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Youth development programming continues to emerge as a promising way to alter the challenging route that adolescence considered at-risk encounter (Benson et. al., 2006; Hellison, 2011). The Youth Leader Corps (YLC) is one example of a cross-age, after-school youth development program. Over the past three years, the YLC program has transitioned to include students attending the newly established middle college that is an alternative high school, situated on the university campus.

Recently, six youth leaders from the middle college completed their third year in the YLC. A way to investigate the impact of youth leaders' experiences is through a resiliency framework (Benard, 1993, 1995). The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of participating in a values-based youth leadership program on resiliency, specifically on the relationships with others, personal expectations, and pursuit of opportunities for personal growth. Classroom teachers, the YLC staff, and a parent or caregiver were also included in the study.

Data indicated that the opportunities provided within the physical education course and the YLC helped to establish relationships among teachers, youth leaders and the children, which were reinforced by program expectations. Cross-case analysis showed two common themes emerging from the youth leaders' relationships with others: (a) connection and interaction with the children in the program (i.e., cross-age bond), and (b) improved their social competence. Two themes emerged for the second research question, impact on personal expectations: (a) improvements of self-worth and (b) self-

identify as a positive influence within a structured environment. The findings for the third research question, which pertained to pursuit of opportunities for personal growth, were limited and varied among each youth leader participant.

PERCEPTIONS OF A YOUTH LEADERSHIP
PROGRAM'S IMPACT ON RESILIENCY

by

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APPROVAL PAGE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The field of youth development continues to emerge as a promising way to alter the challenging route that at-risk youth encounter (Benson et. al., 2006; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004; Hellison, 2011). Youth development programs offer a positive environment where children can work towards accomplishing developmental goals and positive life skills, rather than focusing on individual deficiencies. The combination of youth development and an asset-based approach offers youth supportive relationships with adults, opportunities to succeed, and a sense of purpose in their lives (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004; Hellison et. al., 2000).

Many youth development programs use sport and physical activity as a popular approach to foster developmental principles, life skills, and positive values (Cote, Strachan, & Frazer-Thomas, 2008; Hartman, 2003; Hellison, 2011; Lee & Martinek, 2009; Petitpas, Cornelius, Van Raalte & Jones, 2005). Participation in sport and physical activity can be utilized to provide a pathway to instill personal and social responsibilities, teamwork, and problem solving skills (Hellison, 2011; Lee & Martinek 2009; Martinek, Schilling & Johnson 1999). However, simply organizing a game of basketball is not enough to teach youth how to respect one another and work together. A structured

program model is necessary to design activities in order to create an environment where youth learn positive values and life skills.

Several physical activity curricular models have been developed to help guide in-school and after-school programs. Among these curricular models, Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Model (TPSR) is considered an exemplary model that has been widely incorporated in numerous after-school youth programs around the United States and the world (Hellison, 2011; Hellison & Walsh, 2002; Martinek & Hellison, 2009; Metzler, 2011). TPSR is a values-based model that uses sport and physical activity as a vehicle to teach youth to become more personally and socially responsible for themselves and others around them (Hellison, 2011; Metzler, 2011). The broader purpose of the model is for program participants to apply TPSR concepts in the program, as well as in other areas of their daily lives, such as at school and at home (Hellison, 2011).

Hellison's (2011) TPSR model is organized with five cumulative levels of responsibility: I) respect the rights and feelings of other, II) effort, III) self-direction, IV) care for others, and V) transfer outside the gym. The levels represent a set of non-linear goals or values for children to work towards throughout the program. Level I and IV are considered social responsibilities, while Level II and III target personal responsibilities. Hellison also developed strategies and a suggested daily format to help participants and practitioners explore the levels of responsibility.

Since its inception, numerous research studies have been conducted to measure and evaluate the impact or outcomes associated with participation in a TPSR-based

program (Cryan, 2013; Cutforth, 2000; Debusk & Hellison, 1989; Hellison & Walsh, 2002; Melendez, 2011; Walsh, Ozaeta & Wright, 2010; Wright et. al., 2010). Hellison and Walsh (2002) conducted a study that combined all studies on TPSR at that time. They structured their findings to include the following: The process of participants' experience within the program, the participants' improvements within and outside the program, and the impact of cross-age teaching. Overall, they found that quantitative and qualitative studies have shown participants improvement during the program, such as self-control (Kallusky, 2000; Lifka, 1990; Mulaudzi, 1995), effort (Hellison, 1978; Wright, 2001), self-direction (Herbal & Parker, 1997), and helping others (Galvan, 2000; Walsh, 1999).

In addition, research on level V, Transfer, provided information on participants' ability to implement the levels of responsibility outside of the program in other areas of their lives (Walsh, 2008; Wright et. al., 2010). Researchers suggested that youth involved in a TPSR program displayed signs of improvements in their behavior in the classroom (Cutforth, 1997; Martinek, McLaughlin, & Schilling, 1999; Wright et. al., 2010). For example, classroom teachers in Cutforth's (1997) study reported that they noticed positive behavioral and attitudinal changes after the second year of attending the program. Martinek, McLaughlin, and Schilling (1999) reported an increase in grade point average and a slight decrease in discipline referrals. Wright and his colleagues (2010) conducted a comparison study and found that students in the treatment condition (TPSR-

based course) had reduced absences and better grades than peers in a valid comparison condition (traditional activity-based course).

Cross-age teaching is an extended component that some youth development programs include as a way to provide leadership opportunities and empower the “veteran” youth participants (Cutforth & Puckett, 1999; Martinek & Hellison, 2009; Schilling, 2001). For example, Project Lead, located in northwestern Denver provides an opportunity for the middle school participants to become involved as leaders for the fourth and fifth grade participants. Another example of a cross-age teaching program is called the Youth Leader Corps (YLC). This program takes place on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) and stems from the initial program, Project Effort (Martinek, McLaughin, & Schilling, 1999). Originally, Project Effort was developed to encourage elementary, middle, and high school students who were at-risk due to failing grades or behavioral problems to apply themselves in school and to grow into healthy, knowledgeable adults (Martinek, McLaughin, & Schilling, 1999). The program was divided into three main components: two sports clubs, a mentoring program, and the YLC. The members of the YLC were mostly former participants in the elementary and middle school sports clubs. Research suggested that cross-age teaching experiences improved self-confidence, concern for others, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, problem solving skills, and heightened participants enthusiasm for learning (Cutforth & Puckett, 1999). In additions, studies on cross-age teaching programs indicated that youth leaders experienced positive outcomes including: a sense of

meaningful contribution, reflections on problem-solving and strategies to challenges, connectedness with adult role models, and aspirations of educational goals (Cutforth, 2000; Schilling, 2001).

Over the past three years, the YLC has transitioned to include students attending the newly established middle college high school that is situated on the campus of UNCG. Middle college high schools are one example of an alternative school aimed to support “disaffected” students, or students with the potential to perform to academic standards but fail to do so perhaps because of the school environment or societal issues (Lieberman, 1985; Slade, 2006; Wechsler, 2001). However, the acceptance criteria at the Middle College at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (the Middle College at UNCG) differed slightly in an attempt to include students who were considered disengaged, average, and above average based on an interview process, grade point average, and socio-economic status. By including a percentage of each category, it was assumed that the students would be able to learn from one other.

During the first year of operation, all ninth grade students enrolled in a year long, values-based physical education course that took place twice a week. The course was designed so that the high school students would learn about TPSR through various hands-on physical activities and by following the TPSR daily format. During the first semester, undergraduate and graduate students at the university “trained” the high school students to plan and participate in activities based on the TPSR concepts. Towards the end of the first semester, a select group of high school students were chosen to serve as leaders in

the YLC. Selections were based upon teacher recommendations and student interest. For example, a student may have been recommended if he or she displayed an interest in the program and had the ability to lead others in a positive way. In addition, some may have been considered at-risk based on behavioral reports in the academic setting and not having the best academic performance. Unfortunately, the initial freshmen group was the only class that given the opportunity to enroll in the year long physical education course. Beginning year two, freshmen were only allowed to enroll in a semester long values-based, physical education course.

Recently, the initial group of youth leaders from the Middle College at UNCG completed their third year in the YLC. The current study may provide new insight on the impact of participating in a two-part, TPSR-based program considering students learned to become leaders within an in-school, values-based physical education course and served as leaders in the after-school, youth leadership program. In addition to expanding the body of knowledge of TPSR and cross-age teaching, research from this group may provide beneficial information related to an alternative physical education program that goes beyond the classroom.

A way to investigate the impact of participants' experiences is through a resiliency conceptual framework (Benard, 1993, 1995). Although there are several versions of the resiliency model, majority of them focus on increasing protective factors and/or decreasing risk factors (Benard, 1993; Garmezy, 1991; Henderson and Milstein, 2003; Johnson, 1997). Throughout an individual's life there are several factors that play a

role in one's level of resiliency or lack thereof, especially during the high school ages (Garmezy, 1993; Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993). For example, exposure to a stressful environment, such as living in impoverished areas or the presence of substance abuse places youth at a greater risk of the absence of resiliency (Wang & Gordon, 1994; Condly, 2006). In addition, having a lack of interest in education or a lack of parental involvement also are considered risk factors that make becoming resilient more difficult (Martinek & Hellison, 1997). However, many individuals are able to overcome these risk factors with exposure to protective factors (Rutter, 1985; Werner, 1990; Werner & Smith, 1992). In the current study, the participants were considered at risk for a variety of different reasons including but not limited to single parent home, learning disability, English as a second language and lack of interest in school. However, for the purpose of this study, the youth leaders were specifically chosen to participate based on household income and financial disparities.

Benard (1993) explained that resilient children develop a set of attributes that help minimize or overcome risk factors, which include the following (p. 44):

- **Social Competence:** The ability to establish positive relationships with others and possess qualities such as communication skills, caring and a sense of humor.
- **Problem Solving Skills:** The ability to plan, resolve conflict in a peaceful manner, seek help from others, and think critically.

- Autonomy: The ability to act independently, have a sense of one's own identity, as well as remove one's self from a dysfunctional or harmful environment.
- A sense of purpose includes educational and career goals, hopefulness and persistence.

Youth that develop and foster resiliency have most likely been exposed to protective factors within their family, school, and/or community environment. Previous studies have suggested that resilient individuals are exposed to caring and supportive relationships, positive and high expectations, and opportunities for meaningful participation and personal growth (Benard, 1995; Henderson and Milstein, 2003; Johnson, 1997). In Werner and Smith's (1995) research, their results suggested that a favorite teacher was considered to be a positive role model for resilient children. In addition, Benard (1993) discussed the power of a caring teacher relationship on resilient children.

In the current study, the physical education course and the YLC were guided by these three resiliency qualities. The physical education teachers were also the YLC staff leaders. In addition, the high school students enrolled in a career pathways course each year that was also taught by physical education teachers. The career pathways courses exposed the students to various career opportunities related to health, medical and youth development field. Therefore, the youth leaders were able to receive support and guidance both during and after school, over the course of their high school career.

In reference to high expectations, all students, especially those who were youth leaders in the YLC, were expected to reach level five of TPSR, which was to become personally and socially responsible in the classroom and outside of school. The youth leaders were expected to be positive role models to their peers and to the children attending the YLC.

Finally, students were placed in a learning environment that was student-centered during the physical education course and the YLC, which promoted several opportunities for meaningful participation. Within the TSPR daily format, students in the physical education course had to learn how to work together on teams during the physical activity time. At the end of class, the students reflected on their behavior and how it affected the class. If there were any discrepancies or conflicts, such as individuals not being a team player, the class had to discuss the matter until a mutual agreement was reached. Eventual students worked in groups and were responsible for developing a sport-based unit plan and teaching the class, using the TPSR daily format. During the YLC, the youth leaders were also placed in teaching groups and had to work together to develop and implement weekly physical activity stations for the children in the program that followed a modified version of the TPSR daily format. While working with the children, each group was responsible for managing and maintaining a positive learning environment with the children. This was not always easy, considering some children spoke little to no English while others struggled with behavioral issues.

In terms of personal growth, the students were exposed to a variety of career opportunities during the career pathways courses. As freshmen, students took field trips to job locations that pertained to the health, medical and youth development field. For example, the students visited the hospital, the veterinarian clinic, the neuromechanic research lab and many more places. During their sophomore year, students spent five weeks in two different internship placements, where they reported for duty once a week. As juniors, students spent one day a week in the classroom learning about life skills and career and professional development. In addition, students would report to a two-hour internship, one day a week. Considering the career pathways courses were not a part of the physical education and the youth leadership program, it was not included as a part of this research study.

Interestingly, earlier researchers have suggested that resiliency should be viewed as “process” that is ever changing over time (Masten, 1994; Winfield, 1991; Wolen & Wolen, 1993). This means that resiliency differs based on the significance of protective factors versus deficiencies, as well as individuals and even time. For example, the physical education course and the YLC are but one of several factors that may play a role in youth leaders’ lives. Furthermore, the youth leaders’ level of resiliency cannot be measured on a consistent scale. Instead, it was the researcher’s aim was to investigate the impact of participating in a values-based youth leadership program (the YLC) on three resiliency attributes using Benard’s (1995) work as a guide to create a conceptual

framework: (a) on relationship with others, (b) on personal expectations and (c) on the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth.

Therefore, three resiliency variables were used to investigate the youth leaders' impact of participating in a values-based youth leadership program on resiliency. The operational definition of "Relationship with others" includes developing and/or improving social competence with classmates, teachers, the YLC staff and the children attending the after-school program. "Personal expectations" is defined as developing and/or improving one's self-esteem while maintaining internal locus of control and refraining from negative influences. Finally, "the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth" is defined as developing and/or improving a sense of aspiration to further one's education or career goals. For the purpose of the current study, resiliency was defined as, "the ability to bounce back successfully despite exposure to severe risks" (Benard, 1993, p. 44); more specifically, the ability to develop or improve relationships with other, personal expectations and the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth despite financial adversities at home.

To conclude, youth leaders' perceptions after participating in a two-part after-school, values-based youth leadership program were explored on the relationships with others, on personal expectations, and on the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth. Classroom teachers, the YLC staff and a parent or caregiver of each youth leader was also studied as a means of triangulation.

Purpose of the Study

To investigate the impact of participating in a values-based youth leadership program on resiliency.

The following were guiding questions:

1. What was the impact of participating in the YLC on youth leaders' relationships with others?
2. What was the impact of participating in the YLC on youth leaders' personal expectations?
3. What was the impact of participating in the YLC on youth leaders' pursuit of opportunities for personal growth?

Limitations

The most obvious limitation in the current study is that only one site was used. Therefore generalizability is not an option in such a study (Stake, 1995; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In addition to only using one site, this study was also limited to a small number of participants who have participated in a unique high school environment and after-school youth leadership program over an extended period of time. Due to the nature of this study and the qualitative aspects, the findings may provide an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences within their particular setting.

Another limitation for this study was the researcher's role at the site. The researcher worked at the Middle College at UNCG for the past three years as one of the health, physical education, and career pathways teachers. She also assisted with the after-

school youth leadership program, the YLC, for the past four years. Although the researcher may not have taught each student participant in the study, she developed a close relationship with all of the students, especially with the junior class. To reduce the researcher's bias, she objectively chose her case participants using the demographic questionnaire, selecting the cases based on annual household family income. Because of the rapport that the researcher built with each student and middle college staff, the participants within this study may have been more open and willing to share personal stories during their interviews, as opposed to sharing information with a researcher who was considered a stranger. However, the researcher's familiarity with program may have influenced participant's responses and interpretation. To reduce this limitation, the researcher gathered data from multiple sources in order to triangulate findings.

Finally, as mentioned in the above section, the researcher was only interested in the impact of participating in the physical education course and the youth leadership program without taking into consideration neighborhoods, cultural, societal, the school environment or other outside factors (Benard, 1993; Masten, 1994; Winfield, 1991). A current study that was conducted in child psychology on housing relocation from a high-poverty area to a somewhat lower-poverty area found that risk factor behaviors appeared to either stay the same or worse after moving compared to adolescences that consistently lived in lower poverty neighborhoods (Byck et. al., 2015). Furthermore, middle college high schools are structured to provide at-risk students with an educational pathway that otherwise may have been nonexistent (Slade, 2006). In the current study, the program

provided a unique opportunity in addition to the school environment. Therefore, the researcher chose to limit the study to the program environment (the physical education course and the YLC) with an understanding that other factors contribute to each individual's resiliency. The program may be a significant piece of the whole "picture" by exposing youth leaders to qualities of resiliency that in turn, may provide youth leaders with a stronger shield against risk factors.

Assumptions

- 1) It was assumed that the information provided on the demographic questionnaire was accurate.
- 2) During the interviews, it was assumed that all participants understood the questions and was able to elaborate during their responses.
- 3) It was assumed that all participants responded honestly.
- 4) Since majority of the data collection process consisted of interviews, it was assumed that the researcher was able to obtain rich and meaningful information from the interviewee responses.

Significance of Study

Previous research continues to show positive outcomes for at-risk youth who participate in after-school, values-based youth leadership programs (Cutforth, 2000; Cutforth & Puckett, 1999; Melendez, 2011; Schilling, 2001). At this point, literature on resiliency in after-school values-based programs is mostly limited to the impact on younger children participants and not the adolescents (Allen, Cox, & Cooper, 2013;

Hurtes, 1999; Hurtes et. al., 2000). In addition to extending the current body of knowledge on youth leadership programs, participants in this study may provide information on the impact of participating in an in-school, values-based physical education training course and transitioning into an after-school, values-based youth leadership program. Because the YLC is closely linked to youth leaders' school environment, other possible findings may emerge as impacting participation in a values-based youth leadership program on relationship with others, on personal expectations, and on the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth.

In addition, teachers, the YLC staff and a parent or caregiver of the youth leaders will provide a different viewpoint of the impact of youth leaders' participating in the program on resiliency that other studies have not included. Although this study is small and specific to one unique youth leadership program, findings may provide suggestions for future alternative methods to enhance the educational experience and success of high school students, especially for those who are considered at-risk during school hours.

Definition of Terms

1. At-risk youth: "Youth who live in a negative environment and/or lack the skills and values that helps them become responsible members of society" (Collingwood, 1997, p. 68). Youth leaders that were considered among the lowest levels of annual household income in relation to all of the youth leaders that has been a member of the YLC for at least two consecutive years participated in the

year long, physical education course as freshmen and elected to participate in the study.

2. Cross-age Teaching: An extended component that some youth development programs include as a way to provide leadership opportunities and empower the “veteran” youth participants (Cutforth & Puckett, 1999; Martinek & Hellison, 2009). High school, youth participants plan and implement physical activities to elementary-aged children.
3. Middle college high school: An alternative high school located on a college campus that promotes a supportive educational experience for students that may be considered at-risk of not achieving academically or disengaged in a traditional high school setting.
4. Personal expectations: Developing and/or improving one’s self-esteem while maintaining internal locus of control and refraining from negative influences.
5. Project Effort: An after-school, physical activity program for underserved youth that is held on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
6. Pursuit of opportunities for personal growth: Developing and/or improving a sense of aspiration to further one’s education or career goals.
7. Relationship with others: Developing and/or improving social competence with classmates, teachers, the YLC staff and the children attending the after-school program.

8. Resiliency: The ability to develop or improve relationships with other, personal expectations and the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth despite financial adversities at home.
9. Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR): A values-based curricular model that uses sport and physical activity as a vehicle to teach youth to become more personally and socially responsible for themselves and others around them (Hellison, 2011; Metzler, 2011).
10. Youth Leader Corps (the YLC): A component of Project Effort that provides middle college high school students a cross-age leadership teaching opportunity.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this review of literature is to explore the literature based on resiliency theory and the field of sport-based youth development in order to build a rationale for the current study. The review of literature is categorized into five main sections. The first section, Youth Considered At-Risk, discusses the conditions related to an at-risk individual and transitions to the development of resiliency based on previous and current literature. The second section, Positive Youth Development, includes a description of the evolving field of youth development and an elaboration of the role of sports and physical activities within a youth development program, which places an important emphasis on resilient youth. The third section provides a description of Hellison's (2011) Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Model (TPSR) and research related to the model. The fourth section, The Youth Leader Corps (YLC), includes a description of the youth leadership program and discusses research that has been conducted on the program. Finally, the last section returns to the resiliency model as a guiding conceptual framework for the current study that investigates the impact of participating in a values-based youth leadership program on resiliency.

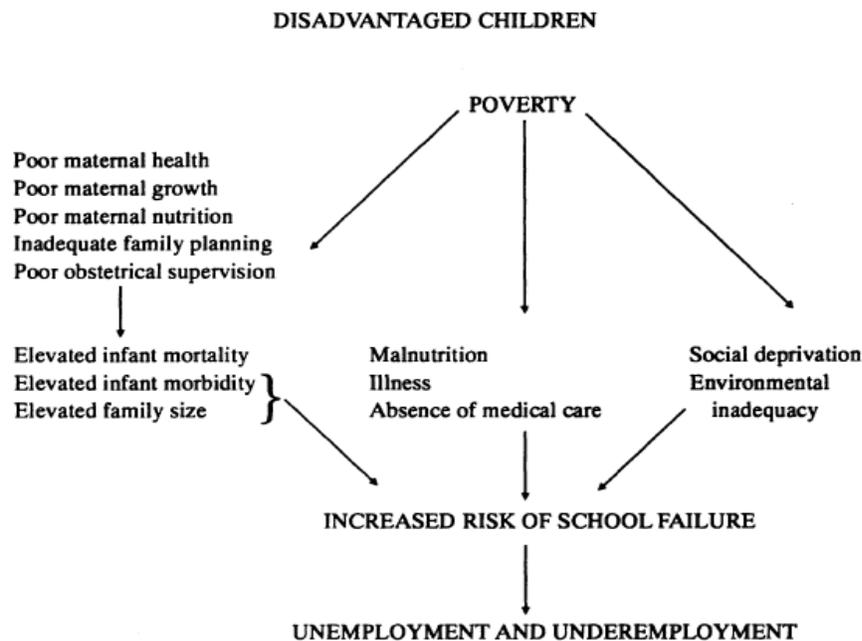
Youth Considered At-Risk

Scholars have continued to discuss and debate the term, “at-risk” for decades. Tidwell and Garrett (1994) explained that, “At-risk has become a general term for young people in trouble. The term has been applied to juvenile offenders, school dropouts, drug abusers, teenage mothers, premature infants, and adolescents with personality disorders.” In contrast, Collingwood (1997) defined at-risk as, “youth who live in a negative environment and/or lack the skills and values that help them becoming responsible members of society” (p. 68). Hixson and Tinzmann (1990) also did not blame the child’s actions as a way to label the individual at-risk. Instead, they explained that adults label children at-risk when there is a disconnect between an individual’s needs and ability or willingness to foster social, intellectual, and emotional development.

Aronowitz (2005) defined at-risk status in youth specifically as living in an impoverished neighborhood with multiple stressors that are likely to increase risk behaviors in youth, such as unprotected sexual behavior, alcohol and drug abuse, school dropout, and violence. Types of stressors include (a) biological (e.g., prenatal exposure to substances with potential for developmental delays), (b) psychological (e.g., maternal depression or other psychopathology), (c) economical (e.g., leading to malnutrition and inadequate health care), and (d) social phenomena (e.g., high unemployment and crime) (Aronowitz, 2005, p. 200). A lot of times, youth considered at-risk struggle with the education system and lack the ability to seek opportunity outside of the known pattern linked to failure (Garmezy, 1991). In addition, youth from impoverished, underserved

neighborhoods are more likely to portray negative behaviors during and outside of school with little to no hope for healthy futures (Fitzpatrick & LaGory, 2000). Hixson and Tinzmann (1990) added that the at-risk status is related to a number of educational deficiencies, which is correlated with a significant number of social problems. Their behavior, grades, attendance, and attitude towards school are gradually altered to a sense of defeat or hopelessness after consistently falling short of achievement over the years. Birch and Gussow (1970) provided a visual, figure 2.1, of this domino effect that youth considered at-risk are faced with beginning at birth (In Garmezy, 1991).

*Figure 2.1. Risks Factors Related to Poverty.
(SOURCE: Garmezy, 1991)*



Children that grow up in poverty experience increased risk factors in comparison to those whose families do not live in impoverished area (Birch & Gussow, 1970; Garnezy, 1991; Wang & Gordon, 1994). Furthermore, Martinek (1996) suggested that negative environmental conditions, such as living in poverty, contribute to factors associated with hopelessness later in life. Unfortunately, the 2013 U.S. Department of Commerce and Children's Defense Fund released information from the 2012 census, showing that the number of poor children has increased by more than 4.5 million since 2000. In their report, poverty is defined by a household average of four family members with a total annual income below \$23,492. As seen in figure 2.1, children growing up in poverty are at an increased risk of school failure, which then leads to risks of unemployment or minimum wage employment. In 2006, The Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that high school dropouts had among the highest unemployment rates (33%) compared to graduates attending college and were unemployed (8%). As the future of the workforce continues to change, majority of jobs will require at least a high school diploma and most likely a post-secondary education. These numbers suggest the need for encouraging and supporting today's youth, especially those in poverty, on a pathway towards at least a high school diploma with hopes of some form of post secondary education.

Defining Resiliency

Interestingly, studies have shown that some youth who are faced with numerous challenges find a way to alter the downward spiral related to at-risk patterns and

conditions of poverty. This is known as developing a degree of resiliency (Rutter, 1985; Werner, 1990; Werner & Smith, 1992). Recent studies have suggested that the development of resilient youth is critical to reduce the chances of long-term delinquency and to maximize the growth of a responsible adult (Allen, Cox, & Cooper, 2013). In addition, Cyr (2011) suggested that developing resiliency “helps youth to navigate the challenges of contemporary living in underserved areas and to maximize their potential for healthy, positive futures” (p. 2).

Despite a wide array of resiliency research that has been around for decades, there is disagreement on a set definition (Benard, 1993; Brooks, 2006; Garmezy, 1971; Esquivel, Doll & Oades-Sese, 2011; Masten, 1994; Rutter, 1985; Werner & Smith, 1992). Richardson and his colleagues (1990) defined resiliency as, “The process of coping with disruptive, stressful, or challenging life events in a way that provides the individual with additional protective and coping skills than prior to the disruption that results from the event” (p. 34). Higgins (1994) simply stated that resiliency is the “process of self-righting or growth” (p. 1). Benard (1993) defined resiliency as, “the ability to bounce back successfully despite exposure to severe risks” (p. 44). Similarly, Wolin and Wolin (1993) described resiliency as the “capacity to bounce back, to withstand hardship and to repair yourself” (p. 5). Overall, resiliency refers to children, youth, and adults who have overcome life adversities through the use of protective factors or positive adjustments (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000).

In addition to a variety of definitions, a model for defining resiliency has taken on different forms (Benard, 1993; Henderson & Milstein, 2003; Garmezy, 1991). Garmezy's (1991) triadic model described resiliency by the process that empowers an individual to develop in his or her environment among risk factors and protective factors at three different levels: individual, family, and environment. Johnson (1997) proposed a similar conceptual model of factors and descriptions that influence at-risk students resiliency. This model placed "human relationships" (i.e., supportive school personnel, adult encouragements, healthy peer groups, positive older siblings) at the center of the model and intertwines "community factors" (i.e., sport/club/hobby involvement, community youth programs), "student characteristics" (i.e., self-esteem, motivation, self-control, goal setting, intelligence/ability, good attitude), "family factors" (i.e., parental support/concern, parental discipline/expectations, family not transient), and "school factors" (i.e., academic success, school programs) (p. 46).

Henderson and Milstein (2003) created a resiliency wheel comprised of strategies to "build resiliency in the environment" (i.e., providing caring and support, setting and communicating high expectations, and providing opportunities for meaningful participation) on one side of the wheel and strategies to "mitigate risk factors in the environment" (i.e., teaching life skills, setting clear and consistent boundaries, and increasing pro-social bonding) on the other side of the wheel. Similarly, Bruce (2007) used part of the resiliency wheel, "providing care and support" and "setting and communicating high expectations," as a part of her blended theoretical framework to

investigate African American seniors that were enrolled in a middle college high school. She investigated how attending a middle college high school impacted students' education success based on academic achievement and internal motivation. Bruce found that, for the participants, attending a specific middle college high school offered healthy relationships among students and teachers, allowed students to identify as smart and mature, provided students with resources and a goal to pursue a college education, and gave students self-efficacy to achieve individual educational goals. Given the proper support and resources, students were able to overcome risk factors to build resilience as a method to succeed in education.

Benard (1993) developed four attributes, also known as protective factors, that resilient youth typically have in common. These include: Social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy, and a sense of purpose and future (p. 44). Social competence refers to the ability to development positive relationships with others, such as peers, the children participants, and adult role models. Resilient youth are able to positively interact with and communicate effectively with the children participants, peers, and adults to create a social system of support. Problem-solving skills include the ability to plan, exercise self-control, and to seek out recourses or ask for help when necessary. Autonomy refers to the ability to create one's identity, act independently, and have a sense of control over one's environment. Finally, sense of purpose and future includes having goals, educational aspirations, persistence and hopefulness about future opportunities. Youth who develop resiliency and foster these attributes have most likely

been exposed to protective factors within their family, school, and/or community environment.

Furthermore, Benard (1995) reframed these four attributes into three common categories. Based on previous research of youth success and failures related to home and school, Benard (1995) developed three characteristics that included: Caring relationships (Social competence), high expectations (self-esteem, autonomy, optimism), and opportunities to participate (sense of purpose and future) (p.2). Given these characteristics in a school and/or community environment, youth are likely to overcome or “even reverse” assumed adversities by building resiliency. Multiple studies have shown that youth are able to learn how to build resiliency over time given consistent exposure to protective factors, especially during school time (Condly, 2006; Henderson & Milstein, 2003; Rutter, 1979; Werner & Smith, 1995). The three categories are discussed later in this chapter in relation to the literature on sport-based youth development programs, which led to the conceptual framework of the current study.

Positive Youth Development

John Dewey once said, “The purpose of development is to enable a person to continue to develop.” Therefore, development should be seen as an intentional process that occurs over time. Similarly, Hamilton and Hamilton (2004) defined youth development as a continuing process over a lifetime that involves principles and practice. Over the years, the field of youth development has shifted from a deficit-based model to an asset-based model. Instead of viewing children as a problem that needs to be fixed, the

field of youth development uses an asset-based approach that builds on the individuals' self-competence within the program (Benson et. al., 2006; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004; Hartmann, 2003; Hellison, 2011).

Youth Development Theories and Framework

Several scholars and researchers have assessed different theories and frameworks based on positive youth development principles to better serve the overall program, children participants, and program staff leaders (Benson, 1997; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004; Hellison, 2011; Lerner, 1995; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Human development extends over a period of time with no identified beginning and end (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004). For this reason, strict goals would not necessarily be effective in a positive youth developmental setting. Positive youth development programs evolve around participants' strengths, relationships, empowerment, and environmental safety (Granger, 2002). As scholars continue to examine and improve youth development programs, goals and principles are structured to implement life skills and build moral character (Benson, 1997; Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004; Hellison, 2011).

In addition, Lerner (1995) created the five C's to link positive youth development with potential human qualities. They include: Competence - skill and knowledge to understand environment; Connection - relationships between adults and peers; Character - good character among individuals; Confidences - positive self-esteem and self-identity; and Contribution - caring and having compassion for others. Although all of these

qualities are important for positive youth development outcomes, competence and character is key to the model.

Similarly, The National Research Council (2002) developed a set of personal and social assets based on the components of health. These assets, along with the five C's provide guidance to focus on the whole child. They include: Physical development - good health habits; Intellectual development - school success, vocational, and reasoning skills; Psychological/Emotional development - good mental health, and coping skills; and Social development - civic engagement.

In addition to these personal and social assets, Peter Benson (1997, 2002) created a model including 40 developmental assets that links human development with positive youth development. The 40 developmental assets attempt to combine three specific health outcomes that include the prevention of high-risk behaviors, outcome success (school, health, etc.), and resiliency (Benson, 2002). Benson's asset model is divided into twenty internal assets and twenty external assets. Internal assets are divided into four categories: (a) commitment to learning, (b) positive values, (c) social competence, and (d) positive identity. External assets are also grouped into four categories: (a) support, (b) empowerment, (c) boundaries and expectations, and (d) constructive use of time (Benson, 1997). These assets-based models and frameworks can easily be integrated into a small program or in a large organization with many programs.

Sport-based Youth Development

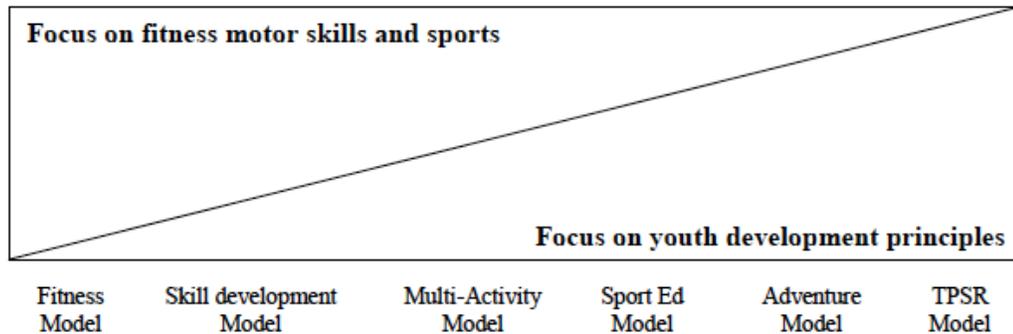
Recent positive youth development models have been incorporated with sport and physical activity. When organized correctly, sport and physical activity can offer a structured environment where children learn to become physically and socially responsible citizens (Hartmann, 2003; Hellison, 2011). However, sport alone is not enough to provide youth with developmental assets. For example, youth will not learn how to be a team player or respect other's opinion simply by playing a five-on-five basketball game. Instead, sport and physical activity must be strategically organized so that youth experience the positive aspects of collaboration and leadership. For example, Hartmann (2003) introduced Larry Hawkins' idea of using sport as a "hook" to engage children in responsibility skills and prepare them to become well-rounded individuals. In order to produce effective youth development outcomes, sport and physical activity must be accompanied with other program strategies and youth work interventions.

Physical Activity Curricular Models

In combination with theories and frameworks, sport-based curricular models and program strategies have been designed to guide programs toward a positive oriented learning environment. After-school programs that use sport and physical activity to guide the mission of the program and life lessons assume that all kids enjoy physical activity and physical activity can teach different life lessons (Hartmann, 2003). Researchers have developed various models that range from skill mastery to social competence. Figure 2.2

provides a spectrum of physical activity models that focus on fitness and motor skills to youth development principles.

Figure 2.2. Physical Activity Curricular Models



The fitness model (Hubbard, 1991), multi-activity model (Curtner-Smith, Todorovich, McCaughtry & Lacon, 2001), and skill development model (Ennis & Chen, 1993) are at one end of the skill mastery spectrum. These models focus on fitness concepts, mastery of sports, and specific skill movements. Such models are designed to develop and improve sport skills or fitness skills with little to no emphasis on improving the quality of youth development.

The sport education model (Siedentop, 1994) begins to shift the continuum from solely focusing on skill mastery to primarily working towards youth empowerment and sportsmanship. The sport education model is designed similar to an intramural set-up where the participants are responsible for coaching, officiating, and playing. The model starts out with skill improvement for a particular sport. As the season (unit) progresses, the focus turns to a value orientation. This model empowers the children as they begin

making personal and team decisions. For example, the instructor assigns each child with a different role to fulfill. The child who is the “coach” of a team must play everyone and decide who is going to play each position. The children designated as officials, must keep the game under control and insure that all players are following the rules. The instructor’s role shifts during process from a direct teaching role to a supervised role. Within the sport education model, skill mastery becomes secondary to positive social interaction among individuals.

The adventure model (Hahn, Leavitt & Aaron, 1994; Meyer & Wenger, 1998) and the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model (Hellison, 2011) are examples of affective models that are used in youth development programs. These models include a values-based structure that uses physical activity to promote positive youth development. The adventure model creates a conflict or barrier that involves group reinforcement to overcome challenging situations. An example of this model may include an outdoor ropes course; participants must work together to successfully make it through the course without leaving anyone behind. By working together to accomplish a common goal, participants learn to communicate and trust one another. The next section is dedicated to Hellison’s (2011) TPRS model, which is that model that was implemented in the current study’s program.

Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR)

The TPSR model is similar to the adventure education model, however physical activity games and sports are typically incorporated in rather than hiking or a ropes

course. TPSR is an exemplary responsibility model that has been used in several after-school programs (Hellison, 2011; Metzler, 2011). This model includes activities to focus on personal and social responsibility behaviors. The TPSR Model merges fitness, motor development, sports, and games to introduce a social balance between self-competence and caring for others (Hellison, 2011). Hellison initially developed the model based on his experience in an urban physical education classroom (Debusk & Hellison, 1989). His main purpose was to keep the kids in school and perhaps teach them to tolerate one another. Because of the growing number of youth development programs, Hellison's third edition book shifts from a school-based setting to discuss ways of including TPSR in after-school programs (Hellison, 2011). As with any other responsibility-based model, Hellison includes strategies and goals as a guideline, which together forms a positive interactive, learning environment. He also provides a general daily format for practitioners to follow.

TPSR Assumptions and Values

The version of TPSR includes a set of core values that govern the overall structure of the model. Hellison (2011) claims that positive youth development will result when program staff leaders create a positive relationship with the children, focus on the "whole child" through physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development, and lead by example in the eyes of the child. He also includes three assumptions that provide a foundation for the TPSR model. Programs must assume that: 1) youth progress requires responsibility-based goals, and strategies, 2) programs focus on a few goals and, most

importantly, 3) program leaders are capable of teaching and implementing the model (Hellison, 2011). The combination of these values and assumptions provide the groundwork for the basic TPSR model.

In addition, Metzler (2011) arranged four themes that summarize Hellison's core values and assumptions. They include student-teacher relationship, integration, transfer, and empowerment. Hellison has always stressed that TPSR revolves around the three "R": Relationships, relationships, and relationships (personal conversations). Instructors must develop a rapport with youth in order to gain their trust and respect. Integration means that lessons are strategically planned so that the physical activity lesson allows youth to experience, explore, and are able to discuss levels of responsibility. Transfer refers to applying the levels of responsibility outside of the program to other areas, such as in the neighborhood or at school. Lastly, instructors empower youth by giving them a voice and choices in the program. Everyone should feel a sense of belonging and not feel ashamed or embarrassed. Eventually, youth members should have an opportunity to become leaders outside of the program.

TPSR Levels of Responsibility

TPSR is organized into five cumulative levels of responsibility to guide youth to positive self-development, both personally and socially, and eventually into a holistic individual outside of the program. Level one, *Respect the Right's and Feelings of Others*, and level four, *Helping and Caring for Others*, pertain to social responsibilities. Level two, *Effort*, and level three, *Self-direction* relate to personal responsibilities. Level five,

Transfer, challenges youth to be responsible citizens outside of the program, such as in the community and at school. The levels are considered non-linear, continuous building blocks for youth in the program. Everyone may not begin at level one, where as some youth may regress to lower levels throughout the program on any given day. For example, one child may be working on level one (learning to respect everyone in the group) while another child is accomplishing level two (staying on task).

TPSR Daily Format

In order for TPSR to be effectively implemented, Hellison (2011) created a daily format. Each day begins with *relational time*. This consists of instructors having causal conversations with members and participants freely choosing an activity to play. During the *awareness talk*, the instructor reviews the program goals, levels of responsibility, and discusses the daily agenda. The majority of time should be spent on the *activities*.

Instructors intentionally create a physical activity lesson for children to practice integrating responsible behaviors. The program ends with a *group meeting* and *reflection time*. During the group meeting, instructors and members of the program discuss their achievements and challenges that occurred during the activity time. Reflection time is devoted to formal and informal self-evaluations. Members can provide their thoughts and feelings about the activity, as well as, give suggestions and opinions for future lessons.

As TPSR programs progress, the intent should be to gradually give youth more responsibility in the program. This does not mean give up the role as instructor. Instead, it includes providing guidance with leadership opportunities. Overall, TPSR challenges

instructors and youth members to work together to create a well-rounded, sustainable program.

TPSR Outcomes and Evaluation

Research is always important to measure, evaluate, and improve any program. Studies have been conducted to observe the transference of the responsibility levels to classrooms, sports teams, and after-school programs (Cryan, 2013; Martinek, Mclaughlin & Schilling, 1999; Martinek, Schilling, & Johnson, 1999). In addition, some TSPR-based programs incorporate an extended stage that includes youth obtaining a leadership role in the program, also referred to as cross-age teaching (Martinek & Hellison, 2009). Hellison and Walsh (2002) investigated and categorized twenty-six studies that evaluated the impact of the TPSR model. They evaluated the twenty-six TPSR studies by concentrating on four main areas: the impact of participants' improvement in the program based on the responsibility model, the impact of participants' transferring program goals outside of the program, the impact of the responsibility-based program on crossed-aged teachers, and the process that participants in the program experienced. The following three sections focus research findings related to within-program improvements, outside of the program improvements (transfer), and the impact on cross-age teaching.

Within-Program Improvements. The TPSR responsibility model is designed so that participants improve personal values and feelings towards others. The majority of the studies pertaining to TPSR were conducted in urban areas, including in-school and after-

school programs. All of the studies in this section evaluated the participants' improvement based on the responsibility levels.

Hellison and Walsh (2002) found nine studies that demonstrated self-control improvements among participants as a result of participation in a TPSR-based program (Debusk & Hellison, 1989; Galvan, 2000; Georgiadis, 1990; Hellison & Georgiadis, 1992; Herbel & Parker, 1997; Kahne et. al., 2001; Kallusky, 2000; Lifka, 1990; Williamson & Georgiadis, 1992). For example, at the beginning of one program, students kicked balls away from one another, but by the fourth week, students returned the balls that were kicked to them in an orderly fashion (Galvan, 2000). Six studies showed an increase in participants' effort level (Compagnone, 1995; Hellison, 1978; Galvan, 2000; Herbel & Parker, 1997; Lifka, 1990; Wright, 2001). For example, four at-risk students, who stayed off task the majority of the time prior to the program, were on task approximately seventy-five percent of the time by the end of the school year (Compagnone, 1995). Three studies revealed self-direction improvements by students working independently on a given task (Lifka, 1990; Williamson & Georgiadis, 1992; Wright, 2001). Five studies showed participants caring for others, by collaborating ideas and using positive reinforcements (Galvin, 2000; Hellison & Georgiadis, 1992; Walsh, 1999; Williamson & Georgiadis, 1992; Wright, 2001). The results of these studies show that TPSR participation can foster behavior and performance improvements.

A more recent study examined the impact of a values-based after-school soccer program for middle school students (Cryan, 2013). Using a mixed methods approach, the

researcher found that the participants improved self-control, respect, and cooperation with others during the program. In addition, interviews with the participants' teachers at the end of the program suggested that the participants' behavior during school hours had also improved. The teachers' continuous mention of support and desire for the program to return indicated, to some degree, the success of the program (Cryan, 2013).

Level V: Transfer. The concept of "transfer" has been a critical issue of inquiries in TPSR studies. That is, participants in a TPSR values-based program are challenged to use the levels of responsibility outside the program (Hellison, 2011). In this section, three studies provide specific examples related to current literature on Level V. A recent study conducted by Walsh, Ozaeta, & Wright (2010) examined the transference of the TPSR model goals to a school environment through a values-based coaching club program. There were thirteen African American and Pacific Islander students (11 boys and 2 girls) at an underserved, urban K-5 elementary school that participated in the program once a week for two consecutive years, a total of forty-five sessions (Walsh et. al., 2010). Multiple qualitative data sources were used in this study to understand the experiences, perceptions and individualized outcomes. A priori was used to examine the levels of responsibility. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow participants to expand on their experiences. Program documentations and artifacts were collected throughout the program such as attendance records, lesson plans, field notes, and participant journals (Walsh et. al., 2010).

Findings from Walsh and his colleagues (2010) appeared to show significant evidence of transfer from the values-based program to the school setting. For example, three teachers noted that students noticeably treated peers with more respect in the classroom after being involved in the program. The teachers went on to note that the students would not have used this behavior without the coaching club program. Other teachers discussed the fact that students used the TPSR language in the classroom. The same results were also seen to positively occur in the other TPSR levels (Walsh et. al., 2010).

Another study conducted by Wright, Li, Ding, & Pickering (2010), examined the transfer of responsibility within a physical education class. One hundred and twenty-two African-American students (57 males and 65 females), ages fourteen to sixteen, were divided into four co-educational course sections (two treatments and two comparisons) (Wright et. al., 2010). An 18-lesson Tai-chi program that followed the TPSR model was delivered to both of the treatment sections. The program was taught once per week for one hour during an academic year (Wright et. al., 2010). Because the participants were required to take the wellness course, participation was not voluntary. This was different from most TPSR studies in that majority of studies occur outside of school, in an extended-day program where participants were either referred to the program or volunteer.

In this study, multiple methods were used to evaluate the students' educational outcomes and the effectiveness of the program (Wright et. al., 2010). A descriptive

statistical analysis of pre- and post- outcomes suggest that students in both treatment groups had more positive gain scores on absences, tardiness, grades, and conduct when compared to the two classes that were not exposed to the Tai-Chi TPSR model (Wright et. al., 2010). For example, both the treatment and comparison absences decreased; however the mean number of absences for the treatment group (4.03) was smaller than the comparison group (4.79) (Wright et. al., 2010). Students evaluated the effectiveness of the program and effectiveness of the instructor by using a checklist. The checklist was structured around the TPSR levels of responsibility. A majority of the participants (87.2%) reported the TPSR instructor discussed the importance of life skills in school and even more respondents (93.6%) admitted to applying the values (Wright et. al., 2010). Data from goal-setting worksheets showed that participants appear to have learned the TPSR values in the course and were able to apply them to another setting. This study suggests that TPSR programs can be effectively integrated into a high school curriculum. This study also provides evidence that suggests TPSR programs have the potential to positively impact educational outcomes (i.e., absences, tardiness, grades, and conduct) (Wright et. al., 2010).

Lee and Martinek (2012) developed a triangulation framework to improve the transfer of TPSR values from a community program to the school setting. Program participants must be aware of the TPSR values. School's must also be aware of the TPSR values and support the program. Lastly, strategies must be implemented for transfer to occur. This study discussed three strategies that have been used and are currently used to

promote a positive connection among programs, school, and other segments of youth culture. These three strategies included: a) coalition building; b) advocacy creation; and c) in-school mentorship (Lee & Martinek, 2012). Coalition building referred to creating partnerships between after-school programs leaders and school teachers/administrators so that both setting can provide support and guidance for the student. Appointing someone as the school contact person was critical for programs and schools to operate on the same level. This included recruiting students, making a schedule, and advocating the programs. In-school mentors helped students apply values learned in the program to school, by assisting with school work or reinforcing the values to the teachers. Mentoring relationships were more beneficial when mentors were a part of student educational life, as well as, the after-school program (Lee & Martinek, 2012).

Impact on Cross-age Teaching. Many of times, an extended leadership component is added to an existing program in order to stay connected with participants throughout high school, college, and beyond (Cutforth & Puckett, 1999). For example, The Energizers Club is a TPRS, sports-based program for fourth and fifth grade Mexican American boys and girls, located in northwestern Denver. The purpose of The Energizers Club was to incorporate sport and physical activities that guided the participants into becoming more responsible in and outside of the program, as well as considering the welfare of others (Cutforth, 1997). Project Lead is an extension of The Energizers Club, which offers an opportunity for the middle school graduates of the program to become involved as a leader, also referred to as an apprentice teacher, for the fourth and fifth

grade participants (Cutforth, 1997). In addition to their role as leaders in the program, the apprentice teachers are given the opportunity to visit the University of Denver and tour the campus with college students who are a part of the Latino Student Alliance. Research on Project Lead indicated that youth leaders experienced positive outcomes including: meaningful contribution, reflections on problem-solving and strategies to challenges, connectedness with adult role models, and aspirations of educational goals (Cutforth, 2000).

Similar to Project Lead, the Apprentice Teacher Program was an extension of the Coaching Club that offers at-risk high school students the opportunity to coach younger children from a local housing development, located in South Side Chicago. During their middle school years (6th - 8th grade), the students were a part of the Coaching Club where they learned to interact with one another, to resolve conflicts, and to evaluate their behavior and attitudes (Cutforth & Puckett, 1999). The game of basketball was used as a way to teach the values of TPSR. At the end of their eighth grade year, the director of the program decided to create a five-week summer program where the high schools would be responsible for teaching basketball to eight and nine year old children. Research suggested that these teaching experiences improved self-confidence, concern for others, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, problem solving skills, and heightened participants' enthusiasm for learning (Cutforth & Puckett, 1999).

The Youth Leader Corps (YLC)

The Youth Leader Corps (YLC) is another cross-age teaching program that extended from the initial program, called Project Effort, located on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (Martinek, McLaughin, & Schilling, 1999). Over two decades ago, Project Effort was developed to encourage elementary and middle school students who were at-risk due to failing grades or behavioral problems to apply themselves in school and to grow into healthy, knowledgeable adults (Martinek, McLaughin, & Schilling, 1999). The program was divided into two sports clubs and a mentoring program. The YLC was added to the program to provide leadership opportunities to former elementary and middle school members of the sports clubs to teach and serve the younger children in the community as high school leaders (Schilling, 2001).

Children in the elementary sports club experienced a variety of sports such as basketball, volleyball, soccer, and martial arts. The middle school sports club focused on one sport for an extended period of time such as soccer. The primary focus of these sport clubs was neither skill development nor recreation. Instead, it was to teach the members to take responsibility for their own actions and to build relationships among peers and adult leaders (Martinek, McLaughin, & Schilling, 1999). The mentoring program was designed for the children to meet one-on-one with a college student outside of the program. This component helped the participant to transfer the values and goals from the sports clubs to communities, schools, and homes (Martinek, McLaughin, & Schilling,

1999). For example, the participants that were classified as needing the most guidance (i.e., behavioral) at school were paired with a mentor. The mentor sessions were focused on level III TPSR, practicing goal-setting and decision-making skills.

Similar to previous research conducted on the TPSR model, studies have also been used to examine the YLC and the effects that the program has on participants. Several studies have evaluated the various levels of responsibility both in and outside of the program (Martinek, McLaughlin, & Schilling, 1999; Schilling & Martinek, 2001), the participants' program commitment (Schilling, 2001; Schilling, Martinek, & Carson, 2007), and the impact on the youth leaders in a leadership role (Martinek & Schilling, 2003; Martinek, Schilling, & Hellison, 2006; Schilling & Martinek, 2001; Schilling, Martinek, & Carson, 2007). Schilling (2001) reported that program commitment was influenced by members' effort, enjoyment, motivation, and length of program involvement. Similarly, Schilling, Martinek and Carson (2007) found that four main categories positively influenced youth leaders' participation, including program environment, staff and participant relationships, program structure, and personal characteristics. These findings remain consistent with other studies on cross-age teaching programs.

More recently, Melendez (2011) investigated the impact of TPSR from former Project Effort participants who also served as high school youth leaders in the YLC. In his qualitative case study, Melendez (2011) purposefully selected five individuals to capture various lens on the study topic. He found that the TPSR values of helping others

and leadership were learned through the program. In addition, participants' mentioned the life skill of being reflective acquired in Project Effort. These were most useful to participants in their current state of life.

Resiliency & Youth Development Framework

The literature review has provided an overview of the resiliency theory and the field of youth development, specifically referring to providing at-risk youth with protective factors to eliminate or overcome risk factors. In this section, the researcher intertwined the research that has been conducted in these areas in an effort to justify the current study: To investigate the impact of participating in a values-based youth leadership program on resiliency. Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1993) suggested that external support factors were also influential to the development of resiliency. After-school programs are one aspect that aim to, "promote and cultivate the traits associated with resiliency" (Martinek & Hellison, 1997). In addition, McLaughlin and Heath (1993) suggested that youth are most interested in programs that focus on building strengths instead of promoting solutions to fix risks associated with the conditions of growing up in poverty. Youth development programs, specifically those that implement TPSR, foster resiliency principles that consisted of three characteristics that included caring and supportive relationships with adults, high expectations, and opportunities to participate in meaningful activities. Each category is discussed below.

Building Supportive Relationships

Multiple studies have shown that even with the presences of at least one caring, supportive adult role model, at-risk youth were positively affected within the school environment (Benard, 1995; Floyd, 1996; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993). Throughout the literature on youth development and TPSR, kids relationships, particularly with adult role models as well as peers and family, are key to successful outcomes (Henderson & Milstein, 2003; Hellison 2011). During TPSR programs, individuals have numerous opportunities to develop relationships with staff member and other youth members. For example, Schilling's (1999) study was based on commitment to the YLC. She found that the high school leaders' commitment to the program was influenced by relationships created with peers and staff and the fun, welcoming environment. Interestingly, the majority of the leaders' behaviors positively changed over the years within the program; outside of the program (i.e., home and school), their behavior varied tremendously (p. 175).

Schilling (2001) attributed the lack of effectiveness outside of the program to two major factors: the length of the program, considering leaders were only "empowered" once a week, and the difficulty of not having a school resource, such as a teacher, that was around the student enough to measure significant change in behavior. Therefore the relationship, although strong, was limited to the program hours and did not carry over to other areas of life. In the current study, the staff of the after-school program was also the students' freshmen physical education, health, and career pathways teacher. A strong

relationship has been built both in-school and during the after-school program. Although the current study does not primarily focus on the implementation and commitment of TPSR, a component of this study aimed to explore the impact of participating in the program on relationships with others.

Maintaining High Expectations

Schools and youth development programs that promote a sense of rigor and hold all members to clear expectations with supportive assistance seemed to offer a successful environment in multiple ways. Youth who were encouraged to use problem-solving skills are more likely to seek out resources and help from others in the future, instead of giving up when faced with a difficult problem (Benard, 1991).

Certain program attributes focused on positively influencing the youth both in and outside of the program. In reference to the field of youth development, Hellison and Cutforth (1997) created a list of eleven key criteria that “state-of-the-art” programs should have in order to be an effective youth development program. “Empower youth” was number four on the list and “Give youth clear, demanding (realistic) expectations based on a strong explicit set of values” was number five. In the current study, the youth leaders were expected to follow the 5 B’s that included: Be with it, Be Ready, Be Enthused, Be a Role Model, and Be Reflective. By holding youth leaders to high expectations, the individual’s may have begun to believe more in themselves. For example, youth leaders may have increased their personal expectations, such as their self-esteem, self-efficacy, autonomy, and optimism in other areas of their life. A resilient

individual is able to set personal expectations for one's self, seek out resources or help from others, and is capable of knowing when to remove himself or herself for a dysfunctional, stressful, or harmful environment (Benard, 1995).

Opportunities for Personal Growth & Future

Engaging youth in meaningful opportunities within a safe environment gives them an opportunity to cognitively create solutions for a situation. Schools and programs that implement cooperative learning, student voices and choices, and community projects are likely to build resiliency (Brooks, 2006; Walsh, 2008). Brooks (2006) suggested that there were benefits of parental participation and involvement within the school setting. Because parents and family members are the primary resources for support, schools and programs were more effective when parents are involved and committed to their child's learning. In low-income areas, this may be more difficult due to single-parent homes, parent(s) working multiple jobs, and lack of transportation.

Staff leaders of TPSR programs are also encouraged to "helped youth envision possible futures for themselves" (Hellison and Cutforth, 1997). Walsh (2008) developed a values-based program, called the Career Club, in an underserved community that combined TPSR with the theory of possible selves. Specifically the purpose of the Career Club was to provide seventh and eighth grade participants with a better understanding of and reflective discussions on their future decisions. In the current study, examples of the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth may be related to the impact of the YLC on

the youth leaders increased hopefulness, persistence, optimism, and educational aspirations over the past three years.

Impact on Resiliency

Previous research has primarily focused on fostering resiliency principles in an effort to build protective factors to reduce or eliminate potential risk factors (Benard, 1995; Masten, 1994; Rutter, 1985; Werner & Smith, 1992). Less research has been conducted on participants as a result of being exposed to protective factors (Benard, 1993; McClendon, Nettles & Wigfield, 2000; Padron, Waxman & Huang, 1999; Read, 1999). As stated earlier, Benard (1993) suggested that a resilient child portrays four attributes, which included social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy and a sense of purpose and future.

In Padron, Waxman and Huang's (1999) study, they asked elementary school teachers from three different schools to identify at-risk students in their classroom. Majority of the students attending the school were on free or reduced lunch (i.e., risk factor was low-socioeconomic status). Next, teachers were asked to choose students that they considered resilient (i.e., high achieving on both standardized achievement tests and daily school work, very motivated, and excellent attendance) and not resilient (i.e., low achieving on both standardized achievement tests and daily school work, not motivated, and poor attendance). The researchers then observed the students in the classroom setting and found that the resilient students were on task more than often and less distracted or

disruptive compared to the non-resilient students. This related to students' expectations for one's self.

Similarly, Read (1999) also interviewed elementary teachers pertaining to resilient and non-resilient students. Interestingly, the teachers related factors such as parental involvement, student motivation and self-esteem to resilient or "successful" students. The same factors were lacking or missing in the students associated as non-resilient or "unsuccessful"; however, there was no mention of direct school, program or classroom factors that impacted resiliency. In the present study, the researcher was interested in learning about the impact of participating in a values-based program on resiliency.

Finally, in McClendon, Nettles and Wigfield's (2000) work, they studied the impact of participating in a yearlong, physical activity curriculum using classroom observations and academic achievement. There were a total of 16 high schools and 900 student participants. The experimental classrooms included the three resiliency qualities. For example, the classrooms were project-oriented and self-paced. Findings suggested that students in the classrooms that fostered resiliency were significantly higher compared to the control classroom. It appeared that by providing students with meaningful experiences that were related to real-life situations positively impacted the students learning environment. While academic achievement (i.e., higher grades) is important, Benard (1995) suggested that developing social competence is key to

resiliency. This included the ability to construct a positive social support system with peers and adult role models.

Therefore, the present study explored all three of the resiliency variables to investigate the youth leaders' impact of participating in a values-based youth leadership program on resiliency. The operational definition of "Relationship with others" included developing and/or improving social competence with classmates, teachers, the YLC staff and the children attending the after-school program. "Personal expectations" was defined as developing and/or improving one's self-esteem while maintaining internal locus of control and refraining from negative influences. Finally, "the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth" was defined as developing and/or improving a sense of aspiration to further one's education or career goals. For the purpose of the current study, resiliency was defined as, "the ability to bounce back successfully despite exposure to severe risks" (Benard, 1993, p. 44); more specifically, the ability to develop or improve relationships with others, personal expectations and the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth despite financial adversities at home. In addition to teacher interviews, the researcher also included interviews with program staff, youth leaders and a youth leader's caregiver in order to provide an in-depth understanding of the impact on participant's resiliency in relation to a unique pedagogical experience that fostered resiliency qualities. Previous literature fails to provide such detailed examination of individual's resilience as a result of participating in a specified environment, specifically a values-based youth leadership program.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The primary purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the impact of participating in a values-based youth leadership program on resiliency. This study aimed to explore youth leaders' perceptions associated with a unique cross-age teaching program for at-risk high school students. In addition, teachers and a parent/caregiver of each youth leader provided insight based on their perceptions of the program's impact from participating in the program. The youth leadership program, called the Youth Leader Corps (YLC), consisted of an in-school values-based physical education training course that was required for all freshmen high school students at the Middle College at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (the Middle College at UNCG) and an after-school values-based youth leadership program. A select group of students were chosen each year to serve as leaders to children in the community. A guiding conceptual framework was used to investigate the program's impact on resiliency of the youth leaders in the program. Resiliency variables included the impact of program participation on relationships with others, developing and/or improving social competence with classmates, teachers, the YLC staff and the children attending the after-school program; on personal expectations, developing and/or improving one's self-esteem while maintaining internal locus of control and refraining from negative influences; and on the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth, developing and/or

improving a sense of aspiration to further one's education or career goals (Benard, 1995).

The following questions were used to organize and guide the study:

1. What was the impact of participating in the YLC on youth leaders' relationships with others?
2. What was the impact of participating in the YLC on youth leaders' personal expectations?
3. What was the impact of participating in the YLC on youth leaders' pursuit of opportunities for personal growth?

Positionality

When conducting qualitative research, especially case studies, inquiry becomes subjective to the researcher's interpretation. Stake (1995) explained that, "many qualitative studies are personality studies" (p.46). Building off of this explanation, Marshall and Rossman (2011) contend that, "the challenge for all researchers is to demonstrate that personal interests will not preordain the findings or bias the study" (p. 63). In order to reduce the researcher's bias and build credibility, this section provides a description of the researcher's background that led to the interest in the current study.

Educational Background

Throughout middle and high school, I was convinced that I wanted to become a high school physical education teacher. My middle school physical education teacher was a passionate instructor who dedicated her time and energy to teaching students about the importance of physical activity and wellness. She made class fun by incorporating creative games instead of the stereotypical "roll-out-the-ball" gym teacher. Unlike many

girls in middle and high school, physical education was my favorite subject. I also enjoyed playing competitive sports and was a three-sport athlete throughout high school. Therefore, my goal was to attend college and become a licensed physical education teacher so that I could advocate for children and teens, especially girls, through sports and physical activity.

To pursue my dream, I attended the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) to obtain a Bachelor's Degree in Kinesiology with a North Carolina teaching licensure in kindergarten-twelve Physical Education. Each semester, I expanded my knowledge of healthful living and physical education through classroom activities, seminars, in-school interactions and student teaching placements. During my methods and practicum courses, I was given numerous hands-on opportunities to teach children, critique lesson plans, and examine my own teaching style.

My last semester at UNCG consisted of two student teaching placements: a 5-week elementary school placement and a 10-week high school placement. It was during my 10-week high school placement that my passion for youth development was heightened. I was placed in a high school with a high-underserved student population and a reputation of low academic performance. While the challenges of teaching the students were many, their participation levels increased as I became more confident with my teaching and experimentation of new ideas. It was this teaching experience that inspired me to continue reaching underserved, at-risk students in the community. I decided to meet with Dr. Tom Martinek at UNCG to learn more about the field of youth

development and chose to pursue a master's degree in Community Youth Sport Development (CYSD).

Throughout my first year as a graduate student, I gained a great amount of experience through performing research, actively participating in courses, and mainly working along side my advisor, Dr. Tom Martinek. While assisting with the CYSD undergraduate courses, I realized my goal went beyond organizing my own after-school program or teaching in a public school system. I wanted to combine my passion for teaching with my interest in youth development to pursue a career in higher education as a university professor.

Most graduate students spend the majority of their time in laboratories conducting research. As a graduate student in CYSD, I also worked in a "lab," but it looked nothing like a research lab with instruments to measure body mass index or chemicals to test human performance. Instead, our youth development lab was situated in classrooms and gyms that were full of children and teens that were actively participating in the after-school program (the YLC), a physical education class, a health class, or career pathway classes.

Over the past four years, I have been one of many graduate students worked with the YLC and for the past three years, I have worked with the Middle College at UNCG. When the Middle College at UNCG opened, the CYSD graduate students were responsible for developing and implementing the physical education, health, and career pathways courses, as well as continuing to assist with the YLC. Because of the school size and structure, I was able to develop a strong relationship with a majority of the

students, especially the initial class that recently completed their junior year. It was eye opening to watch the students grow from anxious freshmen on a college campus to confident juniors leading the school. I have probably learned as much, if not more, from the students compared to the knowledge and life skills that I have attempted to instill upon them.

This brings me to the forefront of the current study. Through my own experiences and bias lens, I have witnessed a positive impact in the juniors over the time that they have attended the Middle College at UNCG. I have observed high school students who are constantly disciplined for misbehavior in the classroom “flip a switch” and act as positive leaders in the eyes of young children during the YLC sessions. I have witnessed students, who claim at the beginning of the year that they hate physical education and sports, leave class dripping with sweat from participating in class activities the entire time. I have also seen the quietest students in class volunteer to be the leaders of a team and coach their peers during intramural games. Finally, I have had personal conversations with some of the juniors who admitted that they would have most likely dropped out of school if they had attended a traditional high school. As a graduate student, I wanted to learn about the impact of participating in the YLC (as it appeared to me) on resiliency. In addition, I wanted to hear from the student’s parent/caregiver and teachers to learn about their perceptions of the youth leaders and the impact that they have witnessed from participating in the program.

Subjectivity

As a part of qualitative research, it is important to recognize and consider the researcher's subjectivity within the study (Patton, 2002). Qualitative methodology allows the researcher to express his or her bias towards the topic rather than overlook them as with quantitative studies (Stake, 1995). In the current study, there were two main reasons that supported my belief of how participating in a values-based youth leadership program impacted high school youth leaders' on resiliency, specifically on relationships with others, on personal expectations, and on the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth. The first reason, I believed that the leaders might have stayed in the YLC for different reasons. Some leaders may have continued in the program for three years because it filled a time void. Others may have continued to receive service-learning credit. No matter the reason, it was visibly evident that all of the youth leaders enjoyed working with the children and that the children viewed the leaders as role models. The youth leaders worked together before, during, and after weekly sessions to provide the children with fun activities and meaningful messages. Outside of the program, friendships were established and some individuals developed the ability to control his or her temper. For this reason, I believed that the leaders who have been a part of the YLC have been positively influenced over the past three years on resiliency.

Secondly, I purposefully selected the site for this study because of my knowledge about the YLC and my relationship with most of the students, staff and administration. I believed that my relationship provided a better connection with the participants during the interviews, which led to a better understanding of the topic. For this reason, I assumed

that the students and staff would be more open and willing to participate the current study. However, as mentioned in the limitations section, my familiarity and role with program may have influenced teachers' and youth leaders' responses and interpretation during the data collection process. In the interviews, I planned to follow a semi-structured interview protocol and asked probing questions so that data were triangulated and biased assumptions were limited.

In conclusion, I wanted to share the stories of youth leaders' participation in a unique values-based youth leadership program over the past years and the impact on resiliency. It was understood that resiliency developed from multiple environmental factors such as home, school, and community; however, I was only interested in the impact of the YLC and the role it played to enhance or affect youth leaders' resiliency. Considering I spent a great deal of time working with the high school youth leaders in and outside of school, I wanted to provide insight on their journey before the program while also including a description of their future plans after participating in the YLC. Ultimately, I would like to witness all of the youth leaders "stay on track" and succeed in life, meaning that each youth leader overcame the stigmatism associated with growing up in poverty and being labeled at-risk.

Pilot Study

The purpose of conducting an initial pilot study was to make adjustments to the future study, refine each interview protocol, as well as to uncover any potential concerns or issues with the interview itself (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In addition, a pilot study allowed the researcher to practice her role as the interviewer. Although the researcher has

taken several qualitative research courses with interviewing training and experience, it was important for the interviewer to practice interviewing for the current study.

Therefore, the pilot study allowed her to do so. The next section provides an explanation for changes and revisions that were made to the protocol in order to build trustworthiness and provide validation for each data source.

Methodological Revisions for Pilot Study

To begin the pilot study, the researcher purposefully selected a total of six participants (N=6) that closely aligned with the criteria for the dissertation study. Prior to the pilot interviews, the researcher met with an expert in qualitative research to critique the demographic questionnaires and each interview protocol to ensure that questions were appropriately aligned with the research questions. Upon completing the pilot study, the researcher modified each demographic questionnaire so to only include necessary information. The researcher also revised each interview protocol again so that the dissertation interviews would be concise and produce rich data relating to the research questions. Suggestions from the expert qualitative researcher were also incorporated into the final draft for each interview protocol before data collection began. The finalized demographic questionnaires and interview protocols are located in the Appendix section (Appendix C—Youth Leader Demographic Questionnaire, Appendix D – School Personnel Demographic Questionnaire, Appendix E – Youth Leader Biography Interview Protocol, Appendix F – Youth Leader Impact Interview Protocol, Appendix G – Teacher Interview Protocol, Appendix H – YLC Coordinator Interview Protocol, Appendix I – Caregiver Interview Protocol).

Research Design

A qualitative research design was used in this study. A constructivist paradigm approach was used to investigate each research question. Marshall and Rossman (2011) defined qualitative research by stating that it is, “pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experiences of people,” (p. 2). In addition, Hatch (2002) explained a constructivist paradigm approach by stating, “multiple realities exist that are inherently unique because they are constructed by individuals who experience the world from their own vantage point” (p. 15). In the current study, the researcher was interested in understanding the phenomena linked to the impact of participating in a unique values-based youth leadership program on resiliency. Perceptions from the youth leaders, the youth leaders’ teachers, and a youth leader’s parent or caregiver provided information related to program participation, primarily to explore youth leader participation on relationships with other, on personal expectations, and on the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth. However, through the process of conducting this study, other findings beside those intended were also identified.

A constructivist paradigm allows for discovering numerous meanings through individual experiences with the intent of creating a common theme or idea. It does not provide an absolute truth or definite answer to an issue (Creswell, 2009). For this study, multiple conversations (individual semi-structured interviews) were conducted between each participant and the researcher in an attempt to develop a common pattern among the responses. Through this approach, individual interviews helped to provide information pertaining to participants’ unique experiences in the YLC.

A multiple-case study design was used to gain a better understanding of the impact of participating in the program from a variety of viewpoints. Marshall and Rossman (2011) explained case studies as, “taking the reader into the setting with a vividness and detail not typically present in more analytic reporting formats” (p. 267). Stake (1995) also stated that with case studies, one must “appreciate the uniqueness and complexity of the case, its embeddedness and interaction within its context” (p. 16). Multiple interviews with different participants (youth leaders, teachers, parents/caregivers) provided the researcher with a way to conduct individual case analyses, as well as a cross-case analysis to develop general findings that were associated with the research questions. Table 3.1 outlines the layout of the case study design. Greater detail about the study design can be found in the procedures section.

Table 3.1. Case Study Outline

Possible Number of Participants	Selected Number of Participants	Number of interview(s)	Approximate Length of Interview
Classroom Teachers (N=2)	Classroom Teachers (N=2)	1 interview with each classroom teacher	45 minutes
PE/Health/Career Pathways III Teacher/ YLC Staff (N=1)	PE/Health/Career Pathways III Teacher/ YLC Staff (N=1)	1 interview with the physical education / YLC staff	60 minutes
Middle College Liason /YLC Coordinator (N=1)	Middle College Liason /YLC Coordinator (N=1)	1 Interview with the Middle College at UNCG Liason / YLC Coordinator	60 minutes
Youth Leaders (N=17)	Youth Leaders (N=6)	2 interviews with each youth leader	Interview 1: 30 minutes Interview 2: 60 minutes

Parent/Caregiver (N=6)	Parent/Caregiver (N=4)*	1 interview with each parent/ caregiver	30 minutes
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**Parent/Caregiver: 2 youth leader participants were sisters; 1 youth leader's caregiver chose not to be interviewed.*

Context of the Study

The Youth Leader Corps program (YLC) in the current study was directly linked to a newly established middle college high school in Guilford County, North Carolina. In order to understand the uniqueness of the program in its entirety, this section begins with a broad picture of the school district, the structure and admission process of the Middle College at UNCG, and transitions into the components and explanation of the YLC.

Guilford County School District

Since 2001, there have been a total of nine, early/middle college high schools opened in GCS district. As previously mentioned, a middle college is an alternative high school centrally located on a college campus that is aimed to support “disaffected” students, or students with the potential to perform to academic standards but fail to do so in-part because of their respective to school environment (Lieberman, 1985; Slade, 2006; Wechsler, 2001). An early college is similar to a middle college but is primarily for advanced students who have an opportunity to graduate high school with an Associate’s Degree or up to two years of college credits (Lieberman, 2004). Guilford County was the first school district to open a middle college high school in the state of North Carolina. The Middle College at UNCG is the newest middle college high school located in the

Guilford County School District (GCS), which has been in operation for the past three years (Modlin, 2011).

GCS is the third largest school district in North Carolina. In the 2013-2014 school year, the GCS website showed there were 72,388 students (not including pre-K) and 9,504 full-time employees. The student demographics include: Black (40%), White (37%), Hispanic (12%), Asian (6%), Multi-Racial (4%), American Indian (0.5%), and Pacific Islander (0.19%). There were a total of 95 countries represented in the district and 117 different languages/dialects. In addition, over half of the students (59%) in the district qualified for free or reduced lunch.

Within the district, there were 126 schools located in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Of those schools, there were 47 magnet and choice schools (alternative schools) with 54 specialized programs, such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), performing or visual arts, advanced academics, Spanish immersion, Montessori, health sciences and aviation. Overall there were 65 elementary (K-5), 23 middle (6-8), 28 high schools, and 10 alternative schools (K-12).

According to the 2012-2013 GCS annual report, eight high schools reached a 100% graduation rate and another eight had graduations rates of at least 90%. The total graduation rate for 2013 increased 1.7% from 2012 and 12.2% from 2006 (86.2%). In 2013, the overall graduation rate in North Carolina was 82.5%. In contrast, there were a total 11,049 student dropouts (2.45%) reported for the 2012-2013 school year. Not surprisingly, males accounted for a higher percentage than girls (61%). In addition,

Hispanic (3.42%), American Indian (3.11%), and Black (2.92%) students reported higher dropout rates than the state average.

The Middle College at UNCG Admissions

The GCS website provides a link for each school located in the district. Every school has its own vision and mission. According to the Middle College at UNCG link, the school vision is, “Our goal is to develop and prepare globally conscious individuals for the health and life sciences to be college, career and life ready.” The mission of the school reads, “We will create a nurturing, safe and academically rigorous environment in which students will be exposed to health and medical, as well as community and youth sport development careers as they increase their knowledge of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math).” The mission and vision of a school provides an overview of what the school strives for.

During the first year of operation, the Middle College at UNCG only admitted 50 ninth grade students in order to form an initial cohort group. Each year, the school has added a grade level to eventually serve up to two hundred students and four grade levels during the fourth year (Martinek & Hooper, 2011). Applications from prospective students are carefully reviewed and selected by the principal, school liaison and GCS personnel. The selected applicants, along with a parent, must interview with the principal, the liaison, and at least one GCS Administrator. Students are chosen only if he or she fits the school criteria and goals. In order to be considered for enrollment, a student must have an aspiration to begin and finish their high school education at the Middle College at UNCG and an interest in medical, health, or youth development careers (Martinek &

Hooper, 2011). The student also must understand the purpose and goals of the school which include: a) providing a four year high school experience intended to foster academic, social, and leadership qualities of underserved, at-risk youth; b) preparing students for post-secondary education health career at either a two-year or four-year community college/university; c) attending small class sizes with flexible class schedules; d) providing career possibilities and opportunities and learn professional leadership skills (Martinek & Hooper, 2011).

Similar to other middle colleges, the typical students that applied and were selected as the first ninth grade class at the Middle College at UNCG were students who generally would not fit into the mainstream high schools due to reasons such as being bullied, social conflicts, at-risk of grade failure, or behavioral issues (Wechsler, 2001). In order to create a balance in the school, administration attempted to select students who were considered disengaged, average, and above average based on an interview process, grade point average, and socio-economic status. It was assumed that students would learn from one another instead of including all students who did not fit into mainstream, traditional high schools.

The Middle College at UNCG Structure

The Middle College at UNCG is housed in one main building on the campus of UNCG with classes offered in one of three buildings throughout campus. In its first year, the school elected to hire one liaison, one principal, one guidance counselor, one secretary/data manager, three high school teachers, and one part-time high school special education teacher (Martinek & Hooper, 2011). The school liaison, Tom Martinek, is also

a UNCG tenured-faculty member in the Department of Kinesiology. Dr. Martinek's graduate and undergraduate students who were enrolled in the Community Youth Sport Development (CYSD) major interact with students as mentors, after-school facilitators, and as the physical education, health, and career pathways staff. During the time of this dissertation study, there were three grade levels, one liaison, one principal, one guidance counselor, one social worker, two secretary/data managers, twelve high school teachers, and one part-time high school special education teacher (the Middle College at UNCG website).

Similar to other middle colleges, students at the Middle College at UNCG enrolled in classes that were located on the university campus. The school was mandated by Guilford County Public Schools and followed the NC Standard Course of Study. Depending on previous test scores and achievement tests, students were placed in the correct level of English, math, social studies, and sciences. Some students were eligible to register for college level courses while others were placed in either high school honors or basic courses. The school provided both an in-school tutorial period and an after-school tutorial session (Martinek & Hooper, 2011).

A distinctive part of the Middle College at UNCG was the cumulative work-study apprenticeship project that begins freshman year (i.e., Career Pathways I-IV). The Middle College at UNCG capitalized on the growing demand in the health, medical, and youth development industry through community partnerships (The Middle College at UNCG Brochure, 2011). This allowed students the opportunity to give back to the community while acquiring professional job skills through legitimate interaction (The Middle

College at UNCG Brochure, 2011). The employer or community partner that a student was assigned to provided support for internship experiences (Martinek & Hooper, 2011). As freshmen, students were exposed to a variety of career options throughout the semester while participating in Career Pathways I. As students progressed into their sophomore (i.e., Career Pathways II), junior (i.e., Career Pathways III), and senior year (i.e., Career Pathways IV), they spent a greater amount of time at a location that was closely related to the student's particular career interest.

The Youth Leader Corps (YLC)

Another unique part of the Middle College at UNCG was the fact that all ninth grade students were required to take a college credited physical education course and college credited health course (Martinek & Hooper, 2011). Each year, three sections were offered to keep class sizes small (approximately 15-20 students in each section). Physical education was taught two days a week, while health education was offered on the alternate two days of the week. Students spend one day a week in Career Pathways I. Each class lasted approximately seventy minutes. A graduate college student enrolled in CYSD at UNCG was responsible for one of three sections. In addition, undergraduate students enrolled in CYSD at UNCG also assisted with planning and teaching one of the three physical education courses as a part of their required college credits. There were two or three undergraduates assigned with each physical education course.

The three physical education courses were structured as a yearlong, leadership-training course for the after-school, values-based youth leadership program (the YLC). Hellison's (2011) Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model was used

as the curricular framework for both the physical education course and the after-school youth leadership program. As previously described in Chapter II, this model incorporates sport and physical activities as a vehicle to promote student empowerment through the TPSR levels of responsibility and daily format. The fall semester of the physical education course was designed as the training portion for the after-school, values-based youth leadership program. At the beginning the semester, the undergraduate and graduate instructors planned and implemented sports-based activities that primarily focus on level 1 (respecting the rights and feelings of others) and level 2 (effort and participation) of the TPSR model. Gradually, students were given more choices and voices; the instructors continued to revisit level 1 and 2, but also gave students more responsibility and leadership opportunities with level 3 (self-direction) and level 4 (helping and caring for others). For example, a student may have a small leadership role such as leading the daily warm-up or a major leadership role such as planning and teaching a station activity to the class. During the spring semester, the students were placed in peer-teaching groups and were responsible for preparing a 4-day sports unit that aligned with the TPSR model. The purpose of the lessons was to include the levels of responsibility and provide students with successful leadership opportunities.

Towards the end of the fall semester, a select group of students were chosen to participate as leaders in the after-school program, the YLC. In order to become a youth leader, students who were interested were asked to write a letter explaining why they should be selected for the program. After the letters were submitted, the YLC staff met to determine which students to include. With the initial freshmen class, all students that

submitted a letter were allowed to serve as a youth leader. The purpose of the program was not to include the “straight A” students or the students who were never reprimanded in class. Instead, the YLC was for students who were able to commit and serve as a leader to the children in the program (Schilling, 2001). For example, a youth leader may have displayed the ability to lead others in a positive way, yet some may have been considered at-risk based on behavioral issues in the academic setting or not having the best academic performance.

The YLC also follows a modified version of Hellison’s (2011) Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility model (TPSR). Once a week, the high school leaders worked in groups of two or three to plan and teach a 10-15 minute station activity that aligned with one of the TPSR levels of responsibility. Children from the local Boy’s and Girl’s Club and local refugee communities attended the program as active participants. In addition to implementing TPSR values-based activities, the youth leaders were also held accountable for the 5 B’s of leadership: Be Ready; Be With It; Be Enthused; Be a Role Model; and Be Reflective (Martinek & Hellison, 2009). Prior to the start of the program session and during reflection time, youth leaders evaluated themselves and group members using the 5 B’s. This provided a simple framework to guide discussions and evaluate leadership skills.

The weekly sessions ran for about an hour; however, the youth leaders spent about thirty to forty-five minutes planning before the session and about thirty to forty-five minutes after the session reflecting and having dinner. After the session ended, the youth leaders and staff (graduate students and coordinator) met to discuss and reflect

about any challenges and accomplishments that occurred during the activity session. The youth leaders also completed individual journal reflections pertaining to the session. Once everyone has returned the individual journal reflections, the group socialized over dinner. After dinner, either the YLC staff transported the leaders home or a parent was waiting to pick his/her child up.

Each year, youth leaders were encouraged to return to the program. New members were also chosen to join the after-school program after completing the physical education course. During the second year of linking the YLC with the Middle College at UNCG, the YLC began operating two days a week due to the increased number of youth leaders who wanted to be a part of the program. Unfortunately, the physical education course was limited to the fall semester after the first year. However, the course continued to serve as a leadership training-program for the YLC. Lesson plan templates that were used in the physical education course and the YLC are available in the Appendix (Appendix K – physical education course, Appendix L – the YLC).

Participants

Rubin and Rubin (2005) explained that interviews gain higher credibility when the conversational partners have firsthand knowledge and are experienced about the research problem. Therefore a total of sixteen participants were carefully chosen for the purpose of this study: (N=6) youth leader participants; (N=4) Parent/caregiver's of each youth leader; (N=2) Veteran GCS teachers at the Middle College at UNCG; (N=1) Career Pathways III teacher at the Middle College at UNCG who was also the Health and Physical education teacher, as well as a YLC staff member; (N=1) After-school

coordinator of the YLC/the Middle College at UNCG Liaison. A pseudonym was assigned to each participant for privacy. Participants had the option of creating a pseudonym. If not provided, the researcher created a pseudonym for the individual.

Youth Leader Participants. The high school youth leaders were selected using two different selection pools. Initially, the researcher gathered the names of all students who had been enrolled in the Middle College at UNCG as a freshman, sophomore, and junior and served as a leader in the YLC for at least two years. There were a total of (N=17) youth leaders that met these criteria. Next, the researcher asked for each youth leader's parent or caregiver to give consent and assent to participate in the study and complete a demographic questionnaire (Appendix C). The researcher used the demographic questionnaires that were returned (N=12) to select the top six youth leaders with the lowest annual household income to participate in the face-to-face interviews. Information from the questionnaire was also used to develop a case profile for each youth leader. As a reminder, resiliency was measured by an individual's ability to bounce back despite severe risks (Benard, 1993, p. 44). For the purpose of this study, the researcher defined resiliency as the ability to develop or improve relationships with other, personal expectations and the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth despite financial adversities at home. Youth leaders were considered at-risk because they were among the lowest levels of annual household income in relation to all of the youth leaders that had been a member of the YLC for at least two consecutive years and participated in the year long, physical education course as freshmen and elected to participate in the study.

Of the six youth leaders (N=6; M=1, F=5), one was born in West Africa, one was born in Central Africa, and four were born in North Carolina. Furthermore, one youth leader identified as White while the other five youth leaders identified as Black or African American. At the time of the study, all of the youth leaders planned to continue in the YLC as a senior and was on track to graduate high school.

School Personnel Participants. The selected GCS teachers (N=2; M=1, F=1) were the only instructors that had taught at the Middle College at UNCG since it opened in 2011; one identified as Black or African American and one identified as White. Both classroom teachers held a Master's degree and had a total of seventeen years of teaching experience. These teacher participants also taught each youth leader for at least two courses over the past three years. Maxwell served as the math teacher. He was also the lead faculty member for the National Honor Society and Student Council. Emerson taught the English courses, as well as the freshmen seminar class. Emerson also helped with the Glee Club, a student-led singing group. Originally, the GCS teacher interviews were scheduled to be face-to-face. However, due to one teacher relocating, the interview had to be conducted via phone.

The Career Pathways III teacher (N=1; F) identified as White and was a graduate assistant/doctoral student at UNCG. She taught and worked with the middle college students at the Middle College at UNCG for the past three years and volunteered with the YLC for the past four years. As a reminder, the Career Pathways III course was designed for juniors. Students spent one a day week in the classroom learning about life skills and career and professional development. In addition, students reported to a two-hour

internship, one day a week. At the time of this study, she was the only Career Pathways III instructor for the junior class. This interview was conducted face-to-face.

The after-school coordinator (N=1; M) was the creator of the YLC and has continued the program for over two decades. He has held the title of the Middle College at UNCG Liaison since the school opened. In addition, he holds a doctoral degree and has been a professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) since 1976. This interview was also conducted face-to-face.

Parent/Caregiver Participants. In order for a parent or caregiver to participate s/he had to agree that s/he was the guardian of the youth leader participant. Of the six youth leaders selected for this study, one caregiver refused to participate in an interview due to little knowledge of the school and the YLC program. There were two youth leader participants that were sisters, so the caregiver conducted one interview and discussed both youth leaders. Another caregiver could not meet for a face-to-face interview but was able to conduct the interview via phone. In sum, there were (N=4; M=1; F=3) parent/caregivers who participated in this study.

Procedures

The researcher received approval from the UNCG Institutional Review Board (Appendix A), the Guilford County Schools Institutional Review Board (Appendix B) and the principal at the Middle College at UNCG prior to beginning this dissertation study. The researcher contacted the parent or caregiver of the youth leaders to explain the study and asked for consent and assent to participate in the study. All but one youth leader participant was under the age of eighteen at the time of the study. However, the

researcher contacted all parent/caregiver since s/he was needed for an interview. A general script that was used during the phone conversation can be found in Appendix J. If given consent and assent for those under the age of eighteen and the youth leader agreed to participate, then the researcher either mailed a letter explaining the study, the youth leader assent form, the parental consent form, the adult consent form, and the youth leader demographics questionnaire or set up a meeting time to obtain documents in person. If the parent or caregiver and/or youth leader chose not to participate in the study, then they were not included in the final case selection.

Once signed forms and the demographic questionnaires were collected, the researcher entered the information into an Excel spreadsheet in order to select the best cases for the purpose of the study. After the researcher determined the case participants based on annual household income, she contacted each parent or caregiver of the selected youth leader to set up a time and location to conduct the youth leader and parent/caregiver interview. In addition, the researcher set up an individual meeting with each of the school personnel to explain the study and asked if he or she would be willing to participate in an individual interview. If the individual agreed to help, then the researcher asked that he or she sign a consent form, complete a demographic questionnaire and set up a time to conduct an interview.

Each youth leader in this study participated in two separate face-to-face interviews with the researcher. The purpose of the first interview was to gain background information about the youth leader in order to create a case profile. Youth leaders were asked to share his or her life story including family history, school history, and future

career goals. The protocol for this interview can be found in Appendix E. The second interview focused on the youth leader's experiences within the physical education course and the YLC and the impact of participation on resiliency. This semi-structured interview was guided by the research questions and elements of resiliency, specifically on relationships with others, personal expectations, and the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth. Follow-up questions were used when necessary to explore factors beyond the set framework. This interview guide can be found in Appendix F.

Each school personnel were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire (Appendix D). In addition, a semi-structured interview (Appendix G) was used to ask teacher participants to discuss each youth leader in relation to the impact of participating in the YLC on resiliency. A slightly different semi-structured interview protocol was used for the after-school coordinator (Appendix H). When interviewing the Career Pathways III instructor, the researcher used the questions from both the semi-structured classroom teacher and the after-school coordinator interview protocol to discuss each youth leader participant during the Career Pathways III course and the YLC.

Finally, the parent or caregiver participant was asked to assist the youth leader in completing the demographic questionnaire and to participate in a face-to-face interview with the researcher. During the interview, the parent or caregiver was asked to discuss the impact of the youth leader participating in the YLC on resiliency. The researcher used a semi-structured interview guide with each parent/caregiver that can be found in Appendix I.

Data Collection

Data were collected using semi-structured interview protocols. Table 3.2 provides a rationale for each data source. Table 3.3 lists the researcher's steps taken during the data collection process.

Table 3.2. Data Sources

Data Source	Rationale
Teacher Demographic Questionnaire	Gather basic educational background information from each school personnel
Youth Leader Demographic Questionnaire	Gather basic information pertaining to the youth leader's background, specifically family and school history. Document will be used to select final cases to the study.
Initial Youth Leader Interview	Gather background information for each youth leader participant in order to create a profile
Second Youth Leader Interview	Obtain in-depth information pertaining to the impact of participating in the YLC on resiliency, specifically on relationships with others, personal expectations, and the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth.
School Personnel Interview	Obtain in-depth information based on the individual's perception of each youth leader participant related to the impact of participating in the YLC on resiliency.
Parent /Caregiver Interview	Obtain in-depth information based on the individual's perception of his/her child related to the impact of participating in the YLC on resiliency.

Table 3.3. Data Collection Steps

Order of Data Collection	Data Collection Steps
1	Obtain IRB approval from UNCG and Guilford County Schools.
2	Contact parent or caregiver of youth leader participants that meet study criteria.

3	Mail letter and forms OR set up a meeting time to explain forms. Set up meeting to collect forms OR provide a stamped envelop with the researcher's return address.
4	Collect consent forms, assent forms, and demographic questionnaire from those willing to participate in the study. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up with participants if necessary.
5	Enter demographic data into Excel Spreadsheet. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine top six cases based on household income levels.
6	Contact top six youth leader's parent/caregiver explaining that his/her child was selected for the interview portion of the study. Set up three meeting times and locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth leader biography interviews • Youth leader experience interview • Parent/caregiver interview Contact the remaining parent/caregivers and explaining that his/her child was not selected for the interview portion of the study.
7	Meet individually with the three veteran teachers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain study and components of participation (demographic questionnaire & semi-structured interview) • If the teacher agrees to participate, sign consent form and complete demographic questionnaire • Set a tentative time for the interview, pending the initial interview with the youth leaders
8	Meet with after-school coordinator/Middle College at UNCG Liaison: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain study and components of participation (demographic questionnaire & semi-structured interview) • If agree to participate, sign consent form and confidentiality agreement • Complete demographic questionnaire • Set a tentative time and location for the interview, pending the initial interview with youth leader
9	Conduct youth leader biography interview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcribe biography interview
10	Conduct and transcribe remaining interviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth leader impact interview • School personnel interview • Parent/caregiver interview
11	Send Thank-you cards to all participants
12	Perform member checks
13	Analyze and code single cases / Perform peer debrief
14	Triangulate findings / Perform peer debrief
15	Perform cross-case comparisons / Perform peer debrief

Individual Participant Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were the primary source of information for this study. Yin (2009) explained that, “one of the most important sources of case study information is the interview” (p. 106). Stake (1995) stated that, “each interviewee is expected to have had unique experiences, special stories to tell” (P. 65). Therefore the purpose of the participant interviews was to gain in-depth information regarding the impact of participating in the YLC on resiliency. Teacher and parent interviews provided another lens on behalf of the youth leaders’ resiliency as a result of participating in the YLC. All participants had an opportunity to create their own pseudonym prior to the first interview. A possible threat for interview data collection is believability (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Sometimes one can validate trustworthiness by asking several different participants about the same event, which was one reason for including more than one youth leader participant and other viewpoints from teachers and a parent or caregiver.

Interview Protocol Questions. The researcher chose to use a semi-structured interview guide or topical approach for this study to give some guidance to the data collection process (Patton, 2002). The questions in each interview protocol, aside from the initial youth leader interview, were developed using the conceptual framework and research questions. For example, the researcher carefully structured the questions using the three components of resiliency: relationships with others (social competence), personal expectations (problem-solving skills and autonomy), and the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth (sense of purpose and future). It was the researcher’s

hope that these questions would help the interviewee's perspective unfold as the participant views the experience or individual (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Although semi-structured questions were created, the researcher used the protocol as a "conversational guide," meaning that the researcher also used probing questions and follow-up questions when necessary (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). In addition, the exact wording used during the interview may not have been word-for-word from the interview protocol. Instead, the researcher may have, "encouraged participants to talk about their experiences, perceptions, and understandings, rather than to give a normative response, company line, or textbook-type answer" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 135). When necessary, the researcher asked a participant to elaborate or clarify in order to maintain the participant's understanding and limit the researcher's interpretation.

Finally, Rubin and Rubin (2005) caution researchers from asking main questions of the participants prior to developing a rapport. In the current study, rapport-building questions were used to begin each interview. For example, the interviewer asked, "To begin, tell me what you know, if anything, about the first PE training course that the current juniors took as freshmen and YLC, the after-school program?" This initial opener allowed the interviewee to share his or her general understanding of the program. Because the researcher has not worked closely with the parents/caregivers, the researcher also asked information questions pertaining to the Middle College at UNCG. For instance, "To begin, talk about where you first learned of The Middle College at UNCG and why you and _____ chose to apply, attend." These questions allowed the parent or

caregiver to think retrospectively about his or her child and provide a starting point for the conversation.

Data Analysis

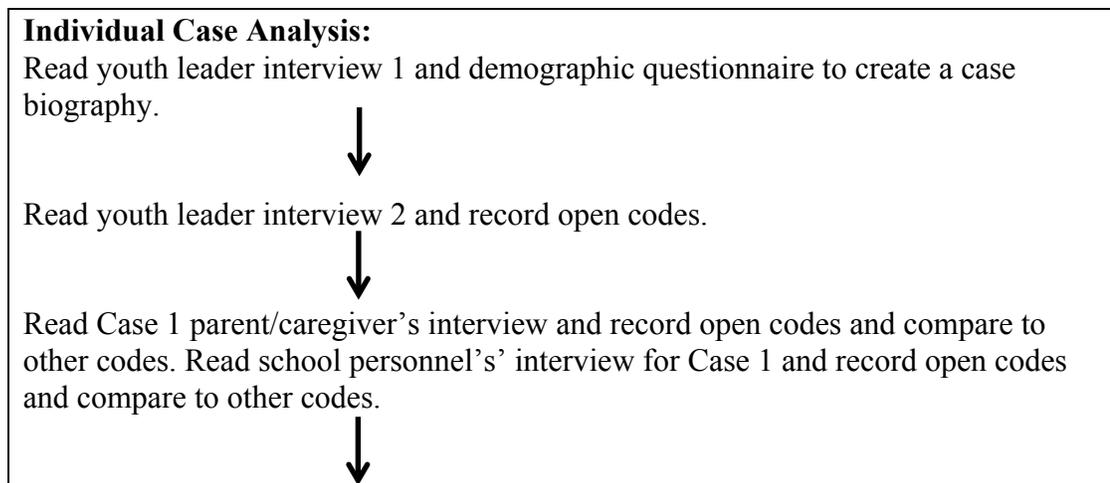
According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), qualitative analysis becomes more intensive after the data has been collected. However, Stake (1995) suggested that when conducting a case study, “there is no particular moment when data analysis begins” (p.71). In the current study, data analysis occurred simultaneously with data collection, as displayed in Table 3.2 (refer to step 13). The researcher attempted to answer the research questions for this study by triangulating each youth leader’s second interview with the interviews from the parents/caregivers, teachers, and after-school coordinator. The interview questions were labeled according to each research question (See Appendix E – I).

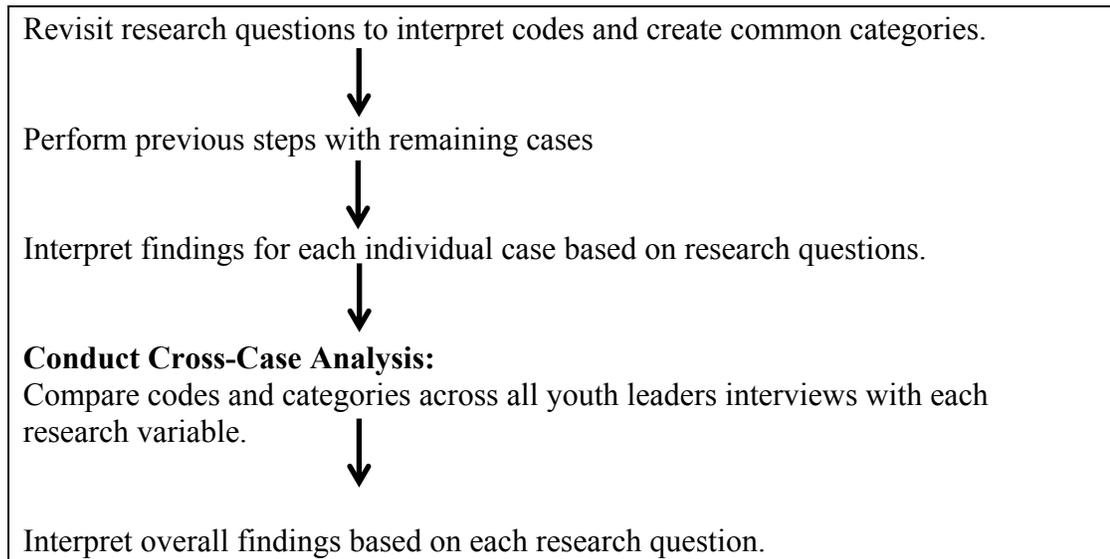
Data were analyzed based upon inductive and deductive qualitative analysis (Patton, 2002). Initially, individual youth leader cases were analyzed by emerging open codes and axial codes that created categories and themes (Patton, 2002). The researcher initially coded words, phrases and sentences using the youth leaders’ language in the second interview. She then completed the same process for the parent or caregiver of the youth leader and the school personnel interviews. Following the coding process, the researcher compiled and grouped the open codes into axial codes in order to provide meaning based on the three variables of resiliency. For example, a youth leader’s second interview was coded and compared to the interview of his or her parent/caregiver and the school personnel’s interviews. Throughout this process, the researcher continuously

referred back to the original interview so to not lose meaningful context. Patton (2002) refers to inductive analysis as “discovering patterns, categories, and themes” (p.24). An example of the peer debrief coding process can be found in Appendix L.

After individual cases were coded and categories were developed, a cross-case comparison was used to search for common themes among all six youth leaders. An example of a cross-case comparison would be to compare the codes and categories across the six youth leader interviews. In addition, school personnel and parent/caregiver interviews were used to validate the common categories that emerged throughout the youth leader interview data. Once the final categories and themes were established, a deductive qualitative analysis was used to interpret the categories and themes in reference to the research questions and guiding conceptual framework. This process also included an attempt to understand any findings that did not necessarily fit into a particular category. Figure 3.1 illustrates an example of the steps taken throughout the data analysis process in order to answer each research question.

Figure 3.1. Data Analysis Process





Individual Interviews

Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher, using *Quick Time Player 10.3* and *Microsoft Word for Mac 2011*. After transcribing an interview, the researcher read through the interview for accuracy and made any necessary corrections. The researcher shared a copy of the transcription for a member check and asked for clarification when necessary. Once the member check was completed and revisions were made, the researcher uploaded the transcribed interview into MAXQDA for analysis.

Threats to Trustworthiness

As a teacher at the Middle College at UNCG with a personal interest in alternative high schools and youth considered at-risk, the researcher's personal biases were possible threats to the trustworthiness of this study. Although a constructivist approach was taken for this study, the researcher's prior knowledge and interest must not be disregarded.

However, these threats were addressed by using several data sources to triangulate findings. In addition, member checks and peer debriefs were also used to build credibility.

CHAPTER IV

INDIVIDUAL CASE FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the impact of participating in a values-based youth leadership program on resiliency. By using a case study design, the researcher aimed to explore each youth leader's perception (N=6) associated with their experience in the Youth Leader Corps (YLC) on resiliency, specifically his/her relationship with others, personal expectations and the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth. In addition, teachers and a parent/caregiver of each youth leader except one provided insight based on their perceptions of the impact that the program had on the youth leaders' resiliency. Lucy's caregiver chose not to be interviewed due to the limited knowledge of the program. Considering Heather and Sora are siblings, there were a total of four parent/caregiver participants (N=4).

This chapter is organized using the six case participants and individual findings related to the three research questions. Each case begins with a quote from a school personnel pertaining to the impact of participating in the YLC. Following is a table to show the relationship of the participant with each school personnel. Then, the section is separated in three sub-sections. The first sub-section, The Participant's Background, provides a profile related to the youth leader's school and family history. The second sub-section, The Participant's Voice – PE to the YLC: Program Qualities that Foster Resiliency Principles, gives a description of the physical education course and the YLC

program qualities that foster resiliency using data related to the protective factors, such as building caring supportive relationship, maintaining high expectations and providing opportunities for personal growth and a future.

The final sub-section, Impact on Resiliency While Participating in the YLC, suggests findings related to the youth leader’s impact of participating in a values-based youth leadership program on resiliency, specifically on the youth leader’s relationship with others (developing and/or improving social competence with classmates, teachers, the YLC staff and the children attending the after-school program), on the youth leader’s personal expectations (developing and/or improving one’s self-esteem while maintaining internal locus of control and refraining from negative influences) and on the youth leader’s the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth (developing and/or improving a sense of aspiration to further one’s education or career goals). School personnel and parent interviews were intertwined throughout the final section to build credibility and to further validate finding.

Case 1 – Lucy

It’s [the YLC] been a real anchor for her in terms of just being a part of an entity, of a club, and the fact that she comes away with a sense of she’s able to help somebody, I think that’s important to her. –Tim

Table 4.1. Lucy’s Relationship with each School Personnel

Teacher	Youth Leader – Teacher Contact
Maxwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math teacher: 3 years, 1 semester each year
Emerson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English teacher: 3 years, 1 semester each year • Freshmen seminar teacher: 1 semester

Sal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freshmen physical education teacher: 1 full year • The YLC staff leader: 2 years
Tim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The YLC staff coordinator: 2 years

Lucy’s Background

At the time of the interview, Lucy was seventeen-years-old and projected to graduate high school in the spring of 2015. She has been a youth leader in the YLC for the past two years and planned to return to the program as a senior. Lucy described her home life as a “roller coaster.” She was born in Africa and journeyed to the States around age seven. Lucy explained, “I don’t stay with my mom. I don’t stay with my dad. I don’t stay with my brothers or sisters. The two ladies that I call my sisters are actually my aunt and my grandma.” When she arrived in the States, she lived with her grandmother in New Jersey while her aunt moved to Greensboro, NC. After about two years, Lucy and her grandmother joined her aunt in Greensboro, NC. Lucy explained, “. . .it was better living down here, more jobs and cheaper and living.” She recently moved to a different neighborhood in Greensboro, but still lived with her grandmother and aunt.

When it comes to school work, Lucy considered herself as independent. She stated, “Since I started school, from kindergarten through twelfth grade now, I had to do my own homework with no help. Never no help.” Throughout elementary and middle school, Lucy struggled with grades and behavior. Lucy described herself as being a “very negative person.” The only way to deal with her anger was to fight and get it over with; “I had the momentum of I don’t care, you know, just go through school and get out and I just really didn’t care.” When specifically asked about her grades, Lucy also explained:

They were bad. If I would like get a D, honestly I would be happy. That was because back then, I never had that um oh make good grades because, I mean yeah my people did want to see good grades but it was like I didn't get that push. To me, it's like I didn't have nobody to prove to or nobody that I got to show good grades to because they probably won't even look at the report card.

For high school, Lucy decided to apply to the Middle College at UNCG because she would be able to enroll in college classes. As a freshman, she became more concerned about her grades, yet behavior was still an issue. "I can only stand being an A/B student; Good grades is what you can achieve for and the hardest you can go. Sometimes you can't just go to that A-student and you have to stay on that A/B. So I would rather stay on that A/B." Emerson, the English teacher, explained that, "She sometimes struggles in English and would get frustrated with it. But she is also a hard worker and so academically, she's successful most of the time."

In reference to behavioral issues, Lucy talked back a lot. However after freshmen year, Lucy claimed that she changed because she was older and "they expected something." She described herself as a junior by stating the following:

As a junior, um, again I was all about getting good grades. I was just like I want to get out of school and I want to go to college and all the talks about juniors is the most important year and everything, so I was like I just got to get my act together. I was more focused.

Similarly, Sal stated, "I think they had targeted her for having some I don't know anger or stuff like that. I remember early on, she was kind of quick to pop back at you, pretty tough. But she has also emerged as one of the really great kids in the program."

Academically, Maxwell, the math teacher, described Lucy as either “hot or cold.” He shared:

In her freshmen year, I never really understood her. As she got older, I guess she got more comfortable by knowing her personality. She got more comfortable by knowing my personality. It seems like she kind of I think that she also came out of her shell but she was able to take ownership of her education and really take things more serious.

As Lucy approached her senior year, she had not applied to any colleges but did schedule a meeting with the guidance counselor to start the process. Her goal was to attend North Carolina Central University for a nursing degree. For now, Lucy continued to wake up at 5:00 AM, on her own, to catch the bus before school. Upon walking across the stage in May, Lucy wanted to take a trip and then relax all summer.

Lucy’s Voice – PE to the YLC: Program Qualities that Foster Resiliency Principles

Building Supportive Relationships. Lucy explained that the purpose of the physical education program was to, “...get us together and like in a way, get us more involved with each other and like healthy, I guess.” During the physical education course, students were placed in groups and were responsible for planning and teaching different sports to their classmates. This required the students to work together to create and implement a plan while managing the class. The students who were not leading had to work together and respect each other during the daily activities, as well. In the following quote, Lucy explained how the physical education class was set up to promote positive relationships with peers. She stated:

When we had that tournament, not tournament but when different classes come and we had to play kickball and basketball and other sports, you have to work as a team and when Sal and them would go over the stuff we had to do for class that day, you then have to work as a team because we're in teams, of course, and then yeah it was a lot of teamwork.

In addition, Lucy explained that her physical education course had more teachers than a traditional physical education class. Jokingly, Lucy shared, "That was good because if you didn't want to deal with one, you could go to the other one." However, she later explained, "I'm just playing, but we had different people to work with us and it was positive. Everybody had energy and they had different ideas of games so it didn't have to be almost the same thing every week." By having more than one teacher in the class, it seemed to have created a positive learning environment with different personalities. Lucy was able to connect with multiple adult leaders that challenged her throughout the course.

During the YLC, Lucy was given the leadership role to plan activities and teach life skills to the children in the program. Lucy explained the purpose of the YLC in the following quote:

The purpose of YLC is to get kids out of communities that will probably never have the chance to interact with different people, talk with different people, meet new people, but at the same time learn different traits. I mean life lessons and skills that they can't learn in their own household because some parents don't really teach their kids' skills or anything.

Lucy stated that the program provided a fun and safe place for children from different backgrounds to learn while playing. She shared, "When the kids leave, they will be very happy, especially when the snacks come. Most of the kids are very happy. They give

high-fives and they say bye and everything.” The children were rewarded at the end of each session with a juice box and a pack of crackers.

Throughout Lucy’s interview, she discussed examples of how the adults in the program, structured a supportive learning environment. During the physical education course, students were responsible for cooperatively working with their peers to accomplish a task. Youth leaders in the YLC were empowered as the leaders of the program; staff leaders simply facilitated the sessions to ensure a successful experience for the children and the youth leaders.

Maintaining High Expectations. Lucy explained that Sal, her physical education teacher, valued respect. Lucy stated that, “Sometimes when Sal would get mad at us, she would sit there and teach us life lessons, like y’all think I’m here for this and that. Like she would just sit there and have an open conversation with us. But some of them were very good.” For Lucy, this was something that she really liked about the course and took away from her overall experience in physical education. Students were held accountable for their actions towards their classmates and the physical education teachers.

Furthermore, Lucy explained that physical education was similar to other classes because students have to follow rules and complete work for a grade; however, in her physical education class, it was different because “We learned skills, important skills, like we probably learned for that week like respect.” Towards the end of the year, students were responsible for leading the class. Lucy explained, “At the end of the year, you have to come up with your own games and you had to do it and show it to the class.” It was the group’s responsibility to plan and organize daily activities. During this time,

the teachers only assisted when necessary. At the conclusion of a lesson, teachers and students would reflect on the experience. Therefore, students were learning from each other, as well as from the teachers' feedback.

Similar to the physical education course, youth leaders in the YLC were responsible for planning and implementing weekly sessions for the elementary-aged children attending the after-school program. In the following quote, Lucy explained that the youth leaders were given freedom in their activity sessions as long as they followed the daily format:

During YLC, nobody tells you what you can do just like you growing up and going to college, you don't have mom telling you what to do. So it's like YLC teaches you that. They give you what you got to do but you just do what you got to do and you have to have like an outcome, which was always a positive outcome.

After the kids left, the youth leaders came together to reflect on their experiences during the session. Lucy shared, "The young leaders will come together with our team that we had and fill out reflections and stuff." During this time, staff leaders worked with each group to discuss the session. For example, staff leaders and youth leaders would discuss things that went well and things that the group could improve on in the next session. The staff leaders provided guidance so that youth leaders could learn through the process.

Outside of the program, Lucy explained that leaders have to "practice what you preach." In addition, Lucy shared that, "if you get in trouble, you can't be in YLC." Youth leaders were held accountable for their behavior both in and outside of the

program. During school hours, youth leaders were expected to be a positive influence for their peers, just as they were role models to the children in the program.

Therefore, it appeared that the program provided youth leaders with a sense of responsibility where they could excel or at least not fail. The staff leaders worked with the youth leaders so that they could experience being a successful leader. In the following quote, Lucy explained how she was initially scared to work with children, but that changed with time:

Well, I never thought that I could actually work with all of those kids, at first, because I didn't do it ninth grade year. I did it in tenth grade year. So the first time I was like oh my gah, this is about to be difficult. Let me do this and get it over with and get my hours, honestly. But then, like throughout the time I was like I just don't care about the hours anymore. I was just like oh my gosh, this is fun and like when I talked to the kids, I talked to the girls and we would be all over there and playing with hair and dudes too.

Opportunities for Personal Growth & Future. The final quality of the resiliency model was not as evident throughout Lucy's interview. It appeared that by having more than one teacher, the undergraduate and graduate teachers, in the physical education class, Lucy was given an opportunity to experience a variety of activities, as well as work with several different individuals. Lucy enjoyed having an opportunity to provide her opinion in the course and in the YLC; her voice mattered to the group. She explained, "I liked the sports, the games that we came up with and everything. I liked interacting and playing the sports, because you know I was very competitive." Although the activities were not directly related to her aspiring future educational or career goals, Lucy seemed to enjoy the physical education class, which was beneficial.

As far as the YLC, Lucy explained, “Like I told you, YLC was a life changing experience. It could be for a certain amount of kids and everything like that. It can just be something positive and it can also change what people want to be in life, you know.” Lucy went from participating in the program for service hours, to participating in the program for personal satisfaction. The program as a whole was structured in a way that Lucy received gratification from working with her group members, the children in the program and the staff leaders.

Overall, Lucy shared several protective factors of the resiliency framework that the physical education course and the YLC have offered to her. The program provided caring adults during and after school hours. In addition, youth leaders were held to an expectation that they would prepare a lesson with activities that would be fun and have a learning component for the kids. In addition, youth leaders were expected to be role models to the children during the YLC and to their peers during school hours. Finally, the program provided numerous opportunities for Lucy to explore a variety of sports and activities while in a positive learning environment. Lucy went as far as stating that the YLC was a life-changing event for her. The YLC staff provided Lucy and the other leaders with empowerment as a way to promote protective factors.

Impact on Resiliency While Participating in the YLC

As previously stated, Lucy began attending the YLC for volunteer hours. Sal described Lucy as coming into the program with a “rough edge” and unsure of her dedication. However, Lucy became attached to the kids and looked forward to seeing them every Friday. Tim also agreed that Lucy evolved as a leader in the program over the

past three years; “At the beginning, she was kind of part of it, kind of figuring it out. Now I see her really stepping up.” The next three sub-sections suggest how participating in the YLC impacted Lucy on her resiliency.

On Relationships with Others. Throughout Lucy’s interview, it was evident that she has built a strong, caring relationship with the children in the program. Tim and Sal also praised Lucy for her ability to work well with the children. Lucy stated:

I give my kids homework. I will say, ‘come back and tell me how you used these skills or values in school, outside of school, or at home’. They would come back and tell me some stuff, so I’m like kids do listen if you actually sit them down and actually talk to them instead of just being there just doing what you have to do and leave.

Sal explained, “She’s able to really take the sport and break it down and link it to the values very well.” Similarly, Tim shared the following information:

She has a great way with kids. She can be very direct but she’s fair with the kids. I just like her ability to set an experience for the kids and really follow-through with all of the groups. I mean she really stays engaged with the kids while working.

Outside of the program, data from the interviews revealed some improvements with Lucy’s relationship with her peers. At one point, Lucy admitted that during her ninth grade year, there were moments when she didn’t care. Later in the interview, she stated that she started caring for others and that the YLC played a role in that transition. Lucy also explained that she has gone from only talking to people that she knows to interacting more with everyone. Lucy suggested that, “YLC helped it [interacting with others]

somehow because when you first get your group in YLC, you don't even know who is in your group and you have to talk to them." Maxwell, Lucy's math teacher, mentioned that Lucy was more willing to work with others in his classroom. He shared:

It used to be Lucy freshmen year, "I can't work with that person" or "I'm not even going to try and work with that person." But, I also taught her junior year with the same students in the classroom with her and it was like, "Oh you want me to work with this group? No problem. I will be a leader or I will do the best I can with that group."

Overall, it appeared that Lucy was able to connect with the children during her sessions. Outside of the program, Lucy seemed to be more willing to work with classmates on assignments.

On Personal Expectation. In terms of the three factors of resiliency, participating in the YLC appeared to have primarily impacted Lucy's personal expectations. Tim suggested, "Given her challenges, you know where she lives, she's always maintained a pretty solid base for herself and maybe that's part of the Youth Leader Corps." Lucy viewed herself as a positive influence or a role model to the kids in the program. When discussing her leadership role, Lucy explained, "It's just the fact of knowing that you are changing the life of the kids and interacting with them and not just seeing them on the sidewalk and not saying anything to them." Lucy shared that some of the children live in her neighborhood. Instead of ignoring them, Lucy carries her leadership role outside of the program to be a positive influence to the children in the neighborhood, even if it limited to a wave or a kind "hello".

Furthermore, Lucy added that the YLC “matured” her without knowing, since someone was looking up to her. Sal also mentioned that she noticed a maturation change in Lucy over time. Sal indicated that, “She’s always been confident, but I do think that she’s matured. I think having to be in front of kids, having to be responsible for kids, having to really reflect on how she acts is important and has helped her in that process.” Maxwell and Emerson explained that Lucy is a strong leader in the classroom in terms of getting her work done. Emerson was Lucy’s English teacher. However, Maxwell also added that, “Outside of the classroom, she might slip up a little bit where she might let that attitude come out when she might feel like she’s not being watched. I hate to say that, but sometimes it seems like you get a different person when she’s around her friends.” In contrast, Sal explained that she views Lucy as more mellow; “There was a group of girls and they would get into these stupid little fights freshmen year. We really just don’t see that anymore.” Therefore, it seemed that while Lucy may not always refrain from negative influences outside of the program, she has made improvements to her leadership demeanor, at least in the classroom. During the YLC, she appeared to maintain her role as a positive leader in the eyes of the children.

On the Pursuit of Opportunities for Personal Growth. When asked if the YLC has impacted her ability to pursue opportunities in or out of school, Lucy replied that it was a difficult question to answer. She explained that the YLC changed her. Laughing, Lucy stated the following quote, which may relate to her future career goals:

I did make a joke that I would like to be teacher one day, but nope. I can’t do it. Teachers go through a lot. That’s the point. They have to go through the attitudes.

I can't do all that. I'll probably grow up and want to work with kids, but it will be outside of my work life.

Emerson shared a time that Lucy and her had a conversation about the YLC, which relates to Lucy's possible future in education:

...I remember her talking about other students [kids in the program] like her who have come from Africa or come from different areas and who are getting used to American culture. I think that was a cool experience for her to be able to show people like, "hey I made it; you can too."

To conclude, Emerson described Lucy's educational future by saying, "Academically, I would say that she's gone from someone who was at high-risk when she came to us of maybe not going to college because she didn't feel or she didn't have the skills necessary, to someone who definitely sees college in their future." From Lucy's interview, it seems that higher education a part of Lucy's future.

In summary, Lucy appeared to have grown to enjoy and value her role as a youth leader in the YLC. She viewed herself as a role model to the children in the program and proclaimed that her level of maturity increased since beginning the YLC. Lucy prided herself with the ability to help the children in the program by providing them with a positive experience. She developed lasting relationships with the children and staff in the program. Outside of the program, Lucy continued to improve her relationship with her peers and teachers. Instead of demanding to work by herself, Lucy volunteered to work with others in order to accomplish schoolwork or program goals. While she may not always refrain from negative influences, the incidences seemed to be rare in comparison

to Lucy’s freshmen and sophomore year. Even though Lucy could not directly explain how the YLC impacted her pursuit of opportunities, she stated that being a part of the YLC changed her for the better; it has been a positive influence. Lucy has a vision of attending college, which she did not have as a freshman in high school.

Case 2 – Veronica

She was another kid that I think was more shy, more introverted. Now she’s definitely more outgoing. Just her clothes that she wears is flashier than it used to be from freshmen to senior year. – Sal

Table 4.2. Veronica’s Relationship with each School Personnel

Teacher	Youth Leader – Teacher Contact
Maxwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math teacher: 3 years, 1 semester each year • National Honor Society staff leader: 1 year
Emerson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English teacher: 3 years, 1 semester each year • Freshmen seminar teacher: 1 semester
Sal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of refugee community mentoring program: 2 years • The YLC staff leader: 2 years
Tim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant in middle school program (Project Effort) and refugee community: 2 years • The YLC staff coordinator: 2 years

Veronica’s Background

Veronica was eighteen-years-old at the time of the interview, and was projected to graduate high school in the spring of 2015. She had been a youth leader in the YLC for the past two years and planned to return to the program as a senior. Veronica also grew up in Africa. When she was about five-years-old, her family was forced to move to Zambia due to the war in Congo. Veronica and her father separated from her mother and

other siblings. Around age eleven, Veronica and her father reunited with her mother and siblings to journey to the states as refugees. At the time of the interview, she lived with both parents and eight siblings; however, Veronica explained, “I was living with my dad, so I grew up mostly with him. It’s like I’m used to dad, not my mom because I really didn’t grow up with her.”

Upon arriving to the states, Veronica explained that, “things were kind of difficult.” Her father was the only one that knew some English. Veronica knew how to say her name and where she was from. For her first year of schooling in the states, Veronica attended a local school that specialized in immigrants and refugees that speak little to no English. Midway through the year, Veronica transferred to a traditional middle school as a sixth grader. The following quote illustrates Veronica’s transition to middle school:

I was kind of scared because I didn’t know nobody. I didn’t have no friends. I was so shy to speak to anybody. In seventh grade, certain people started talking to me. So in eighth grade, I was just like okay. I was cool with everybody. I could actually be social.

During her eighth grade year, Veronica decided to apply the Middle College at UNCG after Tim explained to her that it was a high school with an opportunity to take free college classes. Tim also helped Veronica with the application process. Tim explained:

Well, Veronica is one of the few that has been with me as part of the sport club. When she came in, she was living at one of the refugee communities at the time and we had a whole group of kids coming from there and she was part of that and

I remember just little Veronica. She was always chewing gum. You would have to kind of tow her in but she was always engaged. She was very engaging.

At that time, Tim tried to persuade Veronica into being a youth leader, but she politely refused.

Veronica's description of her freshmen and sophomore year were similar to her transition to middle school. She explained, "I was also kind of shy because I didn't know anybody. I knew Lucy. That was the only person. I mean I talked to everybody. I was just me and since this is a college campus, I was like I'm going to get lost." She also described herself as independent and focused on her studies. As a junior, Veronica admitted, "That's when I started getting crazy because I knew everybody." By crazy, she explained, "I talked, asked questions, make noises, talk with my friends. Just little fun moments, everything was cool."

Academically, Veronica always took her schoolwork seriously and strived for her best. While attending elementary school in Africa, Veronica shared, "You can't have no attitude at school or you get a whooping. You have to come to school on time, ready to learn. There's no talking when the teacher is talking." This work ethic continued throughout middle and high school. Initially, Emerson explained that Veronica struggled with standardized tests due to a language barrier. Emerson also shared, "It's [language barrier] still a struggle but it's not stopping her from learning anymore like it was freshmen year. Academically, she tries hard enough that she is successful in most of her classes and I think has pretty good grades." Similarly, Maxwell explained that the lowest grade Veronica made in his math class was a C, and that was before realizing the

language barrier was preventing her from making good grades. Veronica's father also described Veronica as, "... a very hard worker. She is driven and wants to be successful in life." At the time of the interview, she was making A's and passing all of her tests.

Veronica's goals were to graduate high school, go to college and get a job. She wanted to attend The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to study pharmacy.

Veronica stated:

I want to get a job, a job that isn't just going to be useful to myself but other people. It's going to be helping people who need like people back home [Congo]. I'm trying to do pharmacist back in Africa. They don't have actual medication needed to treat people well. So since I came in, I know more about the medicine and back home maybe build a hospital or maybe actually tell them the correct medicine and how they going to be treated with the right medicine.

Veronica's father shared, "Veronica has her mind set on pharmacy. Financially, we cannot afford for her to go to Chapel Hill. She will go to college though. We are very proud of her."

Veronica's Voice – PE to the YLC: Program Qualities that Foster Resiliency Principles

Building Supportive Relationships. Veronica did not remember a lot about the physical education course. She was in a different section than Lucy. Veronica explained that she had to complete a project with a group to teach the class. She was assigned basketball because that was the sport that was most familiar to her. Veronica admitted, "...we play basketball and sometimes we do like teamwork and we did like a project where you come up with a game and teach it to everybody. That's what we basically do." Veronica enjoyed playing sports and explained that she was engaged during class. There

was little explanation about the basketball teaching project and no mention of the teacher interaction during class.

During the YLC, Veronica stated that, “It’s fun because it’s on Friday and Friday is my turn up day. So it’s fun and seeing kids from different cultures and friends. It’s just like fun because everybody comes up with games.” In groups, Veronica explained that everyone worked together to lead different parts of the session. She shared, “We got to figure out who is doing what, the reflection talk and make sure the game is organized because mostly we used to game when the kids come because we didn’t know like the age and stuff.” The staff leaders gave each group the opportunity to plan their own session activities along with a daily life-skill.

While working with the children, Veronica explained that the children tend to only want to work with their friends. Veronica shared that she could relate to the children because she was shy when she first arrived in the states. In the following quote, Veronica explains the purpose of the program and provides an example of how she encouraged children to work together:

I think it’s like to get kids from different cultures because like when they come here, they don’t know much about any programs that can help them...Uhm, yeah just helping kids grow in a positive way throughout sports like different skills. Like me because if I go somewhere and there’s nobody I know, I’m going to be like okay I don’t know anybody. But if I go somewhere where they speak the same language, I’m more open because they are like my people, like I know I can say this. It’s the same thing with them. Like when we are in the group, they always want to be with their friends because they mold to them like they speak the same language...I be like okay, everybody know we have friends but you also have to meet new people so if you go to college and you have a roommate, because your friends they might not have the same interest as you, so whether you like the person or not you still have to be with them and get to know them.

Therefore, it seemed that Veronica was given the opportunity to learn the importance of communicating with others through working with the children and watching them interact with one another. Overall, Veronica shared how the program was designed to encourage her to work with her group members, as well as the children in the program.

Maintaining High Expectations. In the physical education course, Veronica explained that everything was for a grade; “We take notes like on reflections so whether you did it, they [the physical education teachers] are going to see because you have to write something.” Students kept a journal in physical education and were responsible for recording their behavior and participation each week. Throughout the course, Veronica shared that she learned to try all of the sports. She stated, “Well I learned to try every sport even if I don't know it. I have to try it. I learned whether I can't handle it or I get to see if I'm capable of doing it.” The daily lessons were organized so that students of all athletic ability, or lack there of, could participate in a judge-free zone. The activities were structured to focus more on the TPSR-values (respecting one another, working together, helping others) rather than proficiency in sports skills.

As a youth leader in the YLC, Veronica explained that everyone was supposed to “step up.” She continued by stating that, “...you got to make sure everyone is on task doing what they supposed to be doing.” At the end of each session, the group members and staff leaders reflect on the session. Veronica explained, “After that, you tell each person what they need to work on and what they did wrong and step up next time.” The group members and staff leaders worked together to learn from each session in order to become better leaders and to improve the next session.

Opportunities for Personal Growth & Future. Throughout Veronica's interview, there was no mention of the last quality of the resiliency framework in relation to the program. However, when asked why she continued to be a leader in the YLC, Veronica stated, "Because that's more of the good thing to do, because if I go home and play, I can be doing something useful." From this statement, it seemed that Veronica placed value on her role in the YLC and it gave her purpose.

In summary, Veronica described the program as a place where each youth leader had a role and a task to fulfill. All youth leaders were expected to work together to accomplish the common goal of providing the children with a safe and fun learning experience during the YLC sessions. In addition, Veronica discussed the importance of having a voice in the group even when working with individuals who were not necessarily friends. This example demonstrated how the program challenged youth leaders to increase their social competence during the program. While working with the children, youth leaders had to learn how to communicate with each other, as well as use vocabulary words that the children from different cultures and varying ages could understand.

Impact on Resiliency While Participating in the YLC

As previously explained, Veronica chose not to be a leader in the YLC until her sophomore year. Originally, Veronica explained, "It's working with kids and I think it was my nephews that made me not like working with kids because they are hot heads. They don't listen. Whenever they had the program and stuff, I was like no I'm not going to work with kids because I was impatient." Tim told a similar story. He shared:

She was probably seventh or eighth grade. Seventh grade I think it was when she started. We were starting the Youth Leader Corps and I thought I would grab a couple of the kids to see if they wanted to be in the Youth Leader Corps as the high school. I thought Veronica would I really liked he spirit because she had a cute way about being silly but also she could be pretty serious with her peers...She said no thank you. I said Veronica you'd be good. She didn't want to. So I said fine, you know, I didn't push it. But when we got her to high school and she was working with you guys in the PE class, she just busted her tail all of the time. She was a hard worker.

In addition, when Veronica began participating as a youth leader, Sal suggested, "Veronica is somebody who I think early on wasn't as engaged. When she showed up, it was social. A lot of kids were joining YLC and they got to hang out and then they got dinner and it was sort of like hanging out on a Friday night." Veronica explained that she decided to try the YLC; once in the program, Veronica described it as, "It's just like fun because everybody comes up with games. If you're not into kids, you going to learn it because I'm not. But when I did YLC I just needed to learn how to be more patient, calmer with kids, not be harsh on them. It was great." The next three sub-sections suggests how participating in the YLC impacted Veronica on her resiliency.

On Relationships with Others. In terms of the three factors of resiliency, participating in the YLC seemed to have impacted Veronica's relationship with others by giving her confidence in her own voice. In addition, she also appeared to gain the confidence needed to be more helpful with others instead of choosing to be an independent learner all of the time. During the program, Tim explained Veronica's progress in the following quote:

Part of it is not just developing the lesson, but also interacting with the kids and running the talks and you know it's not always easy for kids. But Veronica has

really jumped into it and really does a great job. She's really evolved from being shy about being in front to wanting to be up front and leading.

Sal explained that Veronica was not a strong vocal leader, but stepped up during the station activities. Sal shared, "She's not necessarily a kid that is strong verbally, you know leading an awareness talk or leading a reflection, but when she is in her small group, she does a good job of keeping the kids in engaged and talking to them." In the classroom, Emerson stated that Veronica has "come out of her shell per se." Emerson continued by explaining that, "She has become a bigger personality but especially freshmen year, she was very quiet in the classroom and didn't talk a lot. Now, she would volunteer or even speak out and make her voice heard than wait on me to call on her."

Veronica gave the following explanation to illustrate her social competence:

I used to be shy to say something in front of people. I used to be nervous. Even when they ask me, I would say, "can you pick somebody else?" But I found out that doing that, it's not going to take me nowhere. There will be a time when I need to present something. So like Carrie would be like no, either way you still have to talk. Then like now, I can do presentations. I still be nervous but I can do it. Even with kids, like if someone in my group or my team are not there, I still have to talk to the kids and run things. So that's the way I kind of learned how to like, yeah if I can talk to kids, I can talk to everybody in front of people.

Overall, Veronica seemed to have a greater ability to communicate with the children in the program and her peers during class. Her confidence increased from freshmen year and part of that was related to her success in explaining game-like activities to the children on Friday nights.

On Personal Expectation. Throughout Veronica's interview, she constantly mentioned the importance of being prepared as a leader. For example, Veronica stated, "Just come prepared. Don't show you was mad and all that anger. Just make sure you use appropriate words because they are kids." Furthermore, she explained, "...be more patient and then like the way you talk; your voice and tone. The way you carry yourself to people." This related to Veronica's position of being a positive influence on the children. Interestingly, Sal stated early on that, "She's not necessarily as helpful with someone else, but she's going to make sure that she gets stuff done." However, it seemed that Veronica learned to hold her peers accountable in the program and in the classroom. In the program, Sal explained, "I like the fact that she's in YLC because it makes her have to care for other people and work with other people and really build those relationships as opposed to I'm just going to work on my own." In the following example, Veronica explained how she helped her friend with homework:

I can use like because when we get homework and stuff. I have to write a poem for my English and it's worth 50 points and Carrie didn't do it. So I was like you didn't do it? She be like no. I be like you have to take your school serious and even if you don't like to do it, you have to do it for your grades. It was supposed to be like 1200 words and I just told her, come here I'm going to help you with it. So I helped her type the paper.

Maxwell shared that Veronica was also inducted into the National Honor Society last year, which played a role in her resiliency. He stated that, "It seems like she holds her classmates to a higher standard, especially after she was inducted into the national honor society. She would give them feedback on if they were doing a presentation. The

criticism was constructive about like speak up, look at your audience and things of that nature.” Veronica also held her classmates to a higher standard, which was another example of how she strived to be a positive influence outside of the program.

Overall, it seemed that Veronica gained the confidence to share her voice and work ethics during the program and during school. Tim described her progress as, “I think it’s really developed her confidence to step up from where she was and the fact that she’s out there. Also, I think because of that, the others have seen her and she’s really gained respect from her peer.” When discussing her public speaking skills, Veronica related her improvements to the YLC. She explained:

I mean now I am cool. I used to be afraid but not anymore. I mean even when I have to present, I have to present to get my grades. I believe in myself that I can do better. [In the YLC] You actually have to explain like you can’t have a game but not know how to explain it. You have to know the rule to it and how to explain it so you don’t look stupid.

Similarly, Emerson explained that she viewed Veronica as a silent, yet positive academic leader. Emerson shared:

Veronica is more of a silent leader. She’s someone who leads by example. She almost always has her homework, always was taking notes when she was supposed to and especially around her group of friends who aren’t always doing. But, they saw her as somebody who they knew she was doing the right thing and kind of looked up to her to do the right thing.

On the Pursuit of Opportunities for Personal Growth. The YLC seemed to have little to no direct impact on Veronica’s pursuit of opportunities for personal growth. Prior to joining the program, Veronica had a strong educational background. Veronica’s

father reiterated that, “She comes home and does her homework without being told. She makes good grades and has always tried in school.” Tim suggested that being a part of the YLC may have encouraged her to not only pursue post-secondary education, but to study in an area where she would be working with others. In the future, Veronica aspired to help others; specifically people back home in Africa.

To conclude, Veronica seemed to be a dedicated individual. She worked hard academically, and she took her role in the YLC seriously. In the program, Veronica transformed from someone who was afraid to speak, to someone who participated with the children and led activities. In the classroom, Veronica led by example and was more outspoken compared to her freshmen year. Veronica gained the confidence necessary to overcome the language barrier that posed as a challenge in the beginning. Standing in front of the children in the program reinforced the she could have a positive influence on others, both her peers and the children.

Case 3 – MJ

I think it helped him deal with this identity crisis of how to be a leader. I think even when he was having this crisis and wondering if he didn’t want to lead for good, YLC was a place that he could put his finger on that he enjoyed and that he excelled at. – Emerson

Table 4.3. MJ’s Relationship with each School Personnel

Teacher	Youth Leader – Teacher Contact
Maxwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math teacher: 2 years, 1 semester each year • Student Council: 1 semester
Emerson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English teacher: 3 years, 1 semester each year • Freshmen seminar teacher: 1 semester

Sal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freshmen physical education teacher: 1 full year • Junior Career Pathways III teacher: 1 semester • The YLC staff leader: 3 years
Tim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The YLC staff coordinator: 3 year

MJ's Background

At the time of the study, MJ was seventeen-years-old and was projected to graduate high school in the spring of 2015. He had been a youth leader in the YLC for the past three years and planned to return to the program as a senior. Growing up, MJ moved a lot because his mother was dealing with domestic violence. MJ shared that, "...while we lived in Greensboro, my mom and I started going to a church and so I really like that church. The bishop is kind of like my dad. We've gotten really close over the time." MJ's mother described MJ life in the following quote:

I would say MJ has always been very, very competitive academically and I was in like an abusive marriage. The way that MJ has always dealt with life is try to achieve above and beyond. He never really had a relationship with his dad so his thing was -- I'm going to show my dad that I can achieve and he will have to look at me one day and see me at my best.

MJ lived with his mother and younger brother and described their home as "peaceful." MJ explained that he had to work as a way to financially support his family. He added, "...I still have to contribute to the bills sometimes because her [mom's] money is not enough for the bills. It doesn't add up, but somehow we always have enough month to month. So we make it." Sal mentioned that, "When he, I guess it was last year, he started working, he would still arrange his work schedule around YLC, which I think is huge for

a kid who needs money and uses his money to help support.” MJ helped his family while also making time for his leadership position in the YLC.

In terms of academics, MJ’s mother described him as “academically advanced” beginning in third grade. Throughout elementary and middle school, MJ tested in and out of AG (academically gifted) classes. Entering high school, Maxwell and Emerson described MJ as a “strong student.” Sal’s explanation was somewhat different pertaining to submitting homework on time and being responsible. In her class, she described MJ in the following quote:

He’s an interesting kid. He’s pretty smart. He has to work hard. He’s probably not as smart as he thought he was coming in. I think he was always kind of a teacher-pleaser. He does well in the classroom, but I’ve been able to say, “Hey you need to step up.” If you decide you are not going to turn something in and you think it’s okay because you can turn it in late and you’re smart, so we’ll give you a good grade anyways. That’s not being responsible.

When MJ made his first bad grade in high school, an F, MJ’s mother explained, “It was more torture on him than to us, but I wanted to see that before he got to college. He could really have a nervous break down or something and I wouldn’t know because he is away at school.” MJ’s mother provided support even when faced with other risk factors, such as being a single parent and persevering through domestic violence.

With regards to MJ’s behavior in school, MJ and his mother told two different stories. MJ’s mother claimed, “Overall as a child, he was very competitive, very quiet and he got bullied a lot like as a little kid because he was short. We said that he had

Napoleon complex.” Sal also suggested that MJ might have been picked on his freshmen year for being smart. From MJ’s perspective, he stated:

In elementary school, people used to say I was smart but I used to get in more trouble than I do now. I was talkative. I used to have a crew and we always used to do crazy stuff, like throwing paper towels in the bathroom. If somebody picked on us, then we would just pick on them back because that’s what we did. I used to get into a lot of fights when I was younger. It’s because I just thought that I was the coolest person ever and nobody could say anything.

According to MJ, the fights that he referred to either happened on the bus or at daycare. It seemed that MJ would get in trouble for talking in class or being immature, like throwing paper balls. However when MJ changed schools in eighth grade, he explained, “I didn’t really pick on people, because I was new so I couldn’t really do that at a new school with new people. But I played football, so I felt like I was cool then, too.” Because MJ changed schools several times throughout his school career, he got used to being the “new guy,” but he appeared to struggle with wanting to be socially accepted.

For high school, MJ chose to attend the Middle College at UNCG for a couple of reasons: to gain college experience and to take advantage of small class sizes. He explained:

The middle college would allow me to get some college experience with being on campus and also get some college classes out of the way, hopefully. The class sizes are smaller because like in a big high school, they are huge and I didn’t want to be that kid in the back or the kid in the front with fifty kids in one classroom. I wanted to be in the small classrooms so I can know the teachers.

As a freshman, MJ shared that he was shy like everyone else coming to a new school, until he started networking and making friends with “the boys.” MJ stated, “I guess when I got with them [the boys], I got more confident because they are the cocky, confident people of the school. Of course, I became confident hanging out with them, too.”

Emerson explained that MJ continued to struggle with being socially accepted for the right reasons throughout his high school career. She shared, “I think he has had some leadership identity crisis over the years. He has kind of dealt with do I be a leader for the positive or just a cool leader that my friends...” Throughout MJ’s school career, he described himself as “a social chameleon” because he changed friends a lot. As a junior, MJ shared, “As the years go on, I get more outgoing just talking to people and talking to the freshmen that came in. So then when I talked to the freshmen and everything, I got president [of the Middle College at UNCG] and I had to be outgoing.” Sal suggested that MJ was no longer a follower.

Not surprisingly, MJ had high expectations for himself after high school. According to MJ’s mother, he had his mind set on Harvard University at an early age, when he found out President Obama attended there. She explained, “I just said okay. We are going to push you in that direction, not knowing that he was going to do medicine at the time. So he’s always been focused like had a goal no matter what was going on around him.” At the time of the interview, MJ planned to attend college at either Duke University or UNC-Chapel Hill to become a neurosurgeon. MJ was working on becoming a better writer so that he could get into a good college. He also added that he wanted to “...constantly try to mature myself and get ready for college.” To conclude, MJ

stated, “I got to focus, especially in college; got to focus, got to focus, got to focus. I got to get these college admissions and applications out, and everything, and then school, and then work, and then church. So I always have a task that I’m trying to accomplish.”

MJ’s Voice – PE to the YLC: Program Qualities that Foster Resiliency Principles

Building Supportive Relationships. MJ stated that the purpose of the physical education course was to train the high school students how to be leaders while working with the teachers:

The purpose, at least for people in YLC, was like it was almost like training but not training at the same time for people that were in YLC. We learned how to do it from people that do it the best, because you know the college and the grad students, they were like they knew how to do it so they would do it pretty good. So after we would watch them for after like ten weeks or so it’s like okay I think I can do this, too. So then after getting that practice round and then being in YLC we actually did it. For the people that weren’t in it, I think it also taught them that you can. There’s a life lesson almost in everything sort of.

During the physical education course, MJ explained, “We would go in and we’d play a sport but at the end, we’d talk about how that sport then relate it to life pretty much and so.” The physical education teachers, the college undergraduate and graduate students, organized games and sport-based activities to teach the high school students life lessons. For example, MJ shared that “a basketball game could easily help work on teamwork.” Eventually, the high school students became the leaders and were responsible for planning and teaching the class activities. MJ explained his experience planning and teaching with his peers in the following quote:

Mine was hockey and I had two people in my group so we had to work together to come up with a lesson plan for a whole week and we planned out the lesson, and

we graduated the activity over the course of the days and learned and did three reflection questions for people to think about, at the end of every lesson. So that was a cool experience to like teach other people and then have them teach us because we were all like the same age but we could all learn something from each other, so that's what we learned there.

MJ's description of the leadership activity showed that although the students were the same age, they were able to learn from one another through working together and leading the class. Students who were teachers for the day were responsible for developing a learning experience for their peers. Because all of the students eventually held the leadership role in the class, the students became more respectful towards their peers, even those who were not necessarily friends.

In addition, MJ shared that daily reflections at the end of each lesson were beneficial to learn about everyone, including the teachers. He stated:

I think the reflection talk was a good way to end it every day because it cool because, while at the same time we were playing and doing PE with these people, we also learned these people. Especially like I know just sitting there with Sal, she would tell a story of what happened. So we started to learn about Sal; she learned about us as far as, so you learned more about each other.

MJ seemed to cherish the support from the teachers, as well as his peers. MJ also noted that he enjoyed seeing the college students and Sal around campus, outside of class. Sal and the other college students developed a relationship with MJ that went beyond the classroom and academics. They provided MJ with support and encouragement to stay on track and not be a follower.

During the YLC, MJ explained that the importance of developing relationship with the children was to build trust. He shared that although the program only lasted a short period of time, it was important to learn all of the children's names. This was one example of building trust so that the children would see that the youth leaders genuinely cared. In addition, MJ explained that a staff leader would begin the sessions and the youth leaders were responsible for building upon the daily lesson. In the following quote, MJ gave an example of a values-based progression from the initial gathering to the small group sessions:

We bring them into the big circle and we pretty much give them a base idea, not what all the groups are going to talk about because if all the groups talk about the same things it starts to get kind of redundant and annoying... Sal talks about an example of showing encouragement to your teammates because that's teamwork but encouragement is more specific... So in our little groups, we all play like our individual games... At least what I try to do, I try to gear their mind and engage it towards a certain way.

Similar to the bond that MJ explained between him and the college students, MJ attempted to create a mentoring relationship between him and the children in the program. Whereas the staff leaders were a supportive of MJ, he was responsible for serving as a role model to the children and his peers.

Maintaining High Expectations. While MJ discussed the physical education course, he explained, "Because like even though you're playing a sport, there still can be a deeper meaning behind that sport, if you know how to relate it in your mind." The teachers in the program attempted to instill positive values throughout the daily lessons. The leadership activities during the YLC allowed students to apply what they have

learned in a safe and structured environment. MJ recognized the potential of using sport as a vehicle to teach the life skills, such as teamwork, to his peers and to the children in the program. As a youth leader, MJ stated that he learned through teaching the children. MJ explained, “When we take sports and we teach kids life lessons through sports, but it’s like at the same time, we learned from ourselves, too.” In MJ’s example, he explained that he learned how to use sport and physical activities to teach life skills while working with others.

MJ explained that the youth leaders were role models to the children and had to learn how to be mature in and outside of the program. He shared:

I think that it’s good for the kids to learn and have a positive role model, especially because they come from like low economic areas and so they may not always have a positive role model. So for them to have a positive role model, it’d be actually good for them; especially like the boys because the boys may not always have a positive male figure in their life. So having some boys around and seeing and giving them a positive role model to look up to and make them act more positive at school and at home and other places that they may go. It’s also good for the leaders in that it teaches them to mature because if you don’t mature, the kids are going to act immature and you don’t want to have a bunch of little immature MJ’s running around. You learn to mature yourself.

MJ’s explanation of a role model showed the expectation level that was associated with the title of being a youth leader in the YLC. More specifically, MJ explained that the boys need a positive role model; therefore, it is his responsible to be that role model. MJ did not directly mention the teachers’ expectations in the physical education course or the staff leaders’ expectations of the youth leaders in the YLC. Instead, his examples illustrated the level of expectation in each part of the program.

Opportunities for Personal Growth & Future. Throughout MJ's interview, some of his comments were related to the third quality of resiliency. During the physical education course, MJ explained that the activities and life skills began as general ideas, such as working together. With time, the activities became more specific and related more toward goal setting. He provided an example in the following quote:

Like if we were playing like in the beginning it was like teamwork and everything but then stuff started to get more specific on life goals and everything. So like when we would play basketball it's like that's easily teamwork but like if we were talking about if we were playing like Pacman or something it'd be goal setting like trying to get to a certain goal, or playing that little line game, maybe that is Pacman, but goal setting, and then learning how to follow directions. We could play like the game I think Tim called it the serpent or something. So we learned a lot about how to relate that in PE.

MJ understood how to relate various activities with different life skills beyond the course. To MJ, the physical education course was more than participating in an activity to learn a sport or to increase heart rate. MJ related his leadership experiences to preaching; he shared, "...It's almost like preaching because in preaching, you have to see different things than what's on the page. That's the literal meaning but it has different, it can have different meanings depending on how you look at it." Throughout the program, MJ learned to apply his knowledge in other areas of his life, such as his sermons at church.

In summary, MJ described various protective factors of the resiliency framework that the program had offered as a building block. Because of the support and encouragement that MJ received throughout the physical education course and the YLC,

he discovered his leadership abilities, especially for the children in the program. The YLC was a place that reinforced MJ to execute his leadership skills in a positive way.

Impact on Resiliency While Participating in the YLC

As a freshman, MJ came to the YLC as a strong leader. Tim and Sal agreed that MJ was a better leader than some of the undergraduate students in the CYSD program. Tim described MJ as “taking the bull by the horns” from day one. He shared the following quote:

I can remember the first day. You know how we would go over to the writing center and then we'd have somebody from safety come in and then we'd take trips to the library? I remember following him around when he was with a group. He always had his hand up. He always had the answer and he was always engaged in something. He was out there. He's somebody out front. I always felt that and that's probably why I thought that he would be a good leader.

As previously mentioned, Sal and Emerson described MJ as having an “identity crisis” about fitting in with his classmates. Sal explained that, “We had some concerns his freshmen year that he was hanging out and goofing off and not really doing what he needs to do to be successful, like slacking off because other kids were slacking off.” Emerson shared that she talked with MJ a few times between freshmen and sophomore year and asked him, “... are you going to lead for the positive or are you just going to be the cool guy and act like the rest of your friends?” In the YLC, however, MJ was a phenomenal leader in front of the kids and with the other youth leaders.

In terms of the three factors of resiliency, participating in the YLC appeared to have helped MJ reassure his leadership positionality with his classmates and peers,

creating a positive relationship with others. In addition and similar to Lucy, MJ suggested that the YLC helped with becoming more mature by being a positive role model in the eyes of the children. Finally, MJ explained that since he enjoyed working with the kids in the YLC, that he was able to obtain a summer position as a camp counselor, extending his knowledge of a youth leader to his career goal. Tim said it well by stating, “I think for MJ, it’s [the YLC] just kind of bolstered some of his strengths in terms of leadership and maybe helped to form a little better footing for him.”

On Relationships with Others. MJ learned to be a leader early on, during the physical education course. MJ explained that the physical education course influenced him and the other students by giving them a voice; “...everybody has a voice, especially me because at the time, I was shy. So I guess that made me a little more confident when I talked.” This transitioned into the YLC, where MJ had a way with connecting to the children, especially the African American males. In the following quote, MJ explained how he worked with one of the boy’s that attended the program:

There was this kid named Stu. He always used to get really mad. He would kick stuff and go sit over there. He was a lot like my little brother. I would talk to him as if he was my little brother; not like in a mean way but like talk to him, find out what’s wrong with him. I learned and learning how to find out what’s wrong with Stu and everything so every time I’d talk to him he’d calm down and come back so I said ok maybe I can do this from now

In addition, MJ stated that he learned to use a better vocabulary when talking to adults, specifically when talking to parents during his summer job. He explained:

I had to do the counselors job a lot, even though I was only a junior counselor. That’s why I’m getting booted up to an adult counselor next year when I turn

eighteen. I would have to talk to the parents. So from YLC and increasing my vocabulary and learning how people were different and how you had to be sensitive to people, I could talk to the parents and make sure every parent went away happy.

Maxwell also suggested that MJ's conversations improved from freshmen year to now.

He explained, "I can tell it in the way he speaks to me, and the content of the things that he is talking to me about. He's really come along way." Outside of school, MJ's mother

talked about MJ's improvements in his public speaking skills at church. She shared,

"...for him to stand up and talk in front of people, he's good now. I definitely know that's YLC."

At the end of MJ's junior year, he gained the confidence to run for president of the Middle College and was elected. According to Maxwell:

I would have never imagined that MJ would have ever ran for anything student council, that big of a level. He conducts meetings within the student council. He get's things done and he's organized. So freshmen year to now, he's grown a lot as far as his confidence level and how he talks to people.

Tim exclaimed that, "...the fact that here he is the president of his class. He's president of

his class and that was a big thing." MJ's mother indicated that being a part of the YLC

helped to increase MJ's confidence. She explained the following story:

I think it made him feel like, before you're a teenager, you're quirky, you don't know if you are good at this or bad at this. But it made him, like he was good at everything. You know he is a horrible basketball player but he feels like he is a NBA champ. It's just like you guys instilling enough confidence in them. Because of that, I have a Jordan upstairs. I have a doctor upstairs. He's going to put his best foot forward. I think YLC is major with giving him that.

Sal also explained MJ's confidence level as, "I think he's had to step up and realize that he's a smart kid. He's got to take responsibility for his own actions and being really comfortable not following the crowd." MJ seemed very prideful of his position as a leader in the YLC and now as the president of the student body. Through the class structure, after school activities and informal conversations, MJ was able to improve his communication skills and apply them in and outside of the program.

On Personal Expectation. MJ shared that being a part of the YLC made him feel more "valuable." He explained, "I guess it made me feel more like I had more to offer." MJ also admitted that he learned to be more mature both in and outside of the program. He stated:

Doing immature things like taking people's things or picking on somebody or trying to be the class clown because you think it's cool or funny; it's not. It's just immature. If their [the kids] learning how not to do that, then you also have to learn yourself not to do that so that you can teach it properly.

Sal also agreed that, "I think now he is not as apt to follow others. He realizes that I don't have to be the clown with them; they like who I am." Emerson concluded, "I think it [the YLC] helped him stay on track of, here this is a positive leadership thing that I'm involved in and so I watch my back and the rest of my life and make sure I'm leading for good." MJ felt a sense of belonging to the program and also held himself to a higher standard since the boys looked up to him as an African American male leader and role model.

On the Pursuit of Opportunities for Personal Growth. When MJ was asked about being a part of the YLC and the impact it had on his sense of purpose for his future, MJ explained that he loved working with kids; but since he wants to pursue a profession as a neurosurgeon, he would not be directly interacting with children on a daily basis. However, he may work with children in the church setting. MJ's mother credited the YLC for his position as a summer camp counselor, as well as his work in the church. She shared:

It really helped him though, honestly because he went from doing YLC to summer camp volunteering with inner-city youth. This year, he was supposed to be a junior counselor but they actually used him as a counselor because he had the experience throughout the year, which equipped him there and he was camp counselor of the year. So YLC really did help him. Plus he is a youth minister in training at church.

In terms of his academic aspirations, Maxwell mentioned the time when MJ failed his college math class and had to re-take it. Maxwell explained:

He used that as a learning lesson. I don't know what the outcome was after going back through that but he would come to me and talk to me like how can you help me or what do I need to do to be more successful in this. He also had conversations with students who were in that class, just giving them strategies and pointers.

In addition, MJ's mother stated that MJ applied what he has learned in the program to life. She explained, "Before, I would say that MJ looked at life like it was flat. Now, it's like here is another angle. I can use these resources that I have to do it. He does that, not just with kids and sport, but he does that with life."

To conclude, MJ appeared to have progressed from a strong leader with little guidance and lots of peer pressure, to a competent leader - the student government president of the school. Although MJ maintained his same friendship group, he no longer seemed to be negatively influenced by their actions in comparison to freshmen and sophomore year. By being a leader in the YLC, MJ learned that he had more to offer to the children in the program, to his peers at school, and to his church community. MJ was persistent and did not accept failure in academia nor in the program.

Case 4 – Maggie

But I love that spirit about her; it’s catching. It adds a little spark to the club. For that reason, I just think she’s an important element to the club. – Tim

Table 4.4. Maggie’s Relationship with each School Personnel

Teacher	Youth Leader – Teacher Contact
Maxwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math teacher: 3 years, 1 semester each year
Emerson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English teacher: 3 years, 1 semester each year • Freshmen seminar teacher: 1 semester
Sal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior Career Pathways III teacher: 1 semester • The YLC staff leader: 3 years
Tim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The YLC staff coordinator: 3 years

Maggie’s Background

Maggie was seventeen-years-old at the time of the interview and was projected to graduate high school in the spring of 2015. She has been a youth leader in the YLC for the past three years and plans to return to the program as a senior. At home, Maggie lived with her mom, dad and younger brother. She described her family as a “fire-cracker that

goes off sporadically, because every family has there up and downs.” Maggie shared that her mother has been a real influence in her life; “She’s been my rock.” When describing herself, Maggie stated, “It just seems that I want to succeed but when reality hits, there are still barriers out there. I’m a realist in a way, but I love to dream and fantasize and stuff.”

In elementary school, it was discovered that Maggie had a learning disability; she struggled with reading and spelling. Initially, Maggie was placed in a special education classroom. However, as a third grader, Maggie was placed in a “normal” classroom with extra assistance. Maggie explained, “In elementary, I could have been secluded as an awkward but because of the way I was raised, I was able to experience different things and have friends and actually enjoy elementary and middle school.” Maggie acquired the nickname “little mama,” which has stuck with her throughout high school. She explained her nickname in the following quote:

My nickname through elementary school was little mama, because I took care of my brother and I grew up really like independent of myself and bossy, as people would call me. Every time I would get in a group that I did not know, I would be like, “so guys, what are we doing?” That’s what developed my character of a pleaser and a controller. I’m the one that wants everyone to work together, so I’m not going to let us sit there and waste time.

In high school, Maggie decided to attend to the Middle College at UNCG for a few reasons. She liked the smaller class sizes, the student-to-teacher ratio and her mother was persuasive. Maggie and her mother applied to three other middle colleges located in the area and was accepted into all of them. Maggie’s mother said that she encouraged her

to attend the Middle College at UNCG because Maggie was interested in the field of nursing.

As a freshmen and sophomore student, Maggie continued to be pulled for educational assistance. Emerson described Maggie as extremely behind as a freshman. She explained, “It threw me off because she was so far behind and I just didn’t know how to help her. However, by the time I left last year, she was insanely successful at our school. She was making straight A’s in really hard classes.” Likewise, Sal praised Maggie for her academic determination; “She got good grades. I didn’t realize her struggles academically until probably her sophomore year when I had to read some papers of hers. They were poorly written. But I think she is very dedicated. She works hard for the grade she gets.” Eventually, as a junior, Maggie no longer needed the extra assistance outside of the classroom.

Interestingly, Maggie’s nickname as a mother figure stayed with her through high school. Sal described Maggie as “the mother hen of the middle college. In terms of taking care of people, you know and just checking in on people, making sure they are okay. If somebody comes in, she just talks to people. She’s more of an emotional support for people.” In the classroom, Emerson shared, “She’s always the mama of the classroom. If Mrs. Emerson wasn’t catching them doing something bad, Maggie usually caught them doing something bad and would reprimand them or tell them to be quiet or get to work or whatever. She’s always like a mini teacher’s assistant.” In contrast, Maggie seemed to struggle with social acceptance among some of her classmates. She claimed that she was viewed as the “odd ball.” In her words, Maggie stated:

Here at the middle college, it is secluded in different groups. Being the odd ball that I am, I still sit with people who aren't usually who you would expect me to sit with. It throws off balance in a way because it is like a white group and a white group, a black group and a black group and then me, the odd ball.

Although Maggie seemed to get along with everyone, she battled with her peers during daily classes. Each year, Maggie was given the same schedule with the same group of students in every class. Sometimes, Maggie's classmates would call her "bossy" or "too serious." Maggie explained, "I grew to hate my class. I got so frustrated about having to be with them, having to act fake, having to act like I cared about these people and it was just, it got to me." In contrast, Maxwell described Maggie as, "She is actually very nice to everybody that I can think of and she works well in just about any setting that you put her in." Overall, Maggie seemed to be making it through the high school scene. She appeared to have a positive attitude about life and was working hard to accomplish her goals.

As Maggie approaches her senior year, she has started to complete college applications with her mother. Her goal was to obtain her Certified Nursing Assistant Licenses in order to save funds to attend college. She also wanted to be a summer camp counselor at a local youth organization. The YLC was one of many organizations that Maggie volunteers with on a weekly basis; she was actively involved in the community.

Maggie's Voice – PE to the YLC: Program Qualities that Foster Resiliency Principles

Building Supportive Relationships. Maggie described her physical education class as "fun" and "better than any other high school's because we didn't have to do the

whole fitness routines.” She also mentioned that her class was able to experience all types of sports. Her favorite part about the course was the inter-class tournament. Maggie explained, “I like how since there was so many different classes, I think there was three, that we had that competition and we were able to play against the other classes. Win or lose, everybody had fun.” Although the students were competitive, the activities were inclusive and enjoyable.

In addition, Maggie shared that it was helpful to have other teachers, the undergraduate students, in the class. By having a low teacher-to-student ratio, the students gained more experience with individual skills and were able to interact with different adult leaders. In the following quote, Maggie explained why she liked having active teachers instead of teachers that coached from the sideline:

The undergraduates that would lead and having them actually participate with us instead of being the coach and blowing the whistle. You’d split us off into different teams and like work on different skills like dribbling and passing. It was very diverse because you allowed us to switch groups and get experience and it wasn’t like that was the whole time.

Maggie also mentioned that the age of the teachers allowed her to feel more comfortable during the physical education class. She explained:

I would say having the younger, the age since y’all were closer to our age, it really did help us be comfortable with the activities and stuff. I know it was for me, because all of my PE teachers were older than me, like way and had their own judgments and stuff.

The teachers were able to relate to the students, which may have provided students with confidence to participate in the activities and speak up during reflections without the thought of embarrassment. Maggie added that, "...When you are in college, you are still more open with us and allowing us to express our voice like with the activities." By providing the students with choices and the option for input in the class, the students could be more engaged, which may have positively affected the students who were not as athletic or were quiet. In Maggie's words, "There was no boundaries and there was no, because you are big, you can't do this. I didn't feel discomfort in the classroom like I did in middle school." The teachers developed activities to create a safe and welcoming environment.

When describing the YLC, Maggie explained, "It's a program that helps refugees that some have English as a second language and how to understand the basic values of how to survive in the real world." The youth leaders worked together to create a lesson plan that was appropriate for all of the children in the program. Maggie shared that the youth leaders spent a lot of time with the children that struggled with behavioral issues. Instead of punishing the children, Maggie explained that the youth leaders "...sit them out and talk to them." This example showed that the staff leaders allowed the youth leaders' an opportunity to resolve any conflict that occurs during the session activities. Maggie's example also illustrated the relationship between the youth leaders and the children.

Maggie provided examples of how the teachers structured a program that was inclusive for diverse learners. This was mirrored in Maggie's description of the YLC and

how the youth leaders were responsible for developing a welcoming environment for all of children to learn and play. The adults in the program were supportive while engaging in the activities and allowing Maggie to feel like an active, vocal member of the program.

Maintaining High Expectations. Maggie explained that the purpose of the physical education course was a requirement for all high school students to take. However, she also explained that her class was different than a traditional high school physical education class because the teachers were encouraging and nonjudgmental. For example, Maggie shared, "...I could not throw the ball, but I wasn't really shunned for it. It was really encouraging that people were trying to make me understand and the class helped with it even if I couldn't play it." The teachers structured the activities so that students were at least somewhat successful with all of the activities. Students were not graded on their physical performance; instead, they were rewarded for trying and not giving up. In addition, Maggie stated that through her experience in the physical education course, she discovered sports that she could play. In the following quote, Maggie explained how being exposed to a variety of sports has increased her confidence to play sports with friends:

It [the physical education course] showed me more. I don't know how to put it. Middle school and elementary school, I danced. That's all I would do. I really wouldn't try other sports because I felt like I couldn't do it. But through the PE, I did get to experience other things like I'm good at kickball. I love badminton. I can work on my volleyball. I didn't know I have a really good arm for throwing a football...Because of that, when I do hang out with friends that want to go outside and play football... So they gave me the football. I can't run. I can pass and I can throw, but I can't run. So the teammates that I'm with, I let them know that.

Because the teachers created a supportive learning environment for Maggie where everyone participated, she was able to explore a variety of activities that she found some success in.

When discussing the YLC, Maggie explained that it was designed to help the youth leaders develop through having a positive influence on the children. Maggie stated that purpose of the YLC was "...to develop both the student and the teachers, well us leaders further of communicating between each other." At the end of each session, when the children left, the youth leaders gather to reflect on their experience with the staff leaders. The staff leaders and youth leaders provided feedback and discussed improvements for the next session. The youth leaders also wrote individual reflections about their experience. Furthermore, Maggie added, "I like that y'all do give us the power to decide on what we want to do. I like that y'all do give criticism, even if we don't like the criticism." Throughout the program, the staff leaders empower the youth leaders to create their own activities; however, the staff leaders also critique the youth leaders as a way to guide them and teach them the correct way to resolve conflict, communicate with one another, and be a positive role model.

Following the reflection, Maggie explained that everyone went to dinner. She shared, "Dinner is just relaxing after stressing over making sure you are not saying the wrong thing or worrying about did you do this right or how could you have done it better." The youth leaders were rewarded with food and social time after each session. As Maggie stated, it was a time to informally socialize with group members and the adults in the program.

From Maggie's explanations, it seemed that the program offered her some sense of self-esteem and willingness to at least try different sports. The staff leaders worked with the youth leaders so that the youth leaders were able to fulfill a positive role model. In addition, the youth leaders were rewarded for their behavior and hard work during the session with a free dinner.

Opportunities for Personal Growth & Future. Similar to Lucy and Veronica, the third quality of the resiliency framework was lacking throughout Maggie's interview. She appeared to have prospered from have multiple teachers who worked with her on skills. Maggie was able to try new sports and discovered that she was able to perform certain activities that were previously foreign to her.

In the YLC, Maggie explained that she enjoyed the experience of working with children from various countries. Maggie stated that she has continued to be a leader in the YLC because of the learning experience and interaction with others. She shared, "I do it because it allows me to work with kids that I find interesting. I love learning how to talk to kids from other countries." Maggie described the program design as intriguing; she was challenged to learn how to communicate with children that did not speak English and how to set up entertaining activities for children with different cultural backgrounds.

Overall, Maggie explained various protective factors of the resiliency framework that the program offered to her. Maggie discussed the importance of having caring adults that encouraged and worked with her to complete a task. In addition, Maggie was provided with a constructive learning experience that allowed her to creatively explore various ways to teach her peers and the children in the program. Finally, Maggie was

exposed to individuals from different cultures and backgrounds, an opportunity that was impossible to be taught in the classroom.

Impact on Resiliency While Participating in the YLC

Maggie came to the YLC as a caring leader, a mother figure. Sal and Tim agreed that Maggie had a desire to help others and was dependable from the start. Sal shared, “She’s somebody that I think learned early on, even showed an ability to want to help others.” Tim explained, “I just thought she would be a good leader, to be honest with you. I watched the way she participated in the PE class. I always felt that Maggie was one of those that would really step up. I could really count on her to figure things out.” While interviewing Maggie, her passion towards the program was evident through her words and attitude. When asked why she has continued year after year, Maggie exclaimed, “Because I enjoy working with the kids and I love, love, love the experience I get. I don’t do it for service learning, because I had enough hours before I even joined the program. I do it because it allows me to work with kids that I find interesting.” The next three subsections suggest how participating in the YLC impacted Maggie’s on her resiliency.

On Relationships with Others. Prior to joining the YLC, Maggie worked well with others. By participating in the YLC, Maggie explained that she has learned how to better communicate and compromise with all individuals. During the program, Maggie learned to use appropriate vocabulary so that the children could understand her. She stated, “Probably watch what I say. It’s [the YLC] probably really improved that because freshman year, I did have some experience with kids but it was only reading to them and dealing with them on the bus.” In the YLC, Maggie had to give instructions, manage her

station and provide a meaningful connection between her activity and life skills.

Maggie's mother explained, "I think she understands the youth better and knows when one of them has a problem or if they need help or something. Maggie can listen and she can give good advice." In the following quote, Sal explained Maggie's leadership qualities in the program and her ability to relate to the children:

She's one of the first ones to engage the kids when they walk in. She's got certain kids that just want a hug and hang on her because she's just so caring and nurturing. She puts together quality activities. It's not just let's play tag. If she's playing tag, there's a certain type of tag they are going to play and her equipment is laid out. She's very organized and I think she does a decent job in terms of the reflection and getting kids to think about why did we play tag this way. We played tag this way because this way emphasized effort or we played tag in pairs because we really wanted to teach you to work together.

When working with her group members, Maggie explained, "You really have to compromise with your partner if you have one. You really have to make sure you are not over stepping your boundary." However, Maggie also shared a time when her partner considered her to be too controlling because she would "take over" the sessions. This showed how Maggie attempted to lead by example; she liked to be organized and prepared, which may have come across as too controlling. In contrast, Sal explained, "I've sent some new people to work with her because she's strong and organized and I know she will provide a good example for those kids." Maggie appeared to be a dominant leader and may hesitate to share the lead role when it comes to providing a meaningful experience for the children in the program.

Overall, Maggie's social competencies with the children seem to have improved over the past three years. Maggie appeared to work well with her group members as long as they put forth the same amount of energy and effort as she. Outside of the program, it seemed that participating in the YLC has reinforced her ability to relate to others. Maggie shared that she was able to relate more with the teachers from working with the children. Interestingly, Maggie explained, "...I try to be one of the kids and actually imply what I would want them to do." It seemed that Maggie was more consciously aware of her teachers and how students' behavior affected the learning environment during school. Again, the experience in the YLC only enhanced Maggie's ability to relate to others outside of the program, she was naturally charismatic for others.

On Personal Expectation. According to the three factors of resiliency, participating in the YLC appeared to have primarily impacted Maggie's personal expectations; specifically, her confidence as a leader and ability to think critically. Maggie shared, "It's shows me that I am a leader even if it's in the sense of a child's eye." In addition, Emerson, Sal and Tim believed that being a part of the YLC served as a confidence booster for Maggie. Tim shared, "I just think it's further bolstered her confidence and what she can do." Emerson suggested:

I think having the validation that she can lead, especially starting out with leading elementary school kids; I remember she loved that experience. I remember her talking about it. That gave her the confidence that she needed to be able to carry it over to her peers and just the critical thinking involved, I don't think she didn't come the first day of ninth grade with critical thinking skills.

During each session, Maggie and the other youth leaders were faced with daily challenges of dealing with elementary-aged children. Youth leaders had to learn how to think quickly to resolve any conflict and to modify activities that did not work.

Furthermore, Maggie explained how participating in the YLC helped to reiterate that she can interact with children without the fear of being bullied. Maggie shared:

I'm more confident around children than I was because I was picked on all through elementary and middle school so I wasn't really comfortable around peers my age. I always wanted to talk to people older than me or I felt like since I was more mature, I wanted to be around older people. It showed me that I could still deal with little kids and not have to worry about who I am and what I look like.

In the following quote, Sal also provided an example of how participating in the YLC has helped to improve Maggie's confidence:

She's one of the stronger YLC candidates because she has a mothering nature to her but she's organized. She puts together good sessions. She's always very creative. I think we got to see her have confidence...She a kid that maybe in another program would get lost in the shuffle, maybe even picked on, and Maggie never gets picked on. For me, I've seen Maggie grow into more of a vocal leader. She's definitely more outgoing.

In addition, Maxwell shared, "I think, as a freshmen, she came in confident but not as confident as she is now...I've seen a tremendous amount of growth in her as far as sticking to something, persevering through it and actually meeting those obstacles." Maggie was able to focus on her strengths and excel as a leader in and outside of the program. By being a leader in the YLC, Maggie was inspired to advocate against

bullying. Maggie explained she wanted to be a positive influence for the next generation.

High school can be a difficult and cruel time for some teenagers; Maggie was able to persevere and become a voice against her obstacle. In a sense, Maggie's mother stated that participating in the YLC, "it has built her up...it's like it's enriched her health."

On the Pursuit of Opportunities for Personal Growth. Maggie admitted that participating in the YLC helped to make a career decision. Originally, her mother wanted Maggie to study physical therapy; Maggie was interested in nursing. She explained, "I like working with the kids in an activity environment, but I also like making sure they are okay. So I figured out I like working with the younger ages and now I want to become a neonatal nurse." Maggie continued by stating, "Even though you have to take the annoying side with the good side. That prepared me for dealing with kids like, 'I don't want a shot; get that away from me' when I become a pediatrician or neonatal." Maggie's mother also credited the YLC for giving Maggie "the strength and the capacity to be, to give her a push start to get to where she is now."

In terms of Maggie's academic aspirations, she came to the program with determination to excel as a student. Maxwell suggested that, "I think that's definitely helped her to kind of keep stayed focus, where she could have easily you know been distracted or something like that." As a youth leader, Maggie has continued to be a role model for her peers. Emerson also shared, "She was a pretty cool example of someone who came to us so far behind academically to someone who is no longer behind academically. She may still struggle but I think she can go to college and be successful."

Participating in the YLC may not be the direct correlation for Maggie’s academic pathway, however it has been a positive factor and a reminder to continue to push forward.

In summary, Maggie appeared to be an individual that has a contagious personality. Her teachers and mother spoke highly of Maggie. She worked hard to overcome obstacles that may have interfered with her future. In the physical education course, Maggie was given the attention and opportunities necessary to build her confidence. By participating in the YLC, Maggie’s confidence as a leader and as a student appeared to have improved from freshmen year. Outside of the program, Maggie’s teachers considered her a “model student”.

Case 5 – Sora

She’s not somebody that takes charge like this is what we are going to do...But she’s always real consistent with putting together an activity and teaching the kids. – Sal

Table 4.5. Sora’s Relationship with each School Personnel

Teacher	Youth Leader – Teacher Contact
Maxwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math teacher: 3 years, 1 semester each year
Emerson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English teacher: 3 years, 1 semester each year • Freshmen seminar teacher: 1 semester • Glee Club: 3 years
Sal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior Career Pathways III teacher: 1 semester • The YLC staff leader: 3 years
Tim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The YLC staff coordinator: 3 full year

Sora's Background

At the time of the interview, Sora was seventeen-years-old and was projected to graduate high school in the spring of 2015. She had been involved with the YLC for three years and planned to return to the program when it began again. At home, Sora shared that she had five younger brothers and sisters that lived with their biological mother. Sora explained, "I still see them from time to time and try to make sure that they're doing well in their lives." Her twin sister, Heather, is the only one that lives with Sora. Recently, Sora has been coping with the passing of her caregivers. Sora shared, "of course my grandparents are the ones who raised me and everything. My biological mother, she wasn't able to take us in and my grandparents were the ones who took us in and raised me and they're the reason who I am what I am today." At the time of the interview, Sora was living with her aunt and twin sister, Heather. Sora admitted that she was dependent on her twin. Sora shared, "She's like, 'you need to get this done now' and things like that. She tries to help me become a better person." It seemed that Sora and Heather have helped each other through the obstacles that they have faced.

In elementary and middle school, Sora described herself as emotional and depressed, yet was artistic and made good grades. In middle school, Sora explained she transferred from a school with a focus on science and technology to a school that was filled with disrespectful students who did not appreciate education. As a new student, Sora was hesitant to communicate with other students. She was confronted with name-calling and rude behaviors from other students. However, Sora also described herself as

“Maybe determined too, because I never gave up.” Sora used her artistic talents as a way to overcome her adversities.

Sora chose to attend the Middle College at UNCG because she did not want to go to the traditional schools in her district. She explained, “...I kind of got bullied in middle school and I knew that some of those people were going to those schools.” Sora credited the principal for “saving her life.” The current principal at the Middle College at UNCG was also Sora’s middle school assistant principal. Sora explained that the teachers at the Middle College at UNCG were very caring; She shared, “when my parents died, I was going through a lot of things and one of the teachers, Ms. Emerson, she really helps me out.” Ms. Emerson provided Sora with support through a very difficult time in her life, a protective factor to help Sora overcome the challenges that she faced

As Sora approaches her senior year, she dreamed of being “in history books.” Originally, Sora wanted to be a cosmetic surgeon or an archeologist; however, she has plans of “...finding lost cities and making discoveries.” Overall, Sora wanted to be successful. She defined success two ways: “Success for me is like being comfortable and having a comfortable lifestyle and being able to help others. I want to be so wealthy that I’m able to help others and give back and stuff like that.” After graduation, Sora planned to find a summer internship that related to graphic design.

Sora’s Voice – PE to the YLC: Program Qualities that Foster Resiliency Principles

Building Supportive Relationships. When asked about the physical education course, Sora exclaimed that she loved her class. Sora shared, “...I really liked the people that were helping us do it too...they were really nice and they always tried to help you

get your work done.” Sora was able to develop a relationship with the physical education teachers both in and outside of the gym. She stated that, “I think that the program has really helped us grow closer to you guys [the physical education teachers/YLC staff] because if we need help with something or with our papers there’s always one of you guys that can help us and I really like the relationships that we have with you guys now.” The teachers helped Sora stay on track by reminding her to complete her work. In addition, the physical education teachers provided Sora with the support and guidance when necessary.

During YLC, Sora explained, “We’re basically P.E. teachers for refugee children and we also teach them morals and values while doing it [teaching physical activities].” Sora explained that her role as a leader was to play with the children and give them lessons at the end. In addition, Sora stated that as a leader, her responsibility was “to lead the kids in the right direction.” In the following quote, Sora gives an example of how she provided care and support to the children in the program:

If you see them upset or something and they tell you that someone is upsetting them. You try to help them solve their problems in a good way. If they’re having troubles with somebody there I usually just get the other kid they’re upset with. I get them together and make them pick out things they both like to do or just get them to have a conversation so that they’re not upset with each other anymore and they can move on with the game and have fun.

The staff leaders of the YLC empowered the youth leaders to work with the children in the program, even if that meant deciding how to handle a child who was upset. This gave

the youth leaders an opportunity to develop relationships with the children, as well as learn to resolve conflict in a positive way.

Similar to the other youth leaders, Sora described the program as a fun place to be. When describing the environment during the YLC, Sora shared, “The gym would have about 6 circles of 2 to 3 leaders and the rest is about 8 children in a circle just playing and having fun. Like doing activities and things like that.” Overall, it seemed that the adults in the program created a positive learning environment in and outside of school. During the YLC, Sora was able to develop relationships with the children and guide them through fun activities.

Maintaining High Expectations. When asked about the purpose of the physical education course, Sora stated, “I think, since it’s a medical school that it was supposed to help us learn things like that and learn about the muscles and other things of that nature.” In addition, Sora also explained that her class was different than her middle school physical education course because, “...we had to study handball and I had never heard of handball before but we had to study that and pick out things that handball would help you with. We never had anything like that at my middle school. I liked it.” During this assignment, the teachers assisted the students when necessary; however, the students were responsible for researching, planning and implementing the daily lessons. In Sora’s case, her group had to learn the game of handball before teaching it to the class.

As a youth leader the YLC, Sora was also responsible for planning and implementing a physical activity lesson. Instead of teaching her peers, Sora and her group

members prepared lessons for the children in the program. In the following quote, Sora explained the expectations of each session. She shared:

We're just planning out what were going to do with them and making sure we know the values we're going to teach them [the children] and how to say them [the values] so you won't get up there and not know what you're talking about. When time runs on you have to make sure that what you're doing goes into that time so time doesn't run over.

Youth leaders were expected to develop quality sessions in a specified time frame. In the next quote, Sora provided an example of how her group incorporated sportsmanship while playing a tag game:

We talked about sportsmanship a lot because a lot of them they get upset if the game doesn't go their way and then we talk about teamwork. A game that we play is tag and its basically freeze tag but once you get tagged you have to latch onto the person so then we use that to explain team work to them because we try to get everyone in the game.

Sora chose sportsmanship because her group realized that the children needed to learn to work together. Her group created a game that encouraged the children to work together to accomplish a task.

The program, both the physical education course and the YLC, provided Sora with reasonable expectations that challenged her to step out of her comfort zone while in front of her peers and the children.

Opportunities for Personal Growth & Future. Throughout Sora's interview, there was no evidence that directly related to the third quality of the resiliency model, personal growth and future. Sora continuously reiterated that she enjoyed being active

and loved the YLC. It appeared that the physical education course and the YLC provided Sora with a positive, supportive learning environment: a place where she chose to be and a place where she could excel as a leader.

Overall, Sora gave examples of two of the three qualities of the resiliency model. The program provided caring, supportive adults that encouraged Sora during school and throughout the after school program. Interestingly, Sora initially described the purpose of the physical education course in terms of learning medical-related concepts, such as muscles. Sora explained that her class participated in sports such as basketball, handball, hockey and soccer, but there was also book stuff, as well. During the YLC, Sora and her group was held accountable for planning and implementing quality sessions where children were actively engaged the entire time.

Impact on Resiliency While Participating in the YLC

Unlike the other youth leaders that were interviewed, Sora asked to join the YLC. Initially Sora's sister, Heather, was chosen to be a youth leader and Sora was not. Sora explained, "Like they were talking about how it would give them leadership skills and I was like it sounds really fun and I really like children too. So I also wanted to do it because of that." Tim and Sal, the YLC staff leaders, agreed that Sora was more of the quiet leaders, but she was important to the program. Sal explained, "...I don't want to say that the program serves her more than she serves us, but I think it's a stable thing that she is a part of." Similarly, Tim shared, "But she's there and she's good with the kids. She'll interact with them and the fact that she likes coming, I think is important for her." Sora has committed to being a leader in the YLC. Although she may not be as strong of a

leader as the others, Sora has a purpose in the YLC, which may have played a role in providing her with additional protective factors.

On Relationships with Others. Sora explained that being a part of the YLC has helped her gain confidence when talking to others. In addition, she shared that the YLC helped give her the confidence to interact with other people outside of her friends. Sora stated:

It's helped me with my social skills because YLC helps focus the kids. When the kids first come, you're not supposed to sit there and talk with your friends. You're supposed to go in and play with the child. Ask them how their day was and stuff like that. That's helped me in school because I'm usually a dependent person and because I get nervous around others, I just stay around the people I'm comfortable with. This program has helped me to go up to new people and talk to them and just be able to network.

Sora's aunt also shared that Sora was not as shy when speaking to people. She explained, "...I think they [Sora and Heather] both were very shy, very introverted, and now both of them don't have any problems speaking to people and carrying conversations with strangers and things like that. I love that. That's one of the perks for them from going to UNCG and being in that program." In contrast, Emerson, Sora's English teacher, shared, "Sora is a little more quieter, more of an introvert than all of the other students we've talked about. She's always thinking. She's always dealing with things." Maxwell, Sora's math teacher, also commented "She's very quiet." According to the academic teachers, it seemed that Sora was still shy or introverted during school.

During the program, Tim admitted that Sora appeared to attend the YLC because of social reasons. Furthermore, Sal complimented Sora's ability to work with her peers and the kids. She explained:

I think she's good in terms of just working with others. She'll work with somebody and they will come up with an idea. She's not somebody that takes charge like this is what we are going to do like you do this and I'm going to do this. But she's always real consistent with putting together an activity and teaching the kids.

Although Sora may not be a vocal, take charge leader in and outside of the program, it appeared that she improved her social skills with the kids and her peers during the group sessions. In her interview, Sora explained that she has continued to be a part of the YLC because it is fun interacting with the kids and other youth leaders. The YLC seemed to be something that Sora enjoys and at least viewed herself as a confident leader.

On Personal Expectation. In terms of the three factors of resiliency, participating in the YLC appeared to have impacted Sora's personal expectations, specifically her self-esteem. Emerson suggested that, "I feel like sometimes she struggles with some self-esteem issues."

Sora confirmed that she has battled with low self-esteem in the following quote:

It raised my self-esteem because I kind of have low self-esteem. But working with the kids, they see you like you're so much higher and you're like their hero and they just look up to you. So it makes you feel better. Like a lot of the girls will call me their sister or they'll just tell me things like that basically and they'll ask me how I do my hair and I guess that's about it.

By participating in the YLC and serving as a role model to the children, Sora seemed to be working on her self-esteem. Sora shared a success story about a young girl that she worked with over the past years. Sora stated:

...The first time I saw her, she was quiet until she made some friends and when she made some friends, I had a bit of trouble out of her because she was always talking. But now, when I see her, if I'm talking or something and her friends are being loud and rowdy, she'll talk to them and tell them to be quiet and to respect me.

Sora's story of the young girl has some resemblance to Sora's situation. Interestingly, Sora was able to help the child make friends. By helping the children, Sora may also have gained some self-esteem.

It appeared that Sora developed a greater sense of self-esteem while in the program. Sal explained, "...For me, I can't remember much from freshmen year. Where as now, I can see her taking charge a little bit more and be a little more engaged." Tim also explained, "I don't know if she will ever be a student council president or whatever but when she's out here, she's responsible for kids and that's probably the one leadership responsibility that she really takes on." Similarly, Sora shared that she has continued with the program because enjoys working with kids. She considered herself to be a better leader because of the YLC. Sora stated, "With all the things I have to do like how you have to lead the children and how you have to talk with big groups, I think it has helped me with that."

Outside of the program, Sora's self-esteem continues to be a work-in-progress. Sora's aunt explained that Sora is no longer afraid to try new things; however, compared

to her sister, Sora is not as independent. Sora's aunt shared, "I'm not going to say she's there yet. She still wants to do everything with Heather." Although Sora seemed to continue to work on her personal expectations in and outside of the program, the YLC has provided her with a positive position where she was able to have an influence on other people's lives, and that is important to Sora.

On the Pursuit of Opportunities for Personal Growth. For the third quality of the resiliency framework, the impact of participating in the YLC on her ability to pursue opportunities in or out of school, Sora was more general with her statement. She explained that participating in the YLC made her want to help more with children in need. She shared:

I guess it's made me want to help more because I love those kids a lot. Online, you see stuff about kids that need help. It just makes me want to help more people in the world. When I see a kid that's struggling or if I see a kid that's sad it makes me want to go do something to help them.

Tim explained that Sora was going to grow up and would not always have her sister and aunt to depend on. In the following quote, Tim suggested that the YLC provided a sense of possible futures for Sora:

I think just dealing with the challenges of her life. I'm not saying it's unstable or anything but I think she's trying to figure out what she's going to be doing. So maybe in some way it's like that old possible futures. Maybe it gives kids some footing to see where they are going to move beyond where they are living and move forward. I hope that's the case with her that she feels confident that she can try things and you know she's not going to be with her aunt the rest of her life or her sister for that matter...I think there's going to be some level of independence that comes out of that. I don't know. She probably has a little bit more of that now as a senior.

Similarly, Emerson shared that she had multiple conversations with Sora over the years. In the following quote, Emerson credited the YLC with giving her a sense of purpose in the eyes of serving the children.

... She's questioned what is my purpose in life? What am I going to add to this world? So for her, that's something that she could put her finger on that she mattered to these kids and to these children and that they mattered to her. So it [the YLC] almost gave her some purpose for something that she questioned over time.

Although Tim and Emerson's statements were not directly related to Sora's educational or career goals, it seemed that participating in the YLC had impacted Sora's pursuit of opportunities for personal growth, simply by providing consistency in her life; a positive, structured place to go. In terms of her educational goals, Emerson explained, "She wants to be successful. She wants to get out of her house and go to college, but I think sometimes life issues got in the way for her. But ultimately, she wanted to succeed and she did a fairly good job at it."

In summary, Sora seemed to take pride in her leadership position in the YLC. She enjoyed working with the children and the children liked working with Sora. Compared to the other youth leaders that were interviewed in this study, Sora did not appear to be a strong vocal leader. However, this may show that the YLC impacted individuals in different ways. She has gained some sense of confidence and self-esteem, especially during the program sessions. Outside of the YLC, Sora dealt with many obstacles, including the recent passing of her caregivers. In the classroom, Sora continued to work

on her social competence and personal expectations. She may not be considered an aspiring student, yet she had not failed either.

Case 6 – Heather

In the classroom, she’s also a leader for the positive. She’s a very positive personality. She always she doesn’t question why we have to do this or anything like that. She always finds a way to get engaged in whatever is going on.
– Emerson

Table 4.6. Heather’s Relationship with each School Personnel

Teacher	Youth Leader – Teacher Contact
Maxwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math teacher: 3 years, 1 semester each year
Emerson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English teacher: 2 years, 1 semester each year • Freshmen seminar teacher: 1 semester • Glee Club: 3 years
Sal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freshmen physical education teacher: 1 full year • Junior Career Pathways III teacher: 1 semester • The YLC staff leader: 3 years
Tim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The YLC staff coordinator: 3 full year

Heather’s Background

Heather, Sora’s twin sister, was also seventeen-years-old at the time of the study. Heather was projected to graduate high school in the spring of 2015. She had been involved with the YLC for three years and planned to return to the program. Heather described her childhood as “magical.” She enjoyed watching cartoons and playing with Barbie dolls. However, the magic stopped once Heather began middle school. In the following quote, Heather described her transition to middle school, which sounds similar to Sora’s unpleasant experience:

I didn't like the school I went to, so the magicalness was broken. I was still a hard worker, but I was very silent and I didn't really do much. They had sports and I did the sports, but I didn't really give my whole heart into them because I really didn't enjoy the people that I was on the team with.

Heather did not relate well with her classmates and teammates. Therefore, Heather lacked social support throughout middle school. In addition, Heather's learning environment seemed was unwelcoming.

In high school, Heather explained that she came to the Middle College at UNCG because, "Well my traditional high school, my family went there and they all didn't really have the best experience there and they wanted better for us." Heather also shared that she and Sora mainly came to the Middle College because of the principal and their relationship with her. As a student, Heather described herself as "well-spoken" and "self-motivated." Heather spoke proudly of being the first class to graduate from the Middle College at UNCG. She explained:

Well on the first day, I tried to make sure that I talked to everybody even if they didn't talk to me. I tried to get to know them. I said I'm still going to be a great student so I made sure I had a relationship with all the teachers on the first day. I got all of their contacts and stuff.

Over the past three years, Heather built relationships with her teachers and her peers in all grade levels. Heather explained that she had always tried to help whenever possible. Heather's high school experience seemed to be more pleasant in comparison to her middle school years because of the support and opportunities that was given to her.

After graduating high school, Heather planned to attend college for a degree in the medical field. Heather explained that she wanted to “make a mark on the world.” In the following quote she described how she planned to accomplish her goal:

I definitely plan whatever career I go into, I’d like to be helping people like I want to do something in the medical field but something that even if I open my own practice, I want it to be more towards people who maybe couldn’t afford the care or maybe need the extra help rather than the people who just can afford it. I want to make sure everyone gets the help they need.

Heather was determined to make the world a better place. She explained, “My biggest goal is to stay on track with my academics. I want to make the best grades. Since I’m about to be a college student, make connections with the staff, as well. Ms. Smith [the principal] and people like that because they really did leave an impact on me.” Heather appeared to have coped with adversities by surrounding herself with caring adults and holding herself to high standards. At home, Heather shared, “With losing my parents, it can be a little silent around the house but it’s pretty good. Our aunt does a good job trying to make sure that we have everything that we need and gives us lots of attention.” Over the summer, Heather wanted to continue volunteering in the YLC and possibly at the local hospital before heading to college.

Heather’s Voice – PE to the YLC: Program Qualities that Foster Resiliency Principles

Building Supportive Relationships. Heather explained that the purpose of the physical education course was to expose the middle college students to a college level

class and, at the same time, provide a fun environment where the students could become acquainted with one another. Heather stated:

I feel like it gave us that college element so I know it gave us like a college introduction. But I also feel like it was for us to have kind of fun because I think to me school days shouldn't just be a whole bunch of classes. I feel like there should always be at least one class or at least something to look forward to and let us have that little bit of fun. Also, in addition, it let us know our students. Everyone could bond over like having fun and activities so it gave us a chance to know the students around us.

Since the physical education course was one of the first college courses that Heather took, she explained that she was nervous in the beginning. However, after meeting the physical education teachers, Heather grew to love the course. Heather felt like she had a voice instead of simply being a participant in the class. In the following quote, Heather explained why she enjoyed the course:

...They [the physical education teachers] were ready and spirited and I just loved that. They were really open to working with us. Every activity we played, we got to have input in which I really love they just didn't say, "Hey, we're playing soccer this day you know." Of course they had like something they wanted to stick by but they were always open to change if we didn't like the games.

Heather shared that she was able to connect with the physical education teachers, a relationship that she still has to this day. She explained that she could ask for advice or help from the physical education teachers, no matter the subject, and they would help. To Heather, having positive adult support was necessary during her high school experience.

During the YLC, Heather explained that the youth leaders work with kids to teach them values and life skills through different games and activities. Heather emphasized

that she and the other youth leaders "...would just like really trying to work with them and understand them." Heather enjoyed working with the children. She explained, "I love like I have many brothers and sister so I'm always used to working with kids, but it was just fun to see kids from other backgrounds and see how, like me talking to them or me giving them my advice and them actually listening." Heather was able to relate to the children in a way that they saw her as a mentor.

Throughout Heather's interview, she valued her role as a student in the physical education course and a leader in the YLC. She was able to develop a lasting relationship with the physical education teachers, which transferred to her role as a youth leader and her interactions with the children.

Maintaining High Expectations. In the following quote, Heather described a typical day in the physical education course:

Well, I remember it took some people forever to get dressed up get dressed out but then we just sit kind of in a circle and then Sal would all just give us a little talk about what we should get out of this activity and things to look out for and how to play the game. Then we would play it and come together at the end and answer some questions on this sheet about what we learned and everything and everyone would answer that.

As Heather mentioned, the course was designed to follow Hellison's (2011) TPSR daily format. The teacher would begin the session with an awareness talk, explaining the goals of the session and introduce the activity for the day. Following the activities, the class would gather in a circle to discussion the session. Students would complete a self-

reflection paper that allowed them to rate their behavior and provide input about the activities.

When explaining the purpose of the YLC, Heather stated, "...I didn't realize that maybe me teaching them [the children] about leadership could come through a game. I didn't know how easily it was to connect something we do every day to a valuable lesson." The youth leaders were responsible for developing and implementing a values-based physical activity session that also followed the TPSR daily format. In the following quote, Heather described a typical day in the YLC, from the time the youth leaders got out of school, to the children arriving, until the children left and the youth leaders went to dinner.

They [outside guests] will see some playing for a good thirty minutes, maybe us [the youth leaders] having a little fun because we're there for a long time. But then they'll see us come together in groups and talk about who's going to do what, what we're going to do, pulling out the game the actual equipment we're using, getting it set up for the kids.

At the end of the session, Heather explained, "They'll see us picking up all that stuff and cleaning up a little bit and getting our sheets and just planning on what we're going to do next week. And they'll probably see people getting stuff ready for their lunch cards." Concluding each session, the youth leaders were responsible for cleaning up their stations and reflecting on the session. The staff leaders reflected with the youth leaders to build leadership skills and to assist with learning through the experiences.

Overall, Heather entered the physical education course a shy freshmen that was nervous to be enrolled a college course at a new school. The physical education teachers

created a learning environment that encouraged students to work together, as well as built on their individual strengths. During the YLC, youth leaders were empowered to design physical activity station that followed a structured daily format.

Opportunities for Personal Growth & Future. Similar to the previous cases, Heather's interview did not provide as much evidence for the third quality of the resiliency model, personal growth and future. However, Heather explained that the physical education course introduced her to "that college element." By providing students with college credit for the physical education course, the students were exposed to the expectations of a college level course. Because the teachers specifically structured the course to challenge the students, yet ensure that they were successful at the same time, Heather was able to gain a positive experience while taking a college level course.

In the YLC, Heather explained, "...Once I just started that one time, I was addicted. I just loved it." Heather continued by stating that she wanted learn how to be a better leader. In the following quote, Heather shared how she progressed from freshmen year.

...When I was working with the kids, at first I was nervous. I was like oh my goodness; I don't feel like I did as good... My freshman year, when the kids would come, would maybe never talk, like I couldn't. I worked with someone who was very strong already; so maybe I let them kind of talk.

During the first year, Heather was partnered with Maggie, a stronger vocal leader. In the next quote, Heather explained how she learned from Maggie in order to become a better leader:

Maggie is very good working with kids. She was very strong and she was just like do this do this and I felt like I didn't give as much as I could've. Definitely as my sophomore and junior year came, I made sure I spoke at least every time and just made sure I planned at least one activity or I got to lead it one day. I just love that I was able to finally learn you know how to be a leader.

The structure of the program allowed Heather to gradually learn how to be a leader, at least during the YLC. Although Heather did not directly relate to the physical education course nor the YLC to helping her educational and career goals, it appeared that the design of the program encouraged Heather to improve her individual leadership skills, including her social competence and self-esteem.

In summary, Heather shared several protective factors of the resiliency framework that the program offered to her. Heather praised the physical education teachers for being supportive and also allowing her to have a voice in the program. In addition, Heather was purposefully partnered with a stronger, vocal leader during the YLC in order to learn from one another. The physical education course and the YLC were structured using the TPSR daily format, yet students and youth leaders were empowered to develop activities to teach the values and life skills. Finally, the physical education course was created with college credit. This provided Heather and the other students a snapshot of the expectations related to a college level course, yet students had guidance to ensure a positive learning experience.

Impact on Resiliency While Participating in the YLC

Heather was chosen to be a youth leader in the YLC because she was a good student during the physical education course. Sal explained, "...In my PE class, I thought

that Heather was just a good kid. You know, worked hard in PE, dressed out, participated, just felt like she would be a good candidate for the program. I think she's somebody that I actually did push forward with." In addition, Tim and Sal used words such as "dedicated" and "consistent" to describe Heather's participation in the YLC. Tim stated, "I think you can count on her being there. I think she'll participate. I think she's always kind of wanting to help in some way." Similarly, Sal explained, "Her and her sister, usually the only time they miss is because of something outside of their control."

On Relationships with Others. Prior to joining the YLC, Heather had a passion for wanting to help. She followed directions and asked for help, yet she lacked the confidence to step up as a leader and take initiative. While participating in the program, Heather explained that the YLC helped her obtain "stronger speaking skills." She shared:

It's made me a stronger speaker because I just use to be nervous. I'm still kind of nervous giving speeches and stuff but just working with the kids and stuff, it allows me to kind of practice my speaking skills. I have to be able to be clear with them and speak clearly to them, so I'm able to take that maybe if I have a speech in my class, I feel like that's really helped me. I'm able to speak clearly to them.

Emerson also commented on Heather's vocabulary skills. Emerson suggested, "I think it's been a really good opportunity to help her hone in on her leadership skills and pick up the vocabulary of being a good leader, that motivational you can do it and being able to explain things to other people, I've seen carry across into the classroom." Sal and Heather's aunt shared that they have noticed improvements in Heather's social confidence over the past three year based on her ability to share her thoughts. During the program, Sal explained, "Where as freshmen year, I think she was a little quieter...Now,

she's much more confident in taking over a group, talking to kids, coming up with the idea, being the first in command as oppose to just the follower in the group." Heather's aunt shared, "Well, I think that goes back to them being so introverted, I think now they're [Heather and Sora] more confident that they can express themselves with adults and not be shy."

In contrast, Tim and Maxwell (Heather's math teacher) agreed that Heather had room for improvement when discussing her social competence. In the YLC, Tim shared, "She's fairly confident but I think she could grow a little more confidence. I don't think she's quite there as far as stepping up." In the classroom, Maxwell described Heather as a model student. He explained that Heather's "...always trying to think of ways to have the student body involved. I think it was her idea for us to have this talent show and she spearheads that and tries to organize that and so we've had a talent show for the last two years." However, outside of the classroom, Maxwell described Heather as more reserved. He shared:

I always see her with the same group of students. I never really see her reach out, which I would think that she would because that's the type of person she is in the classroom, very social and pretty much talks to anybody. Outside of the classroom, I don't really see her branching out to mingle with different people.

Therefore, it seemed that Heather has improved her social skills while in a structured environment, primarily in the classroom and in the YLC. In unstructured areas, it appeared that Heather rarely branches out to her peers, other than her close friends.

On Personal Expectation. Participating in the YLC appeared to have impacted Heather's personal expectations, specifically her self-esteem in relation to having a sense of belonging. In the following quote, Heather explained how being a part of the YLC helped her to understand how much she mattered to others:

It's made me feel really important. I will say that because definitely when I'm talking to my sisters and brothers, sometimes they don't listen. I mean I'm like oh man I'm trying to talk to you. But the kids at YLC, some of them, I'm talking to them. They are so engaged and just like wow, she's just so great. Especially when they come up to you and give you hugs and stuff...so maybe I can really see that I really do make a difference in someone's life.

Similarly, Tim shared, "I think it's given her a certain sense of pride to be a part of YLC...Just being involved with a club like that and to a certain extent I think she's found some success on what she does with people. I think that's really helped her." During school, Emerson also shared that Heather was proud of her leadership role in the YLC. She stated, "You could hear her say I do YLC. She was so proud of it. You would hear her list off some of her accomplishments and YLC was always in there."

In addition to finding success and being proud of her leadership position, Heather's aunt suggested that participating in the YLC also helped Heather become more independent. In the following quote, Heather's aunt gave an example of how Heather had to leave her sister, Sora, which was considered a rarity:

Before, they [Heather and Sora] might have been hesitant, like all the different programs they've been offered. Heather participated in this medical program over the summer and she didn't get to have Sora there with her. With them being twins, they're always going to do everything together, but she didn't even hesitate. It makes her more independent. She has become her own person and not

always relying on her twin to do things and I definitely think the program has a lot to do with that.

Heather appeared to have gained a sense of belonging from participating in the YLC. From that, she seemed to have become more independent outside of the program. In addition, Heather has an opportunity to share her positive accomplishments in the YLC with others.

On the Pursuit of Opportunities for Personal Growth. When discussing the YLC and the impact on the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth, Heather admitted, “I think it’s just actually helped me find my sense of purpose. Like I said, I never realized how much of a difference I could make until YLC; and once I found that I can make a difference, I just said that’s something I want to do.” Heather explained that she learned from the teachers helping her. She stated, “...Just talking to the teachers and seeing how they’re so willing to help me. I’m just like, man I want to help someone else. Even the kids, just helping them; I want to continue doing this. I want to continue to help other people who need help.” Because the teachers showed Heather care and support, Heather has developed an aspiration to help others in need. In addition, Sal explained:

I think she has a better sense of purpose. I feel like maybe their [Heather and Sora] sophomore year going into their junior year, they weren’t sure why they were doing it... This spring, I spent a bunch of time with them and just talking about colleges and doing more. This summer, she took classes online. Stuff like that and really just stepped up to be more engaged in her academics.

Although not directly related to participating in the YLC, Sal’s statement shows the influence that she and the other teachers have on the youth leaders, especially Heather.

Furthermore, Heather shared that participating in the YLC helped improve her critical thinking skills. She stated, "...my critical thinking, I've learned how to just like be a quick thinker and just be able to you know apply things." Similarly, Maxwell also commented on Heather's ability to creatively take an uninteresting topic and "make it better". Maxwell shared:

If it's [the YLC] a way of doing things creatively; if she's been taught that or looking at things that might seem to be not too interesting and just changing it, or making it better, or having a different perspective of it instead of what it looks like on the surface. What can I do to make this a little bit better? I didn't teach her that. It came from somewhere.

Maxwell stated that Heather would come to him with suggestions of making the classroom "a better place".

In summary, it appeared that participating in the YLC has impacted Heather's resiliency on all three qualities of the resiliency framework. In the following quote, Tim provided his opinion of how participating in the YLC has impacted Heather's resiliency. He shared:

I think it's given her a certain sense of pride to be a part of YLC. I think it's helped her confidence. Really, I do. I really do. I think it's been an important part that she's been able to be responsible and helping others. Just being involved with a club like that and to a certain extent I think she's found some success on what she does with people. I think that's really helped her.

To conclude, Heather stated, "I've taken that I can make a difference in peoples lives and that relationships are big; so always make connections with everybody...I've learned that helping people is my calling." Heather has faced many adversities in her past, especially

with the recent loss of her caregivers. The YLC has been a consistent part of Heather's life, yet one of many different factors that attributed to her resiliency.

CHAPTER V

CROSS-CASE FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of six youth leaders' impact of participating in a values-based youth leadership program on resiliency. Specific questions that guided the research were: (a) What was the impact of participating in the YLC on youth leaders' relationships with others?; (b) What was the impact of participating in the YLC on youth leaders' personal expectations?; (c) What was the impact of participating in the YLC on youth leaders' the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth? Cross-case analysis findings and discussion regarding the three research questions are presented in this chapter. Cross-case findings are organized into four sections. Similar to chapter four, the first section provides overall findings related to the physical education course and the YLC program qualities that foster resiliency using data related to the protective factors of the resiliency framework, such as building caring supportive relationship, maintaining high expectations and providing opportunities for personal growth and future. The remaining three sections provide overall findings that emerged for each research questions.

Overall Program Qualities that Foster Resiliency Principles

The purpose of this first section is to provide evidence to support that, the physical education course and the YLC, was guided by the resiliency principles using overall findings from the case study data. Benard's (1993) research suggested, "that one

must examine the environmental characteristics that have fostered the development of resiliency” (p. 45). According to the case study findings, significant evidence showed caring, supportive adult relationships and the existence of high expectations; while there was limited evidence that directly related to the third quality of the resiliency model, personal growth and future. This section concludes with two emerging themes that became noticeably consistent among the six case studies: (a) the physical education course and the YLC offered a *fun and safe environment* and (b) the program provided individuals with a learning experience through *reciprocity*.

Building Supportive Relationships

Throughout the six case studies, the participants discussed their relationship with the teachers and with the children in the YLC program. In the current study, the YLC staff leaders were also a part of the students’ lives during school as their physical education teachers, which seemed to be an important factor to the participants. Maggie and Lucy shared the benefits of having interactive teachers during the physical education course. Instead of directing the students from the sideline, the teachers participated during class. Words such as “energy” (Lucy) “more comfortable” (Maggie) and “spirited” (Heather) were used to describe the physical education teachers. In addition, Maggie and Lucy mentioned the benefits of having a low teacher-to-student ratio during the physical education course. For example, Lucy stated “Everybody had energy and they like had different ideas of games so it didn’t have to be almost the same thing every week. You just have a variety of different things and people.” Maggie shared:

In a bigger group, I'm going based off my middle school class, we'd have like two classes in the same classroom and the same gym, trying to play the exact same game or trying to do the exact same thing and you would have one teacher yelling at the other. It wouldn't really work because you would have one teacher yelling or walking through us in lines and stuff and the reason I feel it was different is because you would just keep up together and you didn't talk over each other.

By having a low teacher-to-student ratio, this provided the students with an opportunity to have multiple interactions with staff and more individual attention. Because there were three to four teachers and fifteen to eighteen students in a class, the teachers were able to cater to different learning styles and student personalities. This provided encouragement and a willingness to participate for some who would have otherwise been overlooked in a traditional physical education setting. Previous research on middle college high schools has praised the structure of small class sizes and benefits to healthy relationships between teachers and students (Bruce, 2007; Yi, 2012). In the current research, the teacher-student relationships extended to after-school time (i.e., the YLC), as well.

Furthermore, MJ, Sora and Heather explained that they were able to develop a lasting relationship with the teachers that went beyond the physical education course. Sora shared that the teachers would help her with other school work and her college classes. Heather talked about how the physical education teachers were supportive when her grandparents passed away. MJ discussed how the physical education teachers taught life lessons and leadership skill during the course that transferred to the YLC. He learned to be a youth leader in the YLC by watching and following the physical education teachers. They showed the students how to be positive role models through leading by example. The teachers genuinely cared for students and provided support based on

individual student needs. In Schilling's (2008) case study of Tasha, an individual that attended Project Effort as a child and continued as one of the first youth leaders in the YLC, there was a disconnect between the after-school program and the school environment. This appeared to not be the case since the youth leaders benefited from having the YLC staff as resources during school hours.

During the YLC, the participants (the youth leaders) viewed themselves as teachers to the children. The youth leaders were responsible for their station activities during the program. An important part of the program seemed to be the diversity of the children. Some of the children were shy and spoke little to no English, while others could be disruptive. The youth leaders had to figure out a way to include all of the children. If there were conflicts, the youth leaders devised a plan to quickly solve the problem. Benard (1993) suggested that resilient children had an ability to cognitively and socially resolve conflict. While participating in the YLC, the youth leaders were placed in a somewhat controlled environment where they had to work together in groups to engage the children in a meaningful activity, as well as monitor and address any behavioral issues that occurred. Of course the staff leaders were able to step in when and if necessary.

Maintaining High Expectations

All of the participants described similarities between the physical education course and a traditional one. They learned how to play sports, there were rules and conduct to follow, and coursework was completed for an academic grade. However, students learned positive values through physical activity and less about excelling in a

particular sport. Veronica and Maggie explained that they learned how to play or at least try a variety of sports because the teachers were encouraging and non-judgmental. At the end of each lesson, the class would come together and either discussed the happenings that occurred during the lesson, as Lucy explained, or, as Veronica, Maggie and Heather explained, they would complete a prompt in their self-reflection journal.

In addition, four of the participants (i.e., Lucy, MJ, Heather, Sora) explained that gradually, the physical education teachers empowered the students to become the leaders of the class. The students were responsible for working with group members to research a sport and teach it to the class using Hellison's (2011) Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility daily format. Within each group, individuals were encouraged to focus on his or her strengths. For example, if an individual was shy and did not like speaking in front of the class, then that person spent more time on developing the activities or writing about the history of the sport. Benard (1995) suggested that "good teachers" provided students with the ability to believe in themselves (p. 3). The physical education teachers attempted to do this by capitalizing on individual's strengths.

Throughout the physical education course and the YLC, the students and youth leaders constantly had a role to fulfill. Whether it was participating in activity, planning and leading peers, or organizing and instructing an after-school activity session for children. In Padron and colleague's (1999) study, they observed elementary-aged students while in the classroom and found that the resilient students were on task more often and less distracted or disruptive compared to the non-resilient students. The researchers referred to students' expectations for one's self as a protective factor for

resiliency. In the current study, Sal and Tim suggested examples of how some students developed or improved their resilience, more specifically by staying on task and “stepping up,” as a result of the program structure. For example, Sal described how one individual “flourished” when given the opportunity to teach the class about lacrosse, instead giving little and sometimes no effort during the previous physical education lessons. Sal stated:

So during that time [the second semester of PE], the kids had the opportunity of actually researching a sport... It was a really good activity because some of the kids that had just been involved actually stepped-up. There was a child in particular whom I really thought just flourished as a leader because he loved lacrosse. That was kind of his identity. So when he had to teach it, you really saw him come to life a little bit more than in the other portion when he just had to participate.

In addition, Tim explained that although the students were not athletically skillful by any means, they continuously put forth effort during the physical education course. Tim related the students’ effort to the various opportunities and encouragement offered during the class. He shared:

I thought, I told the parents at a PTA meeting one night, I said I’ve never seen a group of kids work any harder in a PE class and it’s every day. They just really bust there butt out there... I think the activities that you had [during the physical education class] really provided them [the students] an opportunity to explore their capabilities. I don’t think there was anything they were put into a situation where they felt they could be chastise or put down in any way.

Therefore, it appeared that giving students responsibilities and encouraging them to participate in activities that they find enjoyable might have attributed to keeping students

on task and “stepping up” as was described as a resilient individual in previous studies (Padron, Waxman & Huang, 1999; Benard, 1995).

During the YLC, the youth leaders were expected to be role models to the children in the program. In addition, youth leaders were also responsible for putting together quality activities for every session. As Lucy and Sora mentioned, the staff leaders organize the groups and facilitate the sessions, the activities and life lessons are left for the groups to develop. Concluding the session, Veronica shared that the youth leaders and staff leaders debrief about the session. MJ and Maggie stated that they learned to become competent leaders through the experiences of teaching the children.

Opportunities for Personal Growth & Future

Benard (1995) provided examples of ways to involve students in meaningful opportunities for personal growth such as, a cooperative learning environment and cross-age mentoring. Interestingly, the physical education course and the YLC seemed to foster a cooperative learning environment and provided participants with a cross-age mentoring experience; however, the third quality of the resiliency model, providing opportunities for personal growth, was not as evident throughout the interviews. MJ was the only individual that directly applied the physical education course as a gradual learning process of becoming a leader of the class and for some students, a youth leader in the YLC. The other five youth leader participants appeared to benefit from the ability to excel in a positive, structured environment, in both the physical education course and the YLC. For example, Lucy expressed that the YLC was a “life changing experience.” The

program provided Maggie with an opportunity to work with a diverse group of children, whom she found interesting and enjoyed helping.

Finally, Veronica, Sora and Heather did not directly state or contribute the program to personal growth factors. However, Heather stated, “They were both great programs and I think they’ve all helped me in every aspect in some way.” Perhaps the other two protective factors, developing caring relationship with others and maintaining high expectations, seem to be the direct outcomes of fostering resiliency. The third protective factor, creating opportunities for personal growth, was also important, yet difficult to interpret separately from the other two protective factors. It appeared that the opportunities provided within the program, both the physical education course and the YLC, helped to establish the relationships among teachers, youth leaders and the children and were reinforced by the program expectations.

Emerging Theme: Environmental Factors – Fun and Safe

In addition to the three resiliency qualities, the program environment seemed to be an emerging theme that was consistent among all of the case studies. All of participants described the program as *fun*, which was one of the key criteria for positive youth development programs (Benson, 2002; Hellison & Cutforth, 1997). Participants need to enjoy their role in the program. That way, they are more likely to remain in the program and attend weekly sessions.

Furthermore, three of the participants (i.e., Lucy, Veronica, Maggie) also viewed the program as a *safe* environment. The physical education teachers created a welcoming environment where students were not afraid to try new activities, even it that meant not

succeeding (i.e., Veronica, Maggie). During the YLC, although the staff leaders facilitated the program, they left it up to the youth leaders to create a safe place for the children to play and learn (i.e., Lucy). In addition, Tim described the physical education environment as “psychologically safe,” which provided a positive transition to a leadership position in the YLC. He shared:

I think they responded so well to I think both, all of you guys and how you worked with them and I think that had a large part because of the way you worked with your own approach with them. I think also just the way that the classes were structured. I think the kids really felt that they could try things without being worried and I think it was psychologically safe environment that you guys created. So that I think really set the stage for having these kids really take on leadership role later on in the after-school program.

It seemed that the program environmental factors, specifically fun and safe characteristics in this study, provided a place that aided in the ability to foster the resiliency qualities. Previous research has suggested that the family environment has the greatest impact on the development of one’s resiliency, yet schools and youth development programs have the potential to positively impact of children and youth, particularly at-risk youth (Benard, 1993; Benson, 2002; Brooks, 2006; Henderson & Milstein, 2003). Brooks (2006) also suggested that in addition to reducing risk factors and improving protective factors, school has become a significant environment that children must accomplish in order to become competent adults, especially those considered a part of a racial minority or for those growing up in poverty (p. 2). The current study seemed to provide an inclusive, “successful” environment for both racial minorities and children that have grown up in poverty. The students in the physical

education program and youth leaders in the YLC viewed the program as fun and safe, which may have attributed to their participation in physical education and continuation in the YLC. Therefore the environment should be conducive to promoting caring and supportive relationships, communicating high expectations, and providing opportunities to grow as an individual.

Emerging Theme: Reciprocity in Cross-age Teaching

Typically the term *reciprocity* is referred to throughout service learning and community engaged research as a way of describing the relationships between participants and practitioners (Strand et. al., 2003). Anderson and Hill (2001) created a list of principles of good practice for service learning in teacher education. They suggested that, “reciprocity and mutual respect should characterize the collaboration...” (Anderson & Hill, 2001, p. 5). Dostilio and her colleagues (2012) suggested that reciprocity might exist within three different levels: *Exchange*, participants give and receive something from the others that they would not otherwise have; *Influence*, the collaboration are iteratively changed as a result of being influenced by the participants and their contributed ways of knowing and doing; and *Generativity*, as a function of the collaborative relationship, participants (who have or develop identities as co-creators) become and/or produce something new together that would not otherwise exist (Dostilio et. al., 2012, p. 21-22).

In the current study, data reflected the concept of influence-reciprocity between the YLC staff, youth leaders, and the children. Influence-reciprocity is defined, as “Influence of one another is not necessarily equal in force or stable over time” (Dostilio

et. al., 2012, p. 23). During the interviews, two of the youth leaders (i.e., MJ and Sora) explained that they liked how the physical education teachers taught them values and praised their work; therefore, the youth leaders used the same strategies during the YLC to teach the kids. For example, Sora shared, “We’re basically P.E. teachers for refugee children and we also teach them morals and values while doing it.” MJ stated, “The purpose [of the physical education course] at least for people in YLC was like, it was almost like a training but not a training at the same time for people that were in YLC. We learned how to do it from people that do it the best.”

In addition, the other four youth leaders (i.e., Lucy, Veronica, Maggie and Heather) explained that the YLC was a positive experience because they were working with children in a positive way without knowing the impact it had on the kids. For example, Heather shared that, “you may feel like you’re doing a little but you’re doing so much to someone else.” In the following quote, Tim shared the idea behind the YLC and his opinion related to the impact of participating in the program on resiliency:

...I think in different ways it’s kind of added I mean to take a kid resilient; it’s not just one thing. It’s got to be a bunch of different things but the one thing might be an important point to others. I like the idea that the Youth Leader Corps is the one that .you put a kid in a position to be responsible for somebody else for the welfare of somebody else. If you do that, that’s one thing and then you can add a little bit more to it also conveying some important life skills, values to other kids that will help them become better. So kind of like passing it on.

Maxwell, the math teacher, also suggested that by becoming responsible for someone else, the youth leaders strived to better themselves. He explained:

Just knowing that I'm [the youth leader] responsible for someone else, and if I'm responsible for someone else then I'm going to do the best I can to back that up myself. I think that has always been in the back of their mind no matter what the obstacle may be.

In sum, these findings demonstrate the significance of the program design and the reciprocity of learning that took place throughout the physical education course and the YLC sessions. The youth leaders learned from the physical education teachers and applied their experiences to their sessions during the YLC. During the YLC, the youth leaders learned from working with the children. Although future research is necessary to explore reciprocity in cross-age teaching, it appeared to be a protective factor that provides youth leaders with a shield when facing other adversities in their lives.

Research Question 1 -- Impact on Relationships with Others

The purpose of the first research question was to explore the impact of participating in the YLC on relationships with others. The operational definition of "relationship with others" included developing and/or improving social competence with classmates, teachers, the YLC staff and the children attending the after-school program. The cross-case analysis revealed two common themes with regards to research question 1: (a) all of the youth leaders have continued to return to the YLC primarily because of their connection and interaction with the children in the program (i.e., cross-age bond), and (b) all of the youth leaders in this study improved their social competence in some way.

The Cross-Age Bond

During the interviews, each participant was asked, “Why have you chosen to continuously return as a youth leader in the YLC year-after-year?” The data unanimously showed that each youth leader returned to the program because of the interaction with the children. Lucy stated, “...But after doing it [the YLC] like some of the kids was really good and when you get attached to them like you want to see them every Friday.” Veronica shared, “Because like it’s a great opportunity. Like it’s working with kids...” MJ explained, “It’s really cool to meet kids and having somebody look up to you. A lot of times, you’re always looking up to somebody else. I like meeting kids that look up to me and being a positive role model for them. At the same time it betters me, too.” Maggie exclaimed, “Because I enjoy working with the kids and I love, love, love the experience I get.” Sora suggested, “Like they were talking about how it would give them leadership skills and I was like it sounds really fun and I really like children too. So I also wanted to do it because of that.” Finally, Heather shared:

Once I just started that one time I was addicted. I just loved it. I’m definitely because like when I was working with the kids at first I was like, I was nervous...I just feel like it’s my junior year and I just felt like an expert with it like I wasn’t nervous being around the kids.

The youth leaders spent time planning and organizing specific activities to ensure that all of the children had fun while learning at the stations. From the time that the children arrived until the time that they left, the youth leaders were responsible for running “the

show.” The staff leaders were only in charge of placing the children in groups and keeping track of time.

As mentioned in previous chapters, the YLC program aligned with Hellison’s (2011) TPSR model, which is a relational model to instill positive values through physical activity. For some of the youth leaders, being relational did not come natural; some of the youth leaders developed their relational skills over time. However, throughout the interviews, each youth leader shared stories about the different experiences that they had with the children and they would call them by name. A majority of the stories were related to handling a child that was misbehaving or overcoming an issue within the group. For example, MJ shared how he would talk to the little boy that always came to the program mad or would get upset if things did not go his way. MJ learned how to talk to the boy in order to calm him down. Veronica talked about how some of the children from different communities only wanted to work with “their friend”. She would explain the importance of making new friends and put them in assigned groups. Maggie described a time that she had to referee between four girls that were calling each other names and having a disagreement. Maggie explained how she handled the situation in the following quote:

So I sat them all down and explained to them that you can’t force somebody not to be friends with somebody else just because you have a disagreement with that person. I explained that you can’t call people names just because she’s upset with them. So after all that, they were getting along and started working well with each other.

Lucy explained how she would sit the kids out that were misbehaving or not listening, but she would talk to them and use the time to teach the kids about consequences. In contrast, Heather and Sora shared how they connected with the children. Heather shared how the little girls would compliment her hair. Finally, Sora explained that some of the girls would call her their older sister. It seemed that each individual had a genuine connection with the children in their stories.

Previous research on cross-age teaching programs has shown improvements on self-confidence, conflict resolution skills, and aspirations to learn (Cutforth, 2000; Cutforth & Puckett, 1999). These were also qualities related to a resilient individual (Benard, 1993). Interestingly, one of the participants (i.e., Maggie) explained that she had worked with children before, but it was only reading with them. In the current study, the cross-age relationship between the youth leaders and children appeared to be the purpose for attending the YLC. When reading to a child, older mentors simply have the task of either reading to a child or listening while the child reads. The YLC provided the youth leaders with opportunities to develop self-confidence, improve problem-solving skill within station activities and gain a sense of maturity. For example, Sal explained how the youth leaders had to teach the children to work together through physical activity and group work. She shared:

...it was really interesting because the South East Asian kids [children in the program] didn't want to hang out with our African kids [children in the program]. We had to work to get them, the community kids to be okay to being in group together and that was stuff our middle college kids had to deal with, as well. So I think it's an opportunity for our kids to you know one, TPSR. Can they [the youth leaders] become personally responsible so they are able to serve those kids, but also socially recognizing how to identify if someone is having a problem, reach

out to them and try to help them, seeing outside of their own little life and how to help others.

The impact on relationships within the program between the youth leaders and the children was critical to the physical activity learning experience and resiliency building.

Improvements on Social Competence

The YLC was designed with the philosophy and intent to encourage youth leaders to become responsible individuals in and outside of the program. Throughout the interviews, Tim and Sal explained that they encouraged the youth leaders to contribute during the YLC by working with their group members and leading quality station activities to serve children while teaching personal and social responsibility. At the beginning of each year, the YLC staff specifically assigned each youth leader to a teaching group. Each group consisted of two-to-three youth leaders; typically a stronger, vocal leader was paired with a less vocal individual or a novice leader. The purpose was for the groups to work together throughout the program while planning and implementing their daily lessons, as well as learn from one another. The stronger leaders had to learn how to share the lead role, whereas the novice or shy leaders had to learn to take initiative.

Interestingly, all of the youth leader participants seemed to improve their social competence in some way. Benard (1993) suggested that social competence included, “qualities such as the ability to elicit positive responses from others, flexibility, empathy, caring, communication skills, and a sense of humor” (p. 44). It was evident that three of the participants (i.e., MJ, Maggie, Heather) came to the program with some sense of care

for others and/or vocal confidence, while the other three participants (i.e., Lucy, Veronica, Sora) either lacked a sense of care for others or were considered shy and introverted. Throughout the interviews, it appeared that each youth leader displayed one of three different types of social competence.

The first type of improvement on social competence was only evident within the program: *Social competence within the program*. Of the six youth leader participants, one youth leader (i.e., Sora) came to the program as shy and only seemed to show improvements on social competence by communicating and caring for the children and group members. During the program, the youth leader participated with group members during station activities and cared for the children, but rarely or never took the lead role. In addition, the youth leader did not show improvements on social competence outside of the program. The second type of improvement on social competences, *social competence in the classroom, as well as the program*, included two of the six youth leader participants (i.e., Lucy, Veronica) that came to the program as either shy or lacked a sense of caring for others. In addition to showing improvements on social competence during the program, these youth leaders also showed improvements on social competence in the classroom environment. Finally, the third type of improvement on social competence, *improved speaking skills and vocabulary outside of the program*, consisted of the three participants (i.e., MJ, Maggie, Heather) that came to the program with a sense of care for others and/or vocal confidence and seemed to improve their speaking skills and/vocabulary in the program and in the classroom. Each type of improvement on social competence is described below with supporting data for evidence.

Social interaction within the program. As previously described, youth leaders with this type of social improvement began the YLC with either lacking a sense of care for others or were considered shy and introverted. Although the participant (i.e., Sora) may have improved her social competence within the program, there was little to no evidence of improvements on social competence outside of the program. For example, Sal and Tim explained the importance of Sora being in the program and working with her group members and the children in the program. In terms of Benard's (1993) social competence definition, Sora improved her communication skills while working with her group members and cared for the children; however, she lacked the confidence to lead the group. Sal shared:

She's not as vocal. She's not necessarily someone that's going to step up and takes charge, but she's very consistent. She comes. She partners up with somebody. She enjoys the station she's working at. She does a good job. She cares about the kids. She tries to interact with the kids.

Similarly, Tim described Sora's participation in the following quote:

Examples of her participation is usually she will see what is going to be taught rather than this is what we are going to teach. I think that is pretty consistent with her and you know what, that is all right. I don't push her too much as long as she is contributing to the group and helping out. But she has, I've seen her working one-on-one with some kids and she has this nice, compassionate part about working with kids. That's been evident several times.

In the classroom, Maxwell and Emerson suggested that Sora had not improved on her social competence over the past three years. During math class, Maxwell explained, "...She just lays low and unfortunately it seems like she does just enough to get by

instead of really trying to advance what's going on around her or even herself." Emerson, provided a more detailed explanation when discussing Sora's social skills, or lack thereof, in the classroom. She stated:

The thing is, I think she struggles with being a leader in the classroom. I think it's more of she doesn't have the confidence to do it. She could be a leader in the classroom and I think she knows she even has that capability but she's a little shy, just lacking in self-esteem to be able to really step up like hey I'm a leader follow me.

To conclude, the youth leader participant remained an introvert or was viewed as shy outside of the program. The impact on relationship with others, specifically social competence, appeared to be limited to the constraints of the program.

Social competence in the program and classroom. Youth leader participants with this type of improvement on social competence also began the YLC either lacking a sense of care for others (i.e., Lucy) or were considered shy and introverted (i.e., Veronica). As a freshman, Lucy admitted in her interview, "I used to get in trouble...Um, talking back. Yeah I did that a lot." Veronica described herself as a freshman by stating; "I was also kind of shy, because I didn't know anybody." However, these youth leaders showed signs of significant improvements on their social competence in and outside of the program. Sal and Tim explained how Lucy and Veronica "evolved" during the YLC. Tim stated, "Lucy, she's kind of evolved as a leader. She's really become confident in her leadership. Before, she wasn't so much taking charge but now really kind of takes the lead a lot of time." Sal also suggested, "I remember early on, she was kind of quick to

kind of pop back at you, pretty tough. But she has also emerged as one of the really great kids in the program.” Similarly, Tim described Veronica in the following quote:

She just really stepped up. She got to a point where she wanted to be in the Youth Leader Corps. She’s been great. She just really has blossomed. I think she takes charge. Part of it is not just developing the lesson but also interacting with the kids and running the talks and you know it’s not always easy for kids but Veronica has really jumped into it and really does a great job. So she’s really evolved from being shy about being in front to wanting to be up front and leading.

Sal also suggested that Veronica, “...She wasn't as engaging in each session. She relied more on somebody else. Now, I think she’ll kind of lead.” The youth leaders (i.e., Lucy and Veronica) were able to take the lead during station activities. These youth leaders transitioned from participating in the YLC to taking the lead role of a group.

In addition, these youth leaders (i.e., Lucy and Veronica) also showed improvements in the classroom environment. The ultimate goal of TPSR is to apply or “transfer” the personal and social responsibilities outside of the program (Hellison, 2011). In the current study, data from the classroom teachers and the YLC staff showed that Lucy and Veronica improved their social competence during school, in different ways. The math teacher praised Lucy for her ability to cooperate during group work, instead of complaining or refusing to work with a certain partner. Maxwell admitted, “...We still have to work on sort of the attitude part, but she has worked on that a lot and I have seen her calm down a lot as far as how she comes across to other people or how she interact with other people.” In Lucy’s interview, she attributed her willingness to work with others to being placed in certain groups during the YLC. For Veronica, the

English teacher complimented her improvements to speak up during class and volunteer to help others. Emerson explained:

She's more willing to express herself. She'll answer questions out loud. Whereas, like freshmen year if I called on her, she looked like she was terrified and pretty much said can I not answer the question mostly because of the language barrier. She was afraid that she would say the wrong thing because she didn't have enough English words to express herself. Now, as the years when on she would volunteer or even speak out and make her voice heard than wait on me to call on her.

Likewise, in Veronica's interview, she explained how her physical education teacher encouraged her to talk and how she learned to express herself to the children during the YLC, which transitioned to the classroom. She shared:

I used to be shy to say something in front of people. I used to be nervous. I would be like no I don't want to say it. Even when they ask me, I would say, "can you pick somebody else?" But I found out that doing that, it's not going to take me nowhere. There will be a time when I need to present something. So like Carrie would be like no, either way you still have to talk. Then like now, I can do presentations. I still be nervous but I can do it. Even with kids, like if someone in my group or my team, they are not there, I still have to talk to the kids and run things. So that's the way I kind of learned how to like, yeah if I can talk to kids, I can talk to everybody in front of people.

While previous research, has struggled to make a connections between program improvements and school behavioral improvements (Schilling Martinek & Carson, 2007; Schilling, 2008), findings from the current study appeared to validate TPSR transfer, linking a positive impact in the classroom to the participation in a cross-age teaching program. In addition, these finding seemed to be consistent with McClendon, Nettles and Wigfield's (2000) work, which contributed a classroom environment that fostered

resiliency principles to higher academic success (i.e., higher grades). In the current study, although academic records were not retrieved, it appeared that the youth leaders (i.e., Lucy and Veronica) were more socially engaged during class.

Improved speaking skills and vocabulary. Youth leader participants that demonstrated this type of improvement on social competence, improved speaking skills and vocabulary, came to the program with some sense of care for others (i.e., Heather) and/or vocal confidence (i.e., MJ, Maggie). Sal described Heather's improvements from freshmen to senior year in the following quote:

Heather was a good kid freshmen year, but like I said, it's freshmen to senior year. She's definitely grown into more of a leader in terms of being comfortable planning the activities. Write the stuff out. Not depend on someone else to write the stuff out, which I think she used to link up with stronger people. Now, she'll be the leader of a group. She's definitely more outgoing, I think, just in terms of seeing her interactions with the kids.

Tim also suggested that Heather "...She's pretty sensitive to people. She really is. I think that's one of the things about her. Her sensitivity to some of her classmates that are troubling her and she'll come up and ask what should I do about that. I think she has a real compassionate side to her." In addition, Sal and Tim described MJ and Maggie as vocal leaders from the beginning. Tim shared, "I think he [MJ] came in with some sense of confidence. I remember when we first had him as a first youth leader; he wanted to be in charge of a group." For Maggie, Sal explained, "She's somebody that I think early on even showed an ability to want to help others. You know, each child maybe gets something a little different out of the program. She came in, I think, with the desire to want to help others." While these youth leaders came to the program with a sense of

social competence, participating in the YLC seemed to have a positive impact on further developing their speaking skills and vocabulary in and outside of the program.

During the program, these individuals learned to explain rules and have discussions so that the children were able to understand. Maggie shared that she learned to “Probably watch what I say...it allowed me to know what words they understood and what I thought they [the children] understood sometimes matched and sometimes did not.” This posed as a challenge because the children were from culturally diverse backgrounds and some spoke little to no English. Furthermore, Heather explained how she had to learn to speak clearly when giving directions, which may have helped improve her speaking skills in the classroom. She stated:

It’s [the YLC] made me, I feel like it’s made me a stronger speaker because I just use to be nervous. I still kind of nervous giving speeches and stuff but just working with the kids and stuff, it allows me to practice my speaking skills... with activities and stuff, I had to be able to articulate that well to them [the children] and make sure they understand. So when I’m having a problem or have a question, I’m able to just put it in a more clear way to the person I’m trying to get it to.

Finally, MJ explained how he would teach the children to understand words such as “encouragement” when discussing teamwork. In the following example, MJ shared how he would organize his station activity around teaching encouragement:

So in our little groups, we all play like our individual games...At least what I try to do, I try to gear their mind and engage it towards a certain way so they now when we sit down and ask them a question, that’s the answer I’m looking for. So I try to sit them down, if we’re talking about encouragement today or say hey maybe you pat your teammate on the back or I might constantly repeat something like that just to get it in their heads.

The youth leaders had to learn how to be consciously aware of their vocabulary while teaching at their station. Furthermore, MJ suggested that the YLC improved his vocabulary to talk to adults outside of the program. He explained:

I learned to talk a little bit better like vocabulary wise and so I can talk to a teacher. I can talk, like at the summer camp because I was the only one with my group, I had to do the counselors job a lot even though I was only a junior counselor, that's why I'm getting booted up to an adult counselor next year when I turn eighteen. So like I would have to talk to the parents so from YLC and increasing my vocabulary and learning how people were different and how you had to be sensitive to people.

MJ's mother also mentioned MJ's ability to communicate to others so to understand. She explained:

You have to be able to communicate with a child so they can understand you...So because of that, he can do that. He can communicate. He can break things down. He can mentor. He can tutor, which was impossible because he would do it, but not be able to show somebody how do to it...

In the academic setting, these youth leaders (i.e., Heather, MJ, Maggie) noticeably improved their speaking skills and vocabulary in different ways. For example, Maggie was able to relate more to the teachers from being in the YLC. Emerson commented on Heather's speaking skills in terms of her ability to be a model student for others. She stated, "I think it's been a really good opportunity to help her hone her leadership skills and pick up the vocabulary of being a good leader, that motivational you can do it and being able to explain things to other people, I've seen carry across into the classroom." Similarly, Maxwell praised MJ's on the content of his conversations and his confidence to run for student president. Maxwell shared, "...But just having informal conversations

with him outside of the classroom sophomore and junior year, he has grown up a lot. I can tell it in the way he speaks to me, and the content of the things that he is talking to me about. He's really come along way."

Overall, the impact of participating in the YLC on youth leaders' relationships with others appeared to be significant in terms of providing a learning experience, especially working with a diverse group of children. In addition, the youth leaders impact on relationship with others varied for each individual. In any case, all of the youth leader participants showed improvements in their social competence and level of confidence during the program. Some were able to transfer their relationship with others to the classroom setting. Interestingly, there seemed to be discrepancies related to improvements in relationship with others, specifically social competence and confidence, outside of a structured environment (i.e., hanging with friends). However, the math teacher was the only one that mentioned this concept and further research is needed.

Research Question 2 -- Impact on Personal Expectations

The purpose of the second research question was to explore the impact of participating in the YLC on personal expectations. The operational definition of "personal expectations" included developing and/or improving one's self-esteem while maintaining internal locus of control and refraining from negative influences. The findings of the cross-case analysis emerged as a part of Benard's (1993,1995) framework, which included the following two themes: (a) improvements of self-worth and (b) self-identify as a positive influence within a structured environment.

Improvements on Self-esteem

The youth leaders described that participating in the YLC impacted their self-esteem in different ways. While participating in the program, four participants (i.e., Lucy, Veronica, Maggie and Sora) directly explained that their self-esteem increased by being a role model to the children. Lucy explained, "...This child is looking up to me or looking forward to seeing me every Fridays. It's not that they are just looking forward to come and play the games but someone is just looking forward to come see you. It makes you feel like you are important in a way." Maggie shared:

It's shows me that I am a leader even if it's in the sense of a child's eye. It has improved and probably does improve my self-esteem because you do get your good days and bad days...I'm more confident around children than I was because I was picked on all through elementary and middle school so I wasn't really comfortable around peers my age.

Veronica discussed how presenting activities to the children helped build her confidence to give presentations during class. She shared, "Because you actually have to explain. You can't have a game but not know how to explain it. You have to know the rule to it and how to explain it so you don't look stupid like oh what is she saying..." For Sora, having the kids look up to her helped to boost her self-esteem. Emerson suggested that Sora struggled with self-esteem, yet by being in the program, she was able to gain a sense of purpose or confidence. Emerson explained, "I feel like sometimes she struggles with some self-esteem issues kind of why am I here...So for her, that's something that she could put her finger. She mattered to these kids and they mattered to her. So it almost gave her some purpose what's something that she questioned over time."

Furthermore, two of the participants (i.e., MJ and Heather) described that being a leader impacted their sense of belonging. MJ shared, “I feel like I’m more valuable now.” Heather explained, “It’s [the YLC] made me feel really important…” When discussing MJ’s role in the program, Sal shared that he was one of the main leaders. Although not directly related impacting his sense of belonging, Sal’s explanation provided an example showing how the YLC staff trusted MJ to maintain the program even when the main staff were absent. She explained:

We do put a lot of responsibility on him, especially this past year. We had a group where I couldn’t necessarily be there and we had a college student running it and so MJ was the one to really keep things going. He knew what the program was and so he led a lot more than he had in the past.

With regards to Heather, Tim shared, “I think it’s [the YLC] been an important part that she’s been able to be responsible and helping others.”

The youth leaders learned to organize a successful learning experience for the children primarily through trial-and-error with guidance from the YLC staff. In addition, Lucy, Veronica and Maggie explained that they learned to be more patient when working with the children. If something did not go as planned, the youth leaders had to modify their activities or discussions on the spot. Heather and MJ reiterated the overall goal of Hellison’s (2011) TPSR model, which is that everyone should feel valued.

Being a Positive Influence within a Structured Environment

Another common theme that related to the impact of participating in the YLC on personal expectation was the idea of being a positive influence to others within a structured environment. During the program, it was evident that all of the youth leaders in

this study served as positive role models to the children. For example, Maggie shared that she wanted to be a positive influence on the future generation. Maggie explained, "...it [the YLC] did impact me by showing me that I do influence their life in a good way. I do it because I love the children and being able to influence their life in a good way and you want the next generation to come up better than what we were." In addition, the teachers and the YLC staff described some of the participants (i.e., Veronica, MJ and Heather) as being proud of their youth leadership role. With regards to Heather, Emerson added, "You would hear her list off some of her accomplishments and YLC was always in there." Maxwell explained that MJ took pride in wearing the YLC symbol on his t-shirt. The youth leaders took ownership of their role in the program, which was reflected outside of the program.

Furthermore, five of the six participants (i.e., Lucy, Veronica, MJ, Maggie and Heather) showed improvements on their expectations during school. For example, Lucy and MJ explained that they became more mature as a result of being in the YLC. Lucy was more likely to refrain from conflict and MJ decided to take on the leadership role in the student government as the class president. Veronica and Maggie improved their confidence in the classroom to overcome learning barriers. Finally, Heather also gained confidence in terms of being more independent of her sister and stepping up to help her peers.

The fifth level of Hellison's (2011) TPSR model is to transfer responsibility outside of the program. These findings suggested that the youth leaders were more responsible in different ways, at least within a structured environment. In terms of the

resiliency framework, it appeared that the participants showed a greater sense of autonomy in the classroom (Benard, 1995).

Research Question 3 -- Impact on Pursuit of Opportunities for Personal Growth

The purpose of the third research question was to explore the impact of participating in the YLC on the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth. The operational definition included developing and/or improving a sense of aspiration to further one's education or career goals. Similar to the individual case findings, the cross-case analysis findings were also limited and varied among the participants. For example, during MJ's interview, he discussed ways that he applied his learning's from the YLC to his job as a summer camp counselor. He shared, "At the Sermon Camp there was this kid who he got mad...but I learned that if you just keep trying to talk to him and don't give up on him then he will eventually open up. It just takes him some time to calm down." MJ's mother also explained how she had witnessed MJ talk about his life lessons learned in the YLC during a church sermon. She admitted, "I would say he even had some life lessons because he's used them in his sermons sometimes...He talked about how he used to the tools that he had learned [during the YLC] and how he had used it on the kids he was working with to get along and turned and used it with this guy [A peer that was giving him trouble during school and the YLC]". However, since MJ wants to be a surgeon, he admitted, "...as far as my career goes, the only time I'm dealing with a kid is if they're unconscious because I'm going to be doing surgery on them." In contrast, Maggie shared, "It's [the YLC] been a big influence in my life because it did help me

decide on a career pathway too...So I figured out I like working with the younger ages and now I want to become a neonatal nurse.”

Previous research has shown that several factors influence youth leaders’ growth; the YLC is only one of many sources related an individual’s opportunity for personal growth (Melendez, 2012). In the current research, two participants (i.e., Maggie and MJ) explained how participating in the YLC helped with either the current summer job or their future career goal. In addition, the YLC appeared to be an important component to keep three of the participants (i.e., Lucy, Veronica and Maggie) on track academically, to obtain educational goals that otherwise might have been non-existent. Lucy explained, “I mean it changed me.” However, when asked to specially asked about the impact to her ability to pursue opportunities in and outside of school, Lucy followed up with, “That’s a very difficult question.” Finally, for one participant (i.e., Heather) it provided her with a sense of purpose. Heather also mentioned that the YLC helped develop her critical thinking skills. Heather shared, “...like socially, it’s [the YLC] helped me be a better speaker, make more connections. In my like critical thinking, I’ve learned how to just like be a quite thinker and just be able to apply things; and just even as a person, I’ve learned that helping people is my calling.” Benard (1995) suggested that encouraging critical thinking through hands on experiences fosters resiliency. Maxwell suggested that participating in the YLC has impacted all of the youth leaders on a sense of purpose. He recommended:

I think it’s because it [the YLC] gives them [the youth leaders] a sense, more sense of a purpose. It gives them more meaning of what they are doing and they can take whatever you are learning and share it with somebody else, your life now

has purpose. Whenever you have that purpose, you're driven and want to keep going. There is no way that students who had the risk of never graduating, are not going to graduate if they have some purpose to make sure they are going to keep going when they have to be responsible to mentor or whatever to show that they've made it despite whatever.

Therefore, it appeared that although there were limited data pertaining to the impact on the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth, some youth leaders were able to relate their experiences in the YLC to protective factors. These factors were related to obtaining a summer career and implementing leadership qualities, practicing critical thinking skills, as well as providing an added sense of purpose to each individual's.

CHAPTER VI

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Benard's (1993, 1995) work on resiliency was used to investigate the impact that a values-based youth leadership program had on the resiliency of high school participants. Previous research on resiliency of at-risk youth has primarily focused on exposure to "protective" factors within a school or program setting (Johnson, 1997; Henderson & Milstein, 2003; Bruce, 2007; Yi, 2012). The current research aimed to explore the qualities that were enhanced in the participants as a result of participating in a two-part, values-based youth leadership program. Although this qualitative multi-case study consisted of one, unique during- and after-school program, the following implications are possible for in- and out-of-school youth development programs, specifically cross-age teaching programs for at-risk youth. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section discusses implications for cross-age youth development programs and future research on each of the resiliency qualities. The second sections focuses on methodological implications. The third section concludes with the researcher's recommendations for future research.

Implications for Cross-Age Teaching Programs on Resiliency

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of participating in the Youth Leader Corps on youth leaders' (N=6) relationship with others, on personal expectations, and on the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth. Before making suggestions about

the program's impact relative to these three resiliency principles, it was important to validate that the YLC was guided by and offered protective factors such as providing positive adult relationships, maintaining high expectations for all individuals, and offering opportunities for everyone to participate (Benard, 1995). Then, the researcher was able to make connections between what was offered in the program and its impact related to those principles.

The six participants in this study came from different backgrounds and had been faced with various adversities throughout their lives; however, all of them spoke highly of their involvement in the physical education course and especially in the YLC. Although the YLC has been around for years, this was the initial group of youth leaders that did not evolve as leaders through the program. Instead this group was introduced to TPSR during a one-year physical education course. A benefit to this model was that the youth leaders were able to develop relationships with the physical education teachers that transitioned in the after-school program. Among the three resiliency qualities, relationships with others seemed to be most important. The youth leaders saw themselves as "teachers" to the children in the program. There was a clear connection of learning that developed among the youth leaders as they interacted and applied the leadership skills that were gained from working with the physical education teachers. Benard (1993) explained that when resilient youth lack support, care, and love from their family and community environment, it is up to the school environment to provide opportunities for such relationships. In Schilling's (2008) study, she also suggested the importance of supportive adult relationships outside of the immediate family. Furthermore, Schilling

also mentioned supportive adult relationships as a characteristic of a successful positive youth development programming. The relationship between the youth leaders and physical education teachers/YLC staff reinforced the importance of caring adult during school hours, especially for resilient individuals that were considered at-risk (Benard, 1993; Schilling, 2008; Werner, 1990).

In addition, the relationships that developed between the youth leaders and the physical education teachers validated Hellison's (2011) core value that states TPSR is "a way of being." For practitioners of youth development programs, especially those that include a cross-age teaching component, it is critical to live by the values that are being asked of the participants. The youth leaders in the current study expressed gratitude towards the physical education teachers because of their willingness to help even outside of the classroom and informal conversations. Although a causal link cannot be established in this study, it was evident that the relationship between the adults and youth leaders was important, which has some impact on the youth leaders' relationship with the children. Future research is necessary to determine if the youth leaders' relationship with other adult figures are similar to that of the physical education teachers.

Another implication refers to the program development, which related to the various types of improvements on social competence. As it was mentioned in previous chapters, the initial group of selected youth leaders did not consist of the top performing students. Instead, the youth leaders were chosen based on those students that were consistently active in the physical education class and had the potential to "step-up" when given a leadership position. When planning for a cross-age teaching program, it appeared

that the youth leaders also learned from one another. Therefore, it is suggested that practitioners intentionally group youth leaders based on their ability to communicate and plan quality activities. For example, Heather explained that she learned to overcome her shyness by watching and working with Maggie, a stronger, vocal leader. Maggie also learned how to share the lead role and compromise with Heather instead of taking over the session each time. In this situation, both participants were challenged in their own way. In reference to previous literature, Benard (1993) suggested that peers were a major factor in relation to resilient youth. In the current study, data showed that youth were capable of learning from one another when placed in a structured environment. In their earlier work on surviving private boarding schools, Coleman and Hoffer (1987) found that peer support was beneficial when families were not around. Although family support and involvement were important factors for resilient children (Garmezy, 1985; Masten, 1994), peer support appeared to be a protective factor that fosters resiliency, as well.

Furthermore, the children that attended the YLC also seemed to play a key role on youth leaders' resiliency. Some of the children were bussed from two different refugee communities while others came from the local Boy's and Girl's Club. Together the group was culturally diverse, as well as possessed risk factors of their own. The youth leaders had to overcome language barriers and deal with behavioral disturbances while attempting to teach their physical activity lessons and life skill. This opportunity was significant because the youth leaders had to develop a way to communicate so that the children understood the purpose of the activity and the directions being given. Over time, the youth leaders and children developed a bond and a sense of belonging to the program.

In the research on resiliency within inner-city schools, Maton's (1990) study suggested that when students feel an attachment to the school (i.e., teachers, classmates, environment), they are more likely to participate in school activities as a protective shield against adverse circumstances (In Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1994). Similarly, it appeared that the children attending the program developed an attached to the youth leaders and the youth leaders developed a sense of autonomy from organizing and maintaining their station activities.

In addition, the youth leaders were responsible for resolving conflicts and modifying activities that failed. The ability to resolve conflict in a stressful situation is considered to be a protective factor of resiliency (Benard, 1993; Martinek & Hellison, 2009). More research is necessary to investigate the extent of how youth leaders obtain problem-solving skills within the program and transfer them in other areas of their life, such as school and at home.

Although only two of the six youth leaders claimed that working with the children helped to develop better speaking skills and a better vocabulary outside of the program, it appeared that all of the youth leaders viewed themselves as a role model and leader to the children. When developing a cross-age program, especially one that is centered on at-risk youth, practitioners should consider the children that will be attending the program in order to create a successful program experience for children, youth leaders and staff. Martinek and Hellison (2009) devoted a chapter that discussed program variables such as location, adult leader's role, the kids and administrative support (p. 116). All of these

variables are critical elements to the whole learning experiences and should be well thought out in order to have any impact or success.

In relation to the second resiliency principle, personal expectations, the program structure was also significant. When working with children, the youth leaders had to learn that getting frustrated and quitting was not an option. For the youth leaders in this study that struggled with a short temper (i.e., Lucy) or gave up easily on tests (i.e., Veronica), they learned to be more patient in the program and during school. In addition, five of the six youth leaders improved their expectations during school, which relates to the fifth level of responsibility, taking TPSR outside of the gym (Hellison, 2011). In previous studies, the concept of transfer has been difficult to achieve due to the limited program time and length of time it takes youth leaders to identify with their leadership role (Schilling, 2001; Schilling, Martinek & Carson, 2007). However, in the current study, data showed improvements on personal expectations as a result of participating in the YLC for the past two or three years. This finding also confirmed the importance of program longevity. In Walsh and Hellison's (2002) review of twenty-six previous studies conducted on TPSR, they suggested that longer programs tend to produce more evidence of transfer. Future researchers should consider the length of their program, especially when exploring the impact of transfer outside of the program.

In the current research, the youth leaders were consistently involved in the YLC for at least two years and also had contact with the YLC staff almost every day for the past three years. However, being a positive influence to others was limited to the program and the school environment. While this is an improvement, youth development

practitioners should find a way to practice and promote the importance of having personal expectations for one's self outside of school and the program. A suggestion to promote personal expectations outside of school and the program could be meeting with the youth leaders in other locations such as community events or field trips. In the current study, the youth leaders go to dinner after each session and attended university basketball games. Similar to Schilling (1999) study, more emphasis could be placed on responsibility during this time, which could enhance personal expectations outside of structured environments.

The final implication refers to the third resiliency principle, the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth. In the current study, findings were limited in reference to participant's future education and career goals. This could be related to the lack of emphasis placed on educational and career goals, specifically during the time of physical education and the YLC. The participants in this study were enrolled in a career pathways course that was also taught by the physical education teachers. The researcher chose to leave this course separate from the physical education course and the YLC because it was not a direct part of the youth leadership program. Nonetheless, encouraging youth leaders to be consciously aware of their educational pathway is important.

Other youth development programs such as Walsh's (2008) Kinesiology Career Club is an example of a TPSR, values-based mentoring program that provided at-risk youth with a university mentor; the focus was developing a career pathway. Walsh's cross-age teaching program intertwines TPSR with the theory of possible selves. In his program, seventh- and eighth-graders work with elementary-aged children at an inner city

elementary school. In addition to following the TPSR format and strategies, the staff leaders also worked with the youth leaders on becoming a successful youth worker and charting individual future career goals. Findings concluded that youth development programs that implement the combined possible futures and TPSR can further develop and heighten youth experiences and tailor them to effectively realize career or job opportunities (p. 219). Thus, youth development programs are capable of connecting to the third resiliency factor, the pursuit of opportunities on oneself, if youth leaders are exposed to and deliberately explore career opportunities while participating in the program. Although the current mission of the YLC does not include the career pathways course, it may be a possibility for future research.

In conclusion, it appeared that the six youth leaders in this study were positively impacted from participating in the YLC. In addition to being a leader in an after-school program, these participants were a part of a unique experience where they were exposed to TPSR during school, as well. Typically, cross-age teaching programs are a result of a continuation for those individuals that would otherwise age out of the program (Cutforth, 1997; Martinek & Hellison, 2009). However, given the current program structure, the youth leaders seemed to have a positive impact from participating in the year-long physical education course and transitioning to the after-school leadership program. If practitioners have the resources, staff and opportunity to implement an in-school and out-of-school program, he or she should collaborate with the school administration and community partners to ensure a lasting program. Developing a successful cross-age teaching program takes a lot of time, flexibility and trial-and-error (Hellison, 2011;

Martinek & Hellison, 2009). In terms of fostering resiliency, empowerment with guided support over an extended period of time can have a lasting impact on individuals who have adverse challenges (Wang & Gordon, 1994).

In terms of the impact of participating in the YLC on resiliency, it is important to mention that the findings were very contextual specific to response. The youth leaders in the current study have shown a positive impact on resiliency, however resiliency principles were explored in reference to the program and school environment. This has been a common challenge in youth development programs (Lee, 2005; Schilling, 2001). Lee's (2005) study, explored participants' ability to apply TPSR values within Project Effort and during school hours. Findings suggested that school environmental factors, such as limited empowerment and strict structure, often inhibited the participant's to apply the program goals while in school. It appeared that the youth leaders in the current study may have made improvements on resiliency over the past two or three years, however challenges remain ahead in their own environment and pathway to adulthood. Given that the youth leader participants grew up with a disadvantaged background, one cannot overlook daily risk factors that are associated with poverty. In addition, and outside of the realms of the current study, youth leader participants also have faced other risk factors that cannot be dismissed, such as the death of both parents (i.e., Sora and Heather), living in a single-parent household (i.e., MJ), overcoming a learning disability (i.e., Maggie) and adapting to American culture as an immigrant (i.e., Lucy and Veronica). However, it seemed that building protective factors and placing youth in a successful leadership position has positively impact on resiliency, at least at the time of

the interviews. A follow-up study with the current youth leader participants is necessary to measure the long-term impact of participating in the YLC on resiliency.

Implications for Methodology

The researcher has three implications for methodology in reference to the current study. The first implication for methodology refers to the interview protocols, specifically the second youth leader interview protocol and the caregiver/parent interview protocol. The youth leader interview protocol was semi-structured in relation to the three resiliency principles. For some of the questions, the youth leaders were confused or did not understand the question. Therefore, it is important for the interviewer to be able to rephrase a question or have effective prompts when needed. During the caregiver/parent interviews, the caregiver/parent's had a difficult time distinguishing between the experiences related to the physical education course/the YLC and experiences related to the youth leader's overall high school experience. In any case, the caregiver interviews were informational and allowed the researcher to visit with the youth leaders' family at their house.

The second methodology implication is related to number of youth leaders selected for the study. While the purpose of this study was primarily focused on at-risk youth based on financial status, it would be interesting to learn the impact of participating in the YLC for all of the youth leaders that have been in the program for the past three years. Each youth leader has something unique to offer to the program, as well as a different reason for continuing in the program. Although Hellison's (2011) TPSR model and the YLC were developed primarily to cater to at-risk youth, not all current youth

leaders meet these criteria. Therefore, including all youth leaders in the study may result in similar or different findings, which may go beyond the purpose of the current study. For example, youth leaders that have limited to no exposure to risk factors have also continued to participate in the YLC for the past three years. It would be interesting to explore the extent to which participating in a TPSR-based leadership program impacts kids with various challenges in their lives. Hellison's model may have a more general impact on all kids, instead of only those considered at-risk.

The final methodology implication involves additional interviews with school personnel, specifically the guidance counselor and/or the principal. While the classroom teachers provide significant information, they were limited to the experiences that occurred within their own classroom. If the teacher had a conflict with a youth leader near the time of the interview, this could affect the way she or he responded to the questions. By including the guidance counselor and/or the principal, they may be able to provide more general data related to each youth leader during school hours. In addition, the guidance counselor may be able to provide better responses to the third resiliency principle, the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth.

Recommendations for Future Research

At the conclusion of this study, there are more questions to research and “answer”. The researcher proposes the following recommendations:

1. An expanded study to include all youth leader participants that have participated in the YLC for the past two or three years and were enrolled in the initial physical education course.

2. A study that includes additional sources of protective factors related to attending the middle college high school. The caregivers in the current study had a difficult time directly relating experiences to the impact of participating in the YLC. Therefore, it seemed that the middle college environment offers protective factors that impact youth leader participants, as well. This study could be conducted by expanding beyond the realms of the YLC to include the middle college high school. This would provide a better profile for the individual's total education experience and the YLC would be one of many factors included as an impact on one's resiliency.
3. A follow-up study with the youth leaders in this study, similar to Melendez (2012) to investigate the long-term impact of participating in the YLC in their everyday lives.
4. In order to address causality issues related to the impact of participating in values-based, youth leadership program, a comparison study could be conducted that included youth leaders that participate in the YLC and students that do not participate in the program. Examples of variables could be grades, attendance, or behavior. Throughout a school year, the researcher could use a questionnaire, observations during school and the program and/or interview data.
5. Finally, a comparison study between youth leaders that began by attending Project Effort as a child and emerged as a youth leader in the YLC and youth leaders that went through the physical education training course and became a youth leader after one-year. Both groups followed the suggested stages of leadership

development (Martinek & Hellison, 2009), however both groups learned through very different experiences.

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APPENDIX A

UNCG IRB APPROVAL

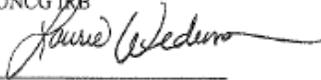


THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
GREENSBORO

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Web site: www.uncg.edu/orc
Federalwide Assurance (FWA) #216

To: Cody Talbert
Kinesiology, Dept of
7619 Brisbane Drive Summerfield NC 27358

From: UNCG IRB



Authorized signature on behalf of IRB

Approval Date: 7/11/2014
Expiration Date of Approval: 7/10/2015

RE: Notice of IRB Approval by Expedited Review (under 45 CFR 46.110)
Submission Type: Initial
Expedited Category: 7.Surveys/interviews/focus groups,6.Voice/image research recordings
Study #: 14-0147
Study Title: Perceptions of a Youth Leadership Program Impact on Resiliency

This submission has been approved by the IRB for the period indicated. It has been determined that the risk involved in this research is no more than minimal.

Study Description:

The purpose of this research is to gain an in-depth understanding of the impact of participating in a values-based youth leadership program on resiliency. Using a qualitative case study research design, this study will aim to explore youth leaders' perceptions associated with a unique cross-age teaching program for high school students. In addition, teachers and a parent/caregiver of each youth leader will provide insight based on their perceptions of the youth leaders' impact from participating in the program on resiliency. The unique youth leadership program, called the Youth Leader Corps (YLC), consists of an in-school values-based physical education training course required for all freshmen high school students at the Middle College at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (the Middle College at UNCG) and an after-school values-based youth leadership program where a select group of students are chosen to serve as leaders to children in the community. Perceptions of youth leaders' participation in a two-part after-school, values-based youth leadership will be explored on the relationships with others, personal expectations, and on the pursuit of opportunities for personal growth.

Regulatory and other findings:

- This research, which involves children, meets criteria at 45 CFR 46.404 (research involving no greater than minimal risk). Permission of one parent or guardian is sufficient.
- **Your study is contingent upon approval from another site (Guilford Co. Schools). You will need to submit a modification at the time you receive that approval.**

Investigator's Responsibilities

Federal regulations require that all research be reviewed at least annually. It is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to submit for renewal and obtain approval before the expiration date. You may not continue any research activity beyond the expiration date without IRB approval. Failure to receive approval for continuation before the expiration date will result in automatic termination of the approval for this study on the expiration date.

Signed letters, along with stamped copies of consent forms and other recruitment materials will be scanned to you in a separate email. **Stamped consent forms must be used unless the IRB has given you approval to waive this requirement.** Please notify

page 1 of 2

the ORI office immediately if you have an issue with the stamped consents forms.

You are required to obtain IRB approval for any changes to any aspect of this study before they can be implemented (use the modification application available at <http://integrity.uncg.edu/institutional-review-board/>). Should any adverse event or unanticipated problem involving risks to subjects or others occur it must be reported immediately to the IRB using the "Unanticipated Problem-Adverse Event Form" at the same website.

Please be aware that valid human subjects training and signed statements of confidentiality for all members of research team need to be kept on file with the lead investigator. Please note that you will also need to remain in compliance with the university "Access To and Retention of Research Data" Policy which can be found http://policy.uncg.edu/research_data/.

CC:
Thomas Martinek, Kinesiology, Dept of

APPENDIX B

GUILFORD COUNTY SCHOOL IRB APPROVAL



August 7, 2014

Cody Talbert
[REDACTED]

Re: 141503

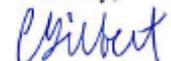
Dear Cody Talbert:

The Guilford County Schools Research Review Committee has concluded that your proposal *Perceptions of a Youth Leadership Program Impact on Resiliency* meets the requirements of state legislation and the current research policy of Guilford County Schools.

Committee approval does not guarantee access to schools or to individuals, nor does it imply that a study can or will be conducted. The school principal makes the final decision regarding the participation of her school. Parents/students and teachers decide independently whether they wish to participate and they may withdraw at any time. The committee expects that the identities of individuals will remain anonymous throughout all stages of the project.

Please present this letter upon initial contact with the principal. Thank you.

Sincerely,


Carolyn Gilbert
Co-Chair, Research Review Committee

APPENDIX C

YOUTH LEADER DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Date: ___ Youth Leader's name: _____

First Middle Initial Last

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone Number (____) _____

Youth Leader's birth date ___/___/___ Youth Leader's Gender: Male Female

Where was Youth Leader born?

Youth Leader's Race (Check all that apply):

- American Indian or Alaska Native Asian Black or African American
 Hispanic Origin (please specify country of origin) _____
 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander White
 Other _____

Youth Leader's Parent's Marital Status

- Married Widowed Divorced Separated Never married

Mother's name: _____

First Name Middle Initial Last Name

Highest level of school completed: _____ Mother's birth date: ___/___/___

Which of the following categories best describes mother's employment status?

- Employed, working 1-39 hours per week
 Employed, working 40 or more hours per week
 Not employed, looking for work
 Not employed, NOT looking for work
 Retired
 Disabled, not able to work

Father's name: _____

First Name Middle Initial Last Name

Highest level of school completed: _____ Father's birth date: ___/___/___

Which of the following categories best describes father's employment status?

- Employed, working 1-39 hours per week
- Employed, working 40 or more hours per week
- Not employed, looking for work
- Not employed, NOT looking for work
- Retired
- Disabled, not able to work

Growing up, youth leader lived with: Mother Father
 Both Other: _____

Youth leader currently lives with: Mother Father
 Both Other: _____

Number of adults in household: _____

Adults (over the age of 18) living with child: Mother Father
 Both Other: _____

Annual household income: Below \$9,999 \$10,000-\$19,999
 \$20,000-\$29,999 \$30,000-\$39,999 \$40,000-49,999 \$50,000-\$59,999
 \$60,000-\$69,999 \$70,000-\$79,999 \$80,000-\$89,999 \$90,000-\$99,999
 \$100,000-Above

What language(s) do parents speak at home? _____

What language(s) does your child speak at home? _____

Name of Elementary School: _____

Name of Middle School: _____

Name of Home-school High School: _____

Number of classes failed or repeated (list courses and grade level below): _____

Grade level as of Fall 2014: _____

Plan to attend The Middle College at UNCG? Yes No (If no, why not) _____

Number of years as a youth leader in YLC: _____

Youth Leader's nickname for the study: _____

Caregiver Nickname for the study: _____

APPENDIX E

YOUTH LEADER BIOGRAPHY INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (1)

Participant's Nickname: **Date:** **Time Start:** **Time End:**

Location:

Introduction: Thank you for taking the time to talk with me. Today, we are going to create a profile based on your life. In our conversation, I would like for you to share your life story in your own words. I am going to ask you a few questions to learn more about your family history, your school history (elementary, middle, and high school), and your future career goals. As a reminder, you do not have to be in this study if you do not want to, even if you and your parents/caregivers have already given permission. If you decide to stop, no one will be angry or upset with you. This interview will be recorded unless you would like me to turn it off. If you do not want to be recorded, then I will continue the interview and take written notes. It is really important that you answer the questions honestly. There are no right and wrong answers. If at any time during our conversation you decide that you would like to stop, please let me know. Do you have questions?

School History

1. Prior to high school how would you describe your relationships with schoolmate; teachers; adults in the community? Give examples
 - a. How would you describe your personal expectations? Give examples
 - b. How would you describe your willingness to seek out opportunities to grow? Give examples
2. If I asked your elementary school teachers or middle school teachers, how do you think they would describe you as a student? (Possible probe: Based on your willingness to work with your classmates? Participation? Personal expectations? Seek opportunities?)
3. Now, how would you describe yourself as a freshman, sophomore, junior, and rising senior? Give examples
4. How would your high school teachers describe you as a student over the past three years?
5. How would your parent or caregiver describe you as a high school student?
6. Why did you come to The Middle College at UNCG instead of attending your traditional high school?
 - a. Why have you returned to the middle college each year?
 - b. What has been most beneficial about attending the middle college? Give me an example? What has been challenging about attending the middle college? Give me an example?

Home

7. For the next part of this conversation, I would like to learn more about your life outside of school. Tell me a story about what it was like growing up in your house.
8. Now, give me an example of what your current living situation (Possible probe: morning routine, safe neighborhood, work to help pay bills, how do you get to/from school)
9. What usually happens when you bring your report card home? (good/bad)
10. Finally, as you begin your senior year of high school in the fall, what are some things that you would like to accomplish over the next 12 months?
 - a. What do you plan to do after graduation?

Closure

At this time, can you think of anything else that you would like share for your profile? Can you think of anything else about your home life, school history, or future goals? Again, thank you for talking with me today. We will meet again to discuss your experiences related to attending The Middle College at UNCG.

APPENDIX F

YOUTH LEADER IMPACT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (2)

Participant's Nickname: **Date:** **Time Start:** **Time End:**

Location:

Introduction: Thank you for taking the time to talk with me again. Today, we are going to discuss your high school experiences, specifically related to the freshmen physical education training course and YLC. As a reminder, you do not have to be in this study if you do not want to, even if you and your parents/caregivers have already given permission. If you decide to stop, no one will be angry or upset with you. This interview will be recorded unless you would like me to turn it off. If you do not want to be recorded, then I will continue the interview and take written notes. It is really important that you answer the questions honestly. There are no right and wrong answers. If at any time during our conversation you decide that you would like to stop, please let me know. Do you have questions?

Physical Education

1. For the first set of questions, I'm going ask that you tell me a little bit about the year-long physical education course that you took as a freshmen and YLC.
 - a. Let's pretend that you have a friend that wants to know all about your PE program. How would you explain a typical day in your PE class from the time you entered the gym until the time you left? (Description)
 - b. What was the purpose of this course? (Description)
 - c. How was this PE course different than other PE courses? (Description)
2. How would you describe your role in the course? Did you have a role? (Opportunities for personal growth)
3. How did this course contribute to you as a student? You as a person? What did you take away from this course (Personal Expectations, Opportunities for personal growth)

YLC

4. We considered the PE program as a training course for YLC. How would you describe the after-school program? If someone walked into the gym during YLC, what would they see? (Description)
5. Why have you chosen to sever as a leader in YLC each year? (Relationship with others, Opportunities for personal growth) Tell me what that means to be a leader to the kids that come to YLC? (Relationship with others, Personal Expectation)
6. What have you personally taken away from your experience in YLC over the past 3 years? Explain. Share a story. (Relationship with others, Personal Expectations, Opportunities for personal growth)
 - a. How has being a part in YLC impacted your social skills? Speak to adults? Relationships with teachers? Give examples (Relationships with others)

- b. How has being a part in YLC impacted your self-expectations? Ability to solve a conflict or avoid a conflict? Ability to control yourself around friends, in the classroom, at home? Ability to remove yourself from stressful situations. Give examples. (Personal Expectations)
- c. How has being a part in YLC impacted your ability to pursue your goals and future? Give examples Note: refer back to previous interview to know individual's goals. (Pursuit of opportunities for personal growth)

Closure

- 7. How would you define an individual who is considered resilient? (Description)
 - a. Do you see yourself as resilient? (Description)
 - b. How did YLC impact your resiliency (Description)
- 8. Do you think other high schools should include a program like our PE training course and YLC? Why or why not? (Relationship with others, Personal Expectations, Opportunities for personal growth)

At this time, is there anything else about PE or YLC, good or bad that you would like to share?

Thanks again, for your help!

APPENDIX G

TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant's Nickname: **Date:** **Time Start:** **Time End:**

Location:

Introduction: Thank you for taking the time to talk with me again. Today, we are going to discuss six selected high school experiences related to the impact of participating in our freshmen physical education training course and after-school program, Youth Leader Corps or YLC. We are going to go through the same questions for each student, one student at a time. As a reminder, you do not have to be in this study if you do not want to, even if you have already given permission. If you decide to stop, that is completely okay. This interview will be recorded unless you would like me to turn it off. If you do not want to be recorded, then I will continue the interview and take written notes. It is really important that you answer the questions honestly. There are no right and wrong answers. If at any time during our conversation you decide that you would like to stop, please let me know. Do you have questions?

Background:

1. To begin, tell me what you know, if anything, about the first PE training course that the current juniors took as freshmen and YLC, the after-school program? (Description)

Youth Leader 1-6

2. Talk about your relationship with _____ over the past three years. (Description)
3. What has _____ learned about being a leader in YLC over the past three years? (Relationship with others, Personal Expectations, Opportunities for personal growth?)
 - a. Would you consider _____ a leader in your classroom? At school? Why? Examples.
4. How has being a part of YLC impacted _____ relationships with classmates, teachers, adults (Relationships with others)
5. How has being a part of YLC impacted _____ self-expectations? Ability to solve a conflict or avoid a conflict? Ability to control yourself around friends, in the classroom, at home? Ability to remove yourself from stressful situations. Give examples. (Personal Expectations)
6. How has being a part of YLC impacted _____ ability to pursue opportunities for personal growth? Give examples (Pursuit of opportunities for personal growth)
7. How would you define a high school student who is considered resilient? (Description)

8. As _____ approaches his/her senior year, would you consider (insert child's nickname) resilient? (Description)
 - a. How did participating in YLC impact _____ resiliency, if at all?
(Relationship with other, personal expectations, pursuit of opportunities)

At this time, is there anything else about any of the youth leaders participation YLC, good or bad that you would like to share?

Thanks again, for your help!

APPENDIX H

YLC COORDINATOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant's Nickname: **Date:** **Time Start:** **Time End:**

Location:

Introduction: Thank you for taking the time to talk with me again. Today, we are going to discuss six selected high school experiences related to the impact of participating in our freshmen physical education training course and after-school program, Youth Leader Corps or YLC. We are going to go through the same questions for each student, one student at a time. As a reminder, you do not have to be in this study if you do not want to, even if you have already given permission. If you decide to stop, that is completely okay. This interview will be recorded unless you would like me to turn it off. If you do not want to be recorded, then I will continue the interview and take written notes. It is really important that you answer the questions honestly. There are no right and wrong answers. If at any time during our conversation you decide that you would like to stop, please let me know. Do you have questions?

Background:

1. To begin, tell me about the first PE training course that the current juniors took as freshmen and YLC, the after-school program? What is the purpose of the program? (Description)
 - a. How was this PE course different than other PE courses? (Description)
 - b. How would you describe the role of the students in the program? (Opportunities for personal growth)

Youth Leader 1-6

2. Talk about your relationship with _____ over the past three years. (Description)
3. How would you describe _____ as a student in the physical education course during the first semester? (i.e. participation, ability to work with others, control one's self, set goals, make good decisions) (Relationship with others, Opportunities for personal growth)
4. Why was _____ chosen as a leader for YLC? (Description)
5. What has _____ learned about being a leader in YLC over the past three years? (Relationship with others, Personal Expectations, Opportunities for personal growth?)
 - b. Would you consider _____ a leader outside of the program? Why? Examples.
6. How has being a part of YLC impacted _____ relationships with classmates, teachers, adults (Relationships with others)
7. How has being a part of YLC impacted _____ self-expectations? Ability to solve a conflict or avoid a conflict? Ability to control yourself around

friends, in the classroom, at home? Ability to remove yourself from stressful situations. Give examples. (Personal Expectations)

8. How has being a part of YLC impacted _____ ability to pursue opportunities for personal growth? Give examples (Pursuit of opportunities for personal growth)
9. How would you define a high school student who is considered resilient? (Description)
10. As _____ approaches his/her senior year, would you consider (insert child's nickname) resilient? (Description)
 - b. How did participating in YLC impact _____ resiliency, if at all? (Relationship with other, personal expectations, pursuit of opportunities)

At this time, is there anything else about any of the youth leaders participation YLC, good or bad that you would like to share?

Thanks again, for your help!

APPENDIX I

PARENT/CAREGIVER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant's Nickname: **Date:** **Time Start:** **Time End:**

Location:

Introduction: Thank you for taking the time to talk with me again. Today, we are going to discuss (insert child's nickname) experiences, specifically related to his/her year-long freshmen physical education course, the pathways courses, and the after-school program: Youth Leader Corps or YLC. As a reminder, you do not have to be in this study if you do not want to, even if you have already given permission. If you decide to stop, that is completely okay. This interview will be recorded unless you would like me to turn it off. If you do not want to be recorded, then I will continue the interview and take written notes. It is really important that you answer the questions honestly. There are no right and wrong answers. If at any time during our conversation you decide that you would like to stop, please let me know. Do you have questions?

Background:

1. To begin, talk about where you first learned of The Middle College at UNCG and why you and _____ chose to apply, attend. (Possible probe below)
(Description)
 - a. What were some initial concerns?
 - b. Over the past three years, what have been some benefits/challenges related to attending The Middle College at UNCG? Examples.
 - c. Why have you and _____ decided to return to The Middle College year after year.
2. How would you describe _____ as a student over the past three years?
(Relationship with others, Personal Expectations, Opportunities for personal growth?)
3. As freshmen, all students were required to enroll in a year-long physical education course worth two college credit hours. Tell me what you know about this course, if anything. (Description)
4. An extension of the PE course is the after-school program, called Youth Leader Corps or YLC. What can you tell about YLC, if anything? (Description)
5. What has _____ learned about being a leader in YLC over the past three years? (Relationship with others, Personal Expectations, Opportunities for personal growth?)
 - a. Would you consider _____ a leader outside of the program? Why? Examples.
6. How has being a part of YLC impacted _____ relationships with peers, teachers, siblings, parents, adults (Relationships with others)

7. How has being a part of YLC impacted _____ self-expectations?
Ability to solve a conflict or avoid a conflict? Ability to have self-control at home? Ability to remove one's self from stressful situations. Give examples.
(Personal Expectations)
8. How has being a part of YLC impacted _____ ability to pursue opportunities for personal growth? Give examples (Pursuit of opportunities for personal growth)
9. How would you define a high school student who is considered resilient?
(Description)
10. As _____ approaches his/her senior year, would you consider (insert child's nickname) resilient? (Description)
 - a. How did participating in YLC impact _____ resiliency, if at all?
(Relationship with other, personal expectations, pursuit of opportunities)

At this time, is there anything else _____ participation YLC, good or bad that you would like to share?

Thanks again, for your help!

APPENDIX J

PHYSICAL EDUCATION TPSR LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

TPSR Lesson Plan

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Physical activity content: _____ Lesson # _____ of _____

Students' current responsibility level(s) (check all that apply in this class):

- 1 Respecting the rights and feelings of others
- 2 Effort and cooperation
- 3 Self-direction
- 4 Helping others and leadership
- 5 Outside the PE program

What happened during the last lesson?: _____

Equipment and resources needed: _____

Students' objective(s) for the lesson: _____

Assessment for measuring lesson objectives: _____

My goal for improving my teaching in this lesson: _____

Time	TPSR Lesson Components (start typing below the first line)	Links to TPSR
	<u>Opening Management Plan:</u>	
	<u>Relational Time:</u>	
	<u>Awareness Talk: (Three Questions)</u>	
	<u>Physical Activity (with diagram):</u>	
	<u>Group Meeting: (Review)</u>	
	<u>Self-Reflection Time: (Assessment)</u>	

SOURCE: Modified lesson plan template from Metzler (2011).

APPENDIX K

YLC LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

**YOUTH LEADER CORPS SPORT CLUB
Lesson Plan/Reflection**

Lesson Activity and Focus (TPSR Goals):

Lesson Activities:

Materials Needed:

Reflection (Personal Thoughts)

What were your contributions to today's activity?

What kinds of leadership qualities did you show today?

What Kinds of things do you need to work on?

APPENDIX L

EXAMPLE OF MEMBER CHECK CODING PROCESS

Codes	Paragraph #	Level of agreement	Peer Debrief's Comments	Researcher's Comments
Case 1 -- Lucy				
PE/ Come up with own sports	2	A	Agree with the code but It could also be coded as <i>team stuff</i>	Ok
PE/Similar/Respect	16	D	Disagree - Doing work It could be associated with <i>effort</i>	Ok
Add pfactor/rewards	46		Snack time	Ok
Add pfactor / having something to do after school	54			Ok
YLC/Purpose/youth leader/teach	56	A	Agree with the code but it could also be coded as <i>learning</i>	Ok
YLC/RwO/adults	89-92	D	It is not clear if she talks more to adults because of Project Effort	Ok, I changed it to YLC/RwO/Response to others
YLC/Exp/Role Model	94	A	Agree - It could also be coded as self-worth	OK
Add pfactor/ sense of responsibility	139			OK
Add pfactor / fun	147			OK
Add pfactor / doing something to do after school	155			Ok