak Skills

General aims
The Level 2 Kayak Skills Award aims to enable participants to:

1. Kayak safely and competently on flat water and Grade I rivers as a member of a group being led.
2. Assist in basic rescues.

Requirements
Participant must successfully demonstrate the following techniques and skills:

1. An understanding of the Basic Safety Rules of canoeing.
2. An ability to Enter and Exit a kayak correctly.
3. Forward Paddle, Reverse Paddle, and Stop.
4. An ability to turn while stationary using Forward Sweep Stroke, Reverse Sweep Stroke and a combination of Forward and Reverse Sweep Strokes.
5. Simple Draw Stroke.
6. Low Brace.
7. Turning on the Move.
8. Edging while the kayak is moving.
9. Capsize Drill.
10. An ability to assist in an Assisted X Rescue and/or an H Rescue.

Assessment

1. The Level 2 Kayak Skills Assessment must take place outdoors on flat water (i.e. water of Grade I difficulty). No part of an assessment can be taken in a swimming pool.
2. During an assessment all techniques and skills must be demonstrated to an assessor's satisfaction in order to achieve this award.
3. It may not be feasible for a junior or disabled person to assist fully in rescues - such candidates should, however, have a full understanding of the correct sequence of each of the required rescues and have some role to fulfil in the completion of these rescues.
4. A spraydeck must be worn throughout an assessment.
5. All strokes should be demonstrated in relevant situations i.e. use of a simple draw stroke to manoeuvre the kayak to the bank. Strokes should be demonstrated on both sides of the kayak.
6. The Level 2 Kayak Skills Award is not a compulsory pre requisite for any subsequent Canoeing Ireland skills awards.
7. No age restriction applies to this award.

Assessment Guidelines

1. The Level 2 Kayak Skills Award can only be assessed by a currently registered Canoeing Ireland Instructor who is, at minimum, a Level 2 Kayak Instructor.
2. The assessment will be carried out with a maximum of six candidates to one assessor for Level 2 Instructors and eight candidates to one assessor for Level 3 Instructors and above.
3. All required assessment rescues should be kept until the end of an assessment.

4. Generally guidelines will be given, should a candidate fail an assessment, as to the areas that they need to improve on.

Notes for Level 2 Kayak Skills Awards
Safety Rules of Canoeing

- You must be able to swim.
- You must always wear a buoyancy aid.
- You must always ensure that there is adequate kayak buoyancy.
- You must never canoe alone.

Entry and Exit

Can be carried out with or without the use of paddles, depending on what is most appropriate to the situation.

Forward Paddling

Some directional instability is allowed for. This should not include complete loss of forward movement or continuous veering from side to side, aiming for a point/gap as a task.

Reverse Paddling

Some directional instability is allowed for. This should not include complete loss of reverse movement or continuous veering from side to side. A wider stroke than that used for forward paddling is permissible.

Stopping

Stopping should occur in a straight line allowing some leeway, but not veering from side to side. Ability to stop should be demonstrated while paddling forward and in reverse.

Forward Sweep Stroke

There should be full arm extension. The sweep should be initiated at the front of the kayak and continued to stern with trunk rotation evident.

Reverse Sweep Stroke

Trunk rotation to place paddle in the water at stern should be evident. There should be continuous sweep to the front of the kayak as the trunk unwinds. There should be full arm extension throughout.

Draw Stroke

The paddle should remain in the water throughout. Some slight bow or stern swing is acceptable. An ability to maintain the paddle shaft vertically should be evident. Some body rotation towards the paddling side should be evident.

Low Brace Support

The kayak must be sufficiently tilted for water to reach the spraydeck. A good push down with the elbows above paddle and associated hip action should be evident.

Turing on the Move

The kayak should be moved at good speed through a series of turns. The turns should be induced by applying a combination of strokes and edge control appropriate to the kayak and the participant. The kayak should continue moving throughout the series of turns without stopping or significantly slowing down.

Capsize Drill

While wearing a spray deck, and followed by a 10 metre swim towing the kayak and paddle to the bank, then emptying the kayak correctly. The paddle should be retained.

Part 2 River Safety & Rescue 1 (RSR 1)

Introduction

The RSR 1 is a half day course designed for people who wish to undertake relevant training in Safety and Rescue Techniques appropriate for Grade I water. The RSR 1 aims to develop a culture of safety, awareness and proactive accident prevention in canoe sports in Ireland.

Objectives of the RSR 1

The RSR 1 aims to enable candidates to:

1. Understand the appropriate equipment for Grade I water
2. Develop an understanding of Safe Practices on Grade I water
3. Execute self-rescue on Grade I water
4. Rescue of others in Grade I water
5. Rescue of equipment in Grade I water

Course Outline

This is designed to be a flexible course depending on trainee's needs and previous experience levels- notwithstanding this core elements of the syllabus must include:

1. Personal Equipment for Grade I
2. Fundamental Hydrology
3. Safe practices and accident prevention methods – CLAP

    1. Communication
    2. Line of Sight
    3. Avoidance
    4. Positioning

4. Risk Assessment & Decision Making on Grade I water
5. Safety Zones & Leadership
6. Safe Travelling Methods

    1. Follow the Leader
    2. Herd and Drive
    3. Leap Frog

7. Safe order of Priority - STIG
8. Self Rescue - Offensive swimming in Grade I with equipment
9. Systematic approach to a rescue: Talk, Reach, Throw, Row, Helo

    1. Talk – Command words
    2. Reach – Reaching techniques
    3. Throw – Throw rope rescues
    4. Row – x- rescue, unconscious rescue, tows, bow & stern carries
    5. Go – Water based unconscious casualty rescue
    6. Helo – Making emergency calls to rescue services

Applying to attend a course

Course applicants must be of a Level 2 skills standard.

Recommended Equipment List for Participants

1. Wetsuit or Drysuit
2. Thermals
3. ISO Approved buoyancy and helmet
4. Adequate hard sole footwear
5. Throw Bag
6. Knife
7. Whistle

Guidelines

The RSR 1 course should be delivered and run on water of Grade I difficulty.

It is recommended that RSR 1 certification be renewed at least once every 5 years.

Appendix O Information Sheet & Consent Forms for Participants

Hi,

I am a fourth year PhD student in Mary Immaculate College. I am interested in understanding what benefit your participation in Positive Youth Development programmes can be to you and your community.

Data will be collected from the following sources:

1. Resilience Scale
2. School work
3. Research Diary
4. National Survey

The research will seek to establish what benefit PYD programmes can be to learners and their communities. The research may involve using excerpts from learners work in particular; the Contemporary Issues Task, the ICT Task, and Personal Reflections written by learners in the center. A research diary will be maintained by me throughout the year.

- Resilience Scale: This is a questionnaire used to determine how resilient a person is. Learners will be asked to fill it out before and after their participation in the programmes to see if being involved in it has made them stronger.
- School Work: Some examples from Learner's work may be used as it relates to their understanding of issues affecting their own lives. For example, "If more young people voted politicians would care more about young people."
- Research Diary: During the year I will keep a diary of the research process this will simply be used to record what I am doing.
- National Survey: Learners might propose questions for inclusion of a national survey of learners in Youthreach. Learners will also be asked to complete the survey.

Your anonymity will be protected in the following ways:

1. Your name will not be used.
2. The name of your school/centre will not be used.
3. The area your school/centre is in will not be revealed.

Regards,

Dan O'Sullivan

Informed Consent Form

I understand Dan O'Sullivan from the Mary Immaculate College wishes to conduct research in our centre. I am willing to help with the study. I am taking part because I want to. I have been told that I can stop at any time, and I do not have to answer any questions if I do not want to. I understand that I can withdraw from participation in the project at any time should I change my mind.

I have read and understand what the research is about.

Signed:

_____

Date:

_____

Appendix P Detailed Breakdown of Participants in each Programme

Table 10 Participants in the RAP Programme

Participant Name	Only RAP	RAP & GAISCE	RAP & Canoeing Skills	All 3 Programmes
Helen				X
Tommy				X
Mark				X
Harry				X
Colm			X	
Richie			X	
Darren			X	
Joe		X		
Sarah		X		
Josephine		X		
John	X			
Claire	X			
Evan	X			
Polly	X			
Paula	X			
Conor	X			

Table 11 Participants in the GAISCE Programme

Participant Name	GAISCE & RAP	GAISCE & Canoeing Skills	All 3 Programmes
Helen			X
Tommy			X
Mark			X
Harry			X
Joe	X		
Sara	X		
Josephine	X		
Charlie		X	
Morgan		X	

Table 12 Participants in the Canoeing Skills programme

Participant Name	Only Canoeing Skills	Canoeing Skills & GAISCE	Canoeing Skills & RAP	All 3 Programmes
Helen				X
Tommy				X
Mark				X
Harry				X
Colm			X	
Richie			X	
Darren			X	
Charlie		X		
Morgan		X		
Eugene	X			

LISTENING TO THE EARLY LEAVERS (22Jun98)

Diarmuid Leonard

Introduction

For many students, one of the most difficult problems they encounter on TP is how to deal with disruptive students. It is s mistake to think that there is any set of infallible techniques that will overcome disruption from students who are bored and possibly weak. One very useful line of approach is suggested by an article by Leonard and Walsh(1998) on a research study in which Walsh (1996) obtained the views of the early leavers themselves and of certain teachers who work with them.

Below is an account of the study, its main findings, and a discussion on the characteristics of the teachers whom the early leaves considered 'okay', i.e. that they liked and learned from. Note that this research contests a different view , viz. that such students are beyond reaching by a teacher, and are bound to be unsuccessful learners and to become early leavers. In particular note the significance of the positive outlooks held by the okay teachers.

To build up an understanding of the early leavers' experiences necessitated as Turkmen, 1992 put it, "getting 'inside peoples' heads ' ". The intention was to obtain phenomenographic information from the early leavers and to hear from those 'okay' teachers (those whom the early leavers considered good) their account of their teaching of the early leavers.

The research method employed was the structured opened-ended interview, designed in such a way as to leave open the possibility of further exploring issues arising from answers given. All of the interviews were fully recorded, transcribed and analysed, with due attention to paralanguage and other relevant aspects of the interviews.

A sample of 20 early school leavers aged between 15 and 18 years was interviewed in the Youthreach centre they were attending. They had attended various schools, vocational, secondary, and community, in Dublin and in the West of Ireland. At a date following their in-depth interviews and transcription of their tapes the researcher held a focus group interview with the young people in order to confirm and explore the main trends that had emerged from the individual interviews.

Teachers nominated by the young people as 'okay' teachers (those whom they liked and learned from) were interviewed in order to seek a profile of this positive pupil/teacher relationship They came from a variety of schools located within two counties in the West of Ireland. The age range of the teachers was from mid thirties to early fifties and their subject specialisms included English, Maths., Geography, French, Home Economics, Remedial teaching.

Findings from this study are of two kinds, from the early leavers themselves and from the teachers they considered 'okay'.

FINDINGS: WHAT EARLY LEAVERS SAY ABOUT SCHOOL

A significant finding is that for most of the sample their reason for leaving early was that they disliked school. Respondents recalled with resentment, even bitterness, experiences wherein they appeared to be treated disrespectfully or were more or less ignored within the classroom. Personal humiliation was a frequent theme in typical comments:

- *They'd ask you and if you didn't know they'd kind of make a laugh out of you really and they'd embarrass you in front of everybody.*
- *Sometimes when I'd be behind they'd be roaring.*

Students felt excluded from their teachers' sphere of attention.

- *They were more interested in the students that were good.*
- *Sometimes he wouldn't even correct your homework. He'd just go on with the rest of the class.*
- *It was like em....don't mind you we have to get on with the others.*

Their descriptions of how such treatment made them feel provides insight into the types of responses and reactions which resulted in disaffection, then psychological withdrawal and finally physical leaving.

- *You would feel you were not wanted there.*
- *You'd feel upset anyway.*
- *You'd feel low and you'd lose all your self-esteem.*
- *You'd feel you were just on your own sitting there.*

Boys tended to react with a certain bravado.

- *I'd just go in and go with the flow*
- *I'd go mitching from the classes I didn't like.*
- *If they don't trust me I'll go down town anyway.*

While more passive, girls also became disaffected.

- *I would have become very quiet.*
- *You would just be quiet and stay out of it.*
- *I would do anything instead of going in the morning.*

It was also found that despite their behavioural and academic problems, help in the form of an effective counselling system did not appear to be available to these pupils. Despite being in trouble, few pupils felt there was someone they could talk to about their difficulties. Pupils expressed concern about the confidentiality of talking to someone within the school and also felt that the principal would side with the teacher rather than them. The only time people spoke to them was in terms of last resort measures such as being called to the principal's office or parents being sent for or telephoned regarding misbehaviour.

Despite their mainly negative experience of school, all of the young people spoke with genuine affection of a particular teacher with whom they had got on very well. The nature of these positive relationships is illustrated in one pupil's account.

There was a teacher, Mr......he was dead sound so he was. He understood everything like. He taught English. He was pure down to earth. He'd sit with you and he'd tell you what you needed to do and he wouldn't push you into an answer. He wouldn't say 'you've only got five minutes to do that now'.

You'd do it in your own time like and that's it. And like you'd have the bit of crack with him and everything. He was a good teacher and he was funny.

What 'okay' teachers say about early leaving

The teachers interviewed consider a number of factors related to home background to be a contributory factor in the problem of early school leaving: lack of parental interest and belief in the value of education; lack of motivation and encouragement coming from the home; financial difficulties; lack of transport to school. However identified by these teachers consider that certain school practices contribute to the creation of a negative dynamic: in this they echo the accounts of the early leavers:

- the absence of a proactive school policy in relation to the less able student;
- rioritising in favour of the more able pupils with not enough consideration being given, for instance, to who best to teach the less able pupils;
- the absence of an effective counselling system in relation to the special needs and problems of particular pupils;
- a classroom situation where pupils experienced being taught by some teachers who actually disliked teaching them or who were unable to cope with them.

There was a general consensus that the basis of many problems lies in a clash between the cultures of the school and the home background of particular pupils: it was felt that within the school these pupils experience the imposition upon them of an *'alien discipline'*. Schools were considered to fail at times to recognise the problems attaching to this clash of cultures and thereby to be failing to cater proactively for the special needs of particular pupils. Some teachers felt that even if there is an acknowledgement of the difficulties, the actual effort to deal with them is often no more than tokenism.

- *Nothing is being done. These children are just numbers*
- *No allowances are made. These children need a special approach. Focus is on discipline rather than on preventative measures'.*
- *Something of this 'special approach' is conveyed in their descriptions of how they relate to these youngsters.*
- *Giving them a chance to shine.*
- *Value what they say.*
- *Build a nice atmosphere...I regard the students as colleagues in a way because we are all working together.*
- *Respect is created by acknowledging things like the boredom that constant repetition can create. They may not be listening because they are bored and not necessarily because they are being disrespectful.*

They appear to have a positive rather than a negative view which results in their acknowledging that problems such as lower ability and shorter attention span for classroom learning require a special approach with some pupils rather than a labelling of them as 'no-hopers'. In particular they indicated their perception of a need to adopt a flexible non-authoritarian style of teacher -pupil relationship within the classroom.

I suppose I wouldn't be very formal in my class. I wouldn't be perceived as being very distant. I would have a flexible approach. We would have a laugh. I wouldn't pretend I knew it all.

These teachers do not perceive disaffected students to be mere deviants beyond redemption and their general perception is that all pupils want to learn with the school/teacher having responsibility when learning does not occur. This accepting and sympathetic approach is indicated in regard to other

aspects of their relationships, as when they spoke of the need to be aware of the perceptiveness of pupils.

- *Even in a remedial class it is amazing how perceptive youngsters are. When you talk to youngsters their awareness of what is going on has stunned me. Hurt is the word I would use about how they feel.*

These teachers were able also to empathise with early leavers' parents:

- *We must consider that maybe parents feel daunted and uncomfortable coming in to us. Maybe they never passed primary school.*

They also appear to have a natural interest in the professional challenge of teaching less able/disadvantaged pupils and enjoy the professional satisfaction of being able to teach them successfully.

- *Personally I would take a pass class rather than an honours class because I would get more satisfaction*
- *There is no great achievement in teaching a student who is almost,.....who **is** better than yourself.*

They understand that an unwelcoming or hostile school climate may have detrimental effects so severe as to 'drive out' disaffected students:

- *Some do not want to learn and they are not necessarily the weaker ones. Others do but are driven out because of lack of help.*

Pupils so driven out have their sympathy and they can empathise with those who decide to leave early.

- *They're better off leaving if they're always being hassled.*
- *They're better to stay if the school is genuine in its attempt to help them. They won't stay if they feel not wanted.*

Here we summarise the main findings from the data before going on to discuss their significance.

i) Early leavers admit to displaying behaviours in class that help explain teacher dissatisfaction with their behaviour and that match their classic profile as deviant and disruptive.

ii) Early leavers seem not to be aware (*'only messing'*) of how provocative their disruptive behaviour may be to a teacher struggling to maintain classroom order and control.

iii) The problem of early leaving is the outcome of an interactive process in which schools play at least a large part in the ultimate decision to leave early.

iv) This interactive process is not apparent to many teachers who are drawn into it.

v) Several processes and practices within schools, particularly traditional schools, are associated with a negative dynamic that ultimately leads the less compliant students to early leaving.

vi) Only some teachers, those considered 'okay' by students, are aware of school features and classroom practice that contribute to the negative dynamic that leads to early leaving.

252

vii) 'Okay' teachers are able to build positive relationships with their students.

DISCUSSION: Early Leavers' Experience of School

The general inference from the evidence of both pupils and teachers is that school is implicated in the problem of early school leaving. This inference is at odds with the common understanding that places the origins of student disaffection and school drop-out outside the domain of the school. Selected aspects of the students' and teachers' accounts are discussed.

i) Student-Teacher Relationship:

These pupils' experience of school was an important factor in their decision to leave early. The quality of this experience depended mainly on relationships with teachers which, for this sample, were generally negative. It is clear that students presented their teachers with unacceptable behaviour but also that many pupils had little awareness of the unacceptability of some of their behaviour such as hostility towards teachers or failure to co-operate in the teaching/learning process. They reported conduct such as *mitching* from classes they didn't like, *messing* in classes rather than *'just sitting there doing nothing'* but seemed to be unaware of how provocative this conduct might have been for teachers. In this sense a picture is presented which coincides with that presented in the literature of the deviant, deficient and negligent pupil.

ii)School

Pupils and teachers both fall victim to features of an inimical school context in which teachers feel obliged to prioritise in favour of those who will get good results, to the extent that potential early leavers are made to feel that they do not warrant the level of attention available to 'good' students and also in terms of the lack of resources within the classroom and school, particularly in the area of remedial teaching. Early leavers have not had the experience of feeling themselves to be valued by the school from which they leave. Set against such a detrimental everyday environment, early leaving may even be a psychologically self-protective response.

ii)Negative Interaction

However it is also clear from the evidence of both the pupils and the teachers that teachers also contributed towards a downward spiral of negative interaction to the creation of the negative interactive process. Some teachers' behaviour, provoked by student 'messing', further exacerbated difficult classroom relationships. Yet 'okay' teachers were able to respond with sensitivity and empathy to students in such a way that otherwise difficult students responded positively to their teaching. Student misbehaviour need not then always lead to a cycle of negative teacher-student interaction, student disaffection and early leaving. These findings in particular are at odds with those in the literature which suggest that it is the pupil's personal and social characteristics that give rise to an inevitable process of early leaving.

iii)Successful Teachers and Early Leaving

On the evidence obtained in this study, even early leavers found some things they liked about school. Of those who did like something that something was defined mostly in terms of liking particular subjects and learning, usually associated with 'okay' teachers. Student disaffection can not be said to have been based on a simple lack of interest in or dislike of learning. As we have seen, not all student-teacher interactions were difficult or unpleasant. Even though it might have been possible for teachers to build on student interests, possibly these students' own behaviour and demeanour contributed to their being considered highly disruptive and not willing to co-operate with the teacher in class. Indeed it can be said with confidence that these young people met some teachers during their school lives who demonstrated that classroom learning may be pleasant an enjoyable.

iv)Characteristics of 'Okay' Teachers

The young people usually commented that some teachers were *'okay'* or *'all right'* and further

probing revealed the highly positive nature of certain pupil-teacher relationships. 'Okay' teachers appeared to have the characteristics of patience, acceptance and a willingness to help along with a kindness and a sense of humour in their approach. In describing these favourite teachers participants said they liked the subjects taught by them and felt they were their best subjects. Most of the participants, with varying degrees of certainty, said they would have remained in school had they met more of these types of teachers. Most striking in the evidence of Okay teachers is the care they took to approach these pupils with respect and consciously build up a durable relationship in the classroom. Their perception is that all pupils want to learn within the classroom and that teachers share responsibility when learning does not occur. Such sensitive and positive attitudes led some to be keenly aware of the perceptiveness of pupils in relation to aspects of school life that caused such pupils *'hurt'*.

These teachers were responsible for the establishment of positive relationships with the young people which resulted in a greatly enhanced school experience for them within these teachers' classrooms. In terms of solutions to the problem this is most significant particularly when considered in the light of the pupils' claims that they would have remained in school had they met more such teachers.

The research reported here highlights for us some at least of what is adverse and negative within the school and the classroom and in so doing it alerts us to a useful realisation: while adverse teacher expectations and attitudes lower student morale and performance, positive teacher expectations and attitudes may raise achievement and motivation and so reduce if not eliminate early leaving. It is the teacher who wields the greatest influence upon the pupil's school experience, at least within the school. Consequently, in the search for solutions to, or alleviation of, the problem of early school leaving, attention should be paid in relation to 'at risk' pupils and their teachers to what constitutes a positive pupil/teacher relationship.

How do we define a positive or 'good' pupil teacher relationship?

In a study on deviance in classrooms Jordan, 1974 outlines two types of teachers which might be termed 'deviance-provocative' and 'deviance-insulative'. He attributes their differences not to the level of classroom management skills but to their deeply held views of human nature:

' That to the 'deviance insulative' teacher deviant pupils never become stabilised deviants in the first place is the outcome of a different common-sense knowledge of classroom deviance and a different set of wider assumptions about human nature and education - a different 'philosophy of life' and a different 'philosophy of education' (Hargreaves, 1975)

Characteristic of such a teacher is an optimistic, encouraging style which focuses on the person rather than the deviant act and which exhibits a confidence in the pupil's willingness to learn. Such an approach is typically described in profiles of the 'good' teacher. Most research on this topic suggests that pupils prefer teachers who are strict but fair, who are approachable and have empathetic attitudes towards them. They dislike teachers who are soft, ineffectual, rigid, harsh or uncaring, and those whose demeanour provokes classroom confrontation. (Rutter et al, 1979, Sharp, 1981). Hargreaves et al (1975)'s suggestion that for good teaching teachers should focus on acts in the class rather than on persons is likely to help achieve equality of approach. A central quality of the 'good' teacher in relation to children with problems is seen to be the gift of listening, together with the ability to deliver a fair-minded appropriate response. Our research supports vividly suggestions in the literature such as Jordan's that a particular teaching approach can help alleviate rather than add to the problems of particular children within our schools.

Notes for Students:
The main thrust of Walsh's research is that teachers who treat weaker disruptive students with respect are more likely to obtain their co-operation. This does not mean adopting a weak or unduly permissive attitude in class but it does mean

- giving them the same degree of teacher attention, time and personal respect that the able students are given
- being willing to acknowledge that some teaching may be boring and may need to be amended
- being sensitive to student perceptions
- being careful not to humiliate such students by bypassing them in class or exposing their weaknesses in public.
- addressing teacher remarks to the action not to the person.

In general the research would suggest that a student teacher should attempt mean attempting to become a deviance-insulative not deviance-provocative teacher. Note that this will require for most people the habit of reflecting on their practice from the perspectives illustrated by the okay teachers.

To complicate matters, other research(e.g.Wragg 1979) indicates that teachers need to establish their authority form the beginning. The difficulty is that the disaffected or demoralised student is predisposed to react against teacher authority, and therefore finding a balance is not easy. In general, students need to establish a classroom persona in which they make clear what they expect but do not personalise their approach too much, i.e. not blame persons when their real priorities are to keep the class moving and to remind the class of rules to be kept.

Beginning/student teachers should make sure to keep cool, not to be drawn into a confrontation with individual students, and not to allow an unpleasant classroom atmosphere to develop. Following a reprimand, the student concerned should be given some opportunity to contribute once again to discussion with the teacher: it should be made clear in teacher interaction with the student reprimanded that the teacher holds no grudge against the individual. In general try to be positive. Find ways of building interest and challenge into lessons. Promote the experience of success in class. Provide reward for he less able as well as for others. Make the class a place of interesting, challenging and rewarding activities.

Note: i)the abilities above are not learned overnight. ii)Much depends on your personal beliefs and respect for others as much as on skills. iii) To learn such abilities, it is probably essential to become reflective about your experience.

REFLECTION:

If you are concerned about your classroom management of disruptive students, consider the following after each lesson:

- What incidents occurred today that improved the classroom climate? What was my role in bringing about this climate?

- What disruptions occurred to day in class? How did they start? How did I deal with them? How did the students react? What was my main concern as teacher- e.g. to bring the class attention back to the lesson and so maintain the flow of the lesson , to spend time trying to find out the student responsible for misbehaviour, to respond angrily to indiscipline? What was the consequence of my response as teacher? Could I have improved my approach?

- What have I learned to day? What advances have I made in my own ability to manage possible disruption, to improve classroom climate?