

**A Leadership Discovery — Enhancing Finnish Youth Football
Coaches' Effectiveness through the Transformer Research
Project**

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ABSTRACT

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It is well established that coaches benefit from coaching development programs (Côté & Turnnidge, 2017). Research reflects the strength that Transformational Leadership (TFL) theory holds great promise when embedded in the youth sport setting. Collaboration between researchers, communal sport organizers, and national sport policy makers represents an intriguing, yet marginal aim throughout the literature to effect coaches' interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge domains (Lefebvre et al., 2016). Thus, the Transformer Research Project's purpose was to fill the gap — through planning, implementing, describing, and evaluating a pilot leadership program within the Finnish youth football context — that included a series of interviews, observations, feedback sessions, journaling, and one workshop.

Action research was chosen due to its semi-controlled and socially suitable construct aligning well with the coaching experience. Used to promote knowledge growth in a cyclical fashion, coaches implemented various action goals reflecting interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge, skills, and behaviors. Data collection process included ten interviews, five feedback sessions, fifteen observations, and rigorous journaling. Thematic content analysis revealed emerging themes that were valuable to display how coaches manifested their transformational behaviors into their coaching 'practices', and was effective to track their frequencies of transformational behaviors.

In addition, as action research serves a greater purpose to test the workability of a given project (e.g. Rovio et al., 2012), this brought forth new knowledge pertaining to coaching developmental programs primarily rooted from a researcher's orientation. Goal setting routines were found to be important for engaging coaches with the research material. Stakeholder (communal and institutional) involvement was seen to reduce perceived barriers to implement transformational behaviors. The findings all contributed to building criteria for more explorative studies which seek to understand how coaches create transformational coaching environments. Notable opportunities to improve the program reflect a greater need for stakeholder involvement, and empirically driven measures which may include athletes as part of the study.

Keywords: action research, transformational leadership, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, coaching development programs, positive youth development, coaching effectiveness, athlete development.

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To my family and friends, words cannot express what you have meant, or the positive force you continue to be in my life. Each of you — and you know who you are — have been so supportive throughout the good, and the bad times. Mom/Dad, your love is eternal. Your mental strength and growth mindset — both — are second to none. Dan, each day I try to emulate your calmness and poise. You are a great brother, friend, and a genuine leader. Julia, your contagious laughter, and kind spirit make every day spent with you its own unique adventure. Erica, you inspired many (and still do). You encouraged positivity, embraced humanity, and dreamed in overwhelming color. I think about you everyday — until we meet again — in my heart and soul is where I'll keep you.

To all the transformational leaders out there, I dedicate this to you!

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“No written word, no spoken plea, can teach our youth what they ought to be. Nor all the books on all the shelves, it’s what the teachers are themselves”

-Anonymous

PERSONAL PROLOGUE

“People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care”

Theodore Roosevelt

What is coaching success? In my opinion, the emphasis on winning takes a backseat within the fertile context of teaching youth about life through the vehicle of sport. How to deal with adversity, relate to different personalities, integrate oneself within a team-oriented environment, and regulate one’s emotions during stressful situations are normal occurrences encountered throughout a lifetime, both on and off the field. Unequivocally, youth sport coaches are important drivers, who bring their followers to new paths of development. Teaching them to have self-awareness and confidence extends meaning beyond the realms of competition. As the world today is rampant with toxic conflict and devastation, youth need transformational coaches. For a mischievous youngster like myself, I was lucky to have such a leader.

Coach Lucy and I had our share of battles. My first attempt at the 100-meter butterfly swim race was anything but successful. To my dismay, she signed me up for this painstaking event at the age of 12. I recall floundering, and struggling to finish the race. What felt cruel to most people or perhaps comical to some, like a cat thrown into water, the odds were stacked against me. My self-proclaimed ‘cool kid’ persona was against the battle-axe. Finishing dead last in my heat, and barely hanging on to my pride, I was alone. Coach Lucy had ‘sentenced me’ to this feeling of detachment. My self-identity was breaking...

Despite my reluctance to show any fragility, I lost all control and dignity after exiting the pool. This felt like a twisted social experiment Coach Lucy had concocted up, just for me. Perhaps she knew I would react this way, and it became a dose of humility. Unsurprisingly, at this stage in my development I did not reflect or feel that sport was the place for moral self-awareness. Instead, I struggled to shake off this arrested embarrassment, and immense feeling of disappointment. The prankster within me was at odds with himself. My cool, calm, and collected facade became debilitated as my inner demons took center stage, placed out like dirty laundry for all to see. Something transformational was occurring within me, but at the time, I just felt wrecked.

Tactfully, Coach Lucy brought me aside, expressing gratitude for my display of effort. This felt like a reversal from her usual tough-love, direct approach with me. “You challenged your capabilities by choosing to swim this event,” she said. I was puzzled at her proclamation. “Me?” I reflected, “Wasn’t this her decision to sign me up for this crazy race? She went on. “In swimming as in life, we all have to make a choice. Sometimes our pride gets in the way. Today you overcame your own ego through getting out of your comfort zone, and facing your fears. Well done and next time I expect you to do better.” A ‘clipboard drop’ (i.e. mic drop) moment followed as onlookers looked bedazzled.

Coach Lucy always kept me guessing. She was gentle and nurturing sometimes, but could easily be fiery and direct, depending on the situation. As time went on she used various methods to stroke my inner motivation, and debunk my ego as necessary. A few weeks after this event a transformation in other facets of my life began to surface, as arduous tasks seemed less frightening. Coach Lucy’s inspirational message would come to mind as I prepared for a class presentation, and would reflect, “This cannot feel worse than that one time.” Still today, when faced with discouraging setbacks like recovering from a season-ending injury, having a Coach Lucy memory to draw support from remains an invaluable source of inspiration.

Her legacy is alive and well. She had a deep capacity for connecting with varied personalities. Developing elite swimmers who would go on to become Olympians, yet through acknowledging achievements outside of sport also, her effective approbation displayed that she was an expert in creating safe, unassuming, and challenging sport environments where champions and participatory-level athletes flourished together. In addition, she was adept at extinguishing confirmation biases as she embraced differences in religion, race, social, and sexual orientations.

Do you remember your first coach? I hope you had someone just like Coach Lucy. A few years ago, I lost my one-and-only, unique sister, to suicide...In dealing with this tragedy — more than 18 years removed from our coach-athlete relationship — Coach Lucy’s leadership had a transformational effect again, but this time on processing grief. Her messages consoled, comforted, and supported me through this difficult recovery. Slowly, I began to transform into a new person who cared deeply about my leadership development, and especially how I could help those in need.

Ultimately, as sport policy planners, directors and coaches, our leadership styles can be fashioned into tools steering athletes through rough times. Like the mental fortitude it takes to overcome a 3-0 half-time deficit, a grueling swimming event, or a very personal and devastating tragedy. Coach Lucy's emphasis on character development was her guidepost, as her knowledge of sport coupled with strong leadership behaviors allowed her the opportunity to channel my blood, sweat, and tears not just for performance, but to help me get through some of life's most difficult moments. While pain in life is inevitable, suffering is voluntary, and coaches should nurture, foster, and develop transformational leaders.

1 INTRODUCTION

What made Coach Lucy special was that she had a transformational effect on me. It was not her coaching record, how many trophies her athletes or team had won, how many individuals would go on to achieve great athletic success — 18 years and still counting — instead, it was her ability to inspire devotion from her followers. Today, all this time later, her lessons are a relevant source of inspiration as I write this right now. If that's not coaching success, then I don't know what is!

John Wooden, the legendary-former basketball coach of the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), was an exemplar of this type of success too. Having coached the likes of Bill Walton and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (both NBA Hall of Famers), he was not shy of winning (e.g. 10 NCAA¹ Division 1 Championships, and 7 straight from 1967-73)². Yet this record only scratches the surface of his greatness. By showing how much he cared for each of his players, on and off the court, his true character overshadowed his amazing statistics. When asked post-retirement during a rare lecture³ what he was most proud of throughout his entire career, he answered with conviction:

“The thing that I am most proud of, despite all the Championships and great players, and people are always surprised by this. It's that my players went on to graduate, and lead successful lives after their playing days were over, practically all of them.” (John Wooden, UCLA Coach Rare Lecture, 1:09-1:13).

The bond he created with his players was everlasting, as he was adept at developing a deep connection while empowering them to perform at their best. His often recited 'Pyramid of Success' has become a tenet of American sport coaching, and has remarkable cross-cultural significance. He definitely exuded a growth-mindset through all facets of his character. Quite simply, he transcended time. Prior to Wooden accepting the UCLA coaching job, before his career truly 'bounced off', he was an English teacher and high school basketball coach in Indiana during the 1930s. A former player of his, Ed Ehlers, was asked to describe what effect a young Wooden (he was in his 30s at the time) had on him way back then.

¹ National Collegiate Athletic Association is the USA's highest amateur level sports organization. Referred to as NCAA.

² See Luther, C. (2010). UCLA Newsroom: Coach John Wooden. <http://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/john-wooden-dies-84109>

³ See John Wooden UCLA Coach Rare Lecture. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xYD0a6FX_s

“As I look back on who he was, yes, he was a great coach. He gave great pep talks and ran great practices. But that is not what I remember the most. It is who he was as a person. He was so much more than a coach. Coach Wooden was such an example of sincerity and honesty that I wanted to be like him. We weren’t just players to him. We were people he cared about. He got within you, and you believed in him.” (Ehlers as cited in Harrity, 2012, 6).

What an enormous compliment and way to leave a lasting impression on somebody! Forming lifelong impressions like this is not easy. Moreover, fostering deep connections with your athletes may seem above and beyond all normal expectations of a coach. After all, your job is to win, right? With this results driven frame of mind, what happens when they do not seem to go your team’s way — what then? What if I suggested that you should do less of one thing, and do more of another? Like focusing on enhancing your individual connections with your athletes more often, and ‘pumping the brakes’ on focusing on results alone. As you harness the emotions that come with harmony and being close with people, a resounding effect starts to show. Coming up with ways to connect with your players is the hard part, but it takes patience, practice, and progress.

Anson Dorrance, the head coach of the women’s soccer dynasty at the University of North Carolina (“Tarheels”) winner of 21 NCAA Division 1 Championships, and current coach, is a master at this. He developed a heart-felt way to deliver his messages that transcended the playing field, yet built a perennial winning culture. I asked Heather O’Reilly, who was a former player of his and an old friend of mine, what made Dorrance so different from other coaches she had throughout her illustrious soccer career:

“He had unique ways to motivate, and inspire us. He wrote a ‘senior’ hand-written letter to every graduating player. My year it was the night before the National Championship game. I was told not to open it until just before warm-ups. We [seniors] each read ours aloud to the team. It had nothing to do with the game we were about to play, which was the biggest one of our lives. Instead, it was all about character — how we developed in four years — and had matured into well-rounded individuals. He joked a few times...like making fun of my intense ‘game face’ and how clumsy I was my freshman year. As I read the last few sentences...he [Dorrance] described how grateful he was to be a small part of my personal development, and to witness my growth was the best trophy I could give him. Of course, we all cried [players, coaches and staff]. It was incredibly sincere and so heart-felt...Well, you already know what happened next. We won the game, and I got the letter framed.” (Personal Information, Heather O’Reilly, 04.04.19).

Heather would go on to win three Olympic gold medals and one FIFA World Cup gold medal in a decorated career which amassed over 230 appearances for the USA Women's National Soccer Team. Anson's 'senior letter' clearly had an effect. What makes athletes and teams perform at their best? Is there any secret to it? With athletic talent put aside, effective coaches go beyond the call of choosing an optimal lineup, formation, or tactical strategy. Whether you are a coach, director, or sport executive, you are responsible for ensuring each of your team members produces to the best of their ability – first, they must believe they can – and turn in an outstanding performance. Do you have some strategies up your sleeve? Dorrance, Wooden, and Coach Lucy have all unlocked the secret by using a wide variety of methods to inspire and motivate their athletes. It is not always campfires and romance stories however, as sometimes people are going to disagree, baffle at, and even dislike your decisions.

The New England Patriots (a team in the National Football League-NFL; USA) head coach, Bill Belichick, is widely known for his tough-love approach in building a team. By instituting "The Patriot Way" and "Do Your Job" slogans, these mission statements emphatically convey a disciplined regime. This includes being on time to practice, acting as a professional in all facets of the game, and upholding simple team rules like no 'social media' within the locker room. Belichick himself is not exempt from his own regime either⁴. Witnessed through media interviews he leads by example first — by never talking about team issues, past success, or providing any insight that would give the media a story — which could lead to gossip. If players or coaches do not 'walk the line,' they are not a Patriot for very long. Yet, his success is unparalleled and indisputable, having won a record 6 NFL Championships. For those that know how rigorously controlled the competitive balance is within the North American sport landscape⁵, you understand what an incredible achievement that is.

By digging deeper into the recipe of success, one notices that although Belichick is a perennial winning coach, his style of leadership attracts other top coaches to the franchise. By allowing them to have significant roles, responsibilities, and share in the decision-making process, Belichick augments his leadership's effectiveness. Like Nick Caserio (Director of Player Personnel), who is tasked with leading the scout-recruitment team. A group of hard-working individuals that routinely visit colleges across the entire country — the scouts target prospective talent through administering a variety of tests — to see if certain players would fit

⁴ See "Do Your Job" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdnWmKnUcWg&t=66s>

⁵ See Szymanski, S. (2010). *The comparative economics of sport*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

into the Patriots' regime. Notably, Caserio and his scouts routinely select players that other teams do not want. His approach is unfathomable to most other teams — either they're too slow, not big enough or have no distinguishable trait or role — which is traditionally thought to be fundamental for a player to establish himself in the NFL (whose pseudo-acronym is widely known as Not-For-Long). Thus, it conveys the high turnover rate of players in the league. Quite convincingly however, the Patriots recruitment team has benefited from the near-sightedness of other teams, and by their clever and developmental approach.

Essentially, 'The Patriot Way' encompasses adaptability, a willingness to work, and being modest and highly teachable. Players are often chosen as 'castaways' from other teams. Despite this, under Caserio's tutelage, the Patriots' talent coaches notice where untapped potential rests — players whom have not reached their peak, are malleable and intelligent enough to improve, or have not quite found their role but are willing to listen and learn — New England adapts their playing system to fit these player's strengths. In fact, Caserio's team of scouts has 'scary-good' results. For example, Matt Slater, the 153rd pick (2008 NFL Draft), is now one of the best special team players in the NFL. He serves as a captain for the Patriots. Julian Edelman, a 232nd pick (2009 NFL Draft), and former quarterback in college who was overlooked by every other team in the league — found a role on the Patriots at wide receiver — and just won the Super Bowl's most coveted individual award for Most Valuable Player in 2019. The list could certainly go on. Tom Brady was passed up by every team several times before getting plucked up by the Patriots as the famous 199th pick (2000 NFL Draft). Brady is arguably the greatest player in NFL history with an unprecedented 6th Super Bowl win in 2019 at the age of 41. Providing roles and responsibilities for your staff — and letting them own their decisions — is essential to team success. This reminds me of a quote from the legendary co-founder of Apple, creative visionary and inspiring leader — Steve Jobs — who remarked on Apple's recruitment policy this way:

“It doesn't make sense to hire smart people and tell them what to do. We hire smart people so they can tell us what to do.” (Steve Jobs as cited in Schwantes, 2017).

Like Bill Belichick does — and Steve Jobs did — getting one's team on the same page requires setting expectations, giving significant roles and responsibilities to their staff, and allowing them the autonomy to take control. Undoubtedly, this process is a delicate balance of effective leadership decisions, and extends beyond to the community as well. Outstanding coaches are creative yet uncompromising when shaping a collective identity. Frosty Westering implemented a creative vision for his collegiate American football team (Pacific Lutheran University; Division III), that extended beyond the field. In what was termed 'Afterglow', his players, their friends and family, team supporters and coaches, would all gather post-game to reflect, share food, give approbations, and also collect feedback from players to improve the program. At mid-week the team captains collected their peer's thoughts and feelings, functioning as a feedback channel from the players to coaches. If anything needed to be brought up, it was said aloud to the entire group. The point of this mission statement — to embrace each other and bring everybody closer together — had a remarkable effect. The environment was one where parents even cried after their sons left the program, because the head coach had included them in a very authentic way (Harrity, 2012).

Besides the obvious greatness that all these coaches personified, what sets them apart is their own unique ability to build a unified team, inspire individuals to perform at their best, and create a culture that extends to the community (i.e. fans, family members, etc.). As you spend time developing your coaching plans to improve your athlete's strengths, try to understand where you can improve yourself too. I bet if you ask any athlete you know, about the best coach they ever had — from professional, amateur or participatory levels — I would postulate that the chances are quite good that their favorite coach had characteristics which resemble some of the traits listed above. Know your own strengths, be authentic, hardworking, but patient. If you are a freshly coined coach, spend time developing your own leadership talent, and know that results do not happen overnight. Start inwards, and go outwards from there. When you feel okay to be yourself, and strive to be the very best version of 'you', then you encourage others to do the same. As my Uncle Ron always says "You be you".

If you are a sport director or sport policy planner, or have ‘leader’ attached to your job description, good for you. I’m sure you care about developing yourself too, since you are reading this right now. During my first year in football⁶ coaching back in 2014, I tried to emulate some of these leadership strategies by applying them in my own way using interdisciplinary teaching methods. I related coaching concepts to workable, real-life situations and settings that I felt my athletes would understand, and be inspired to hear. My aim was to benefit their lives outside of sport as well. I created a team first unity with mission statements that included their input. I tried to connect with each player every two weeks through personal conversation that had nothing to do with sport. By using varied sources of information and ways of teaching — workshop settings, team talks, retreats, and surprise activities — I tried my best to make sure there was variety, and something for my athletes to learn. I included the parents in the discussion as well. This gave my team ‘assets’ of layered support. Sounds like a good plan — right?

Well, actually, I had little to show for it after my first two years of coaching. In fact, by statistics alone, parents and directors were starting to ask questions of my methods. These rumblings from stakeholders sounded the ‘alarm bells’ as questions surfaced — ranging from player-selection to tactical strategy issues — all testing my conviction as a new coach. Luckily for me, my direct superior gave me much support and confidence to stay on course. It was not until my third year that results started to show.

During preseason that year, we were ranked 157th in the State of Florida (based off the previous season’s record), out of a pool of around 300 teams. This was the first season my team was eligible to play in a State-wide competition (Florida State Cup), for ages 13-14. Competing amongst 300 (approximately) other teams it was a beautiful ride that started out with many failures. Ultimately, we went on a winning run after the first month of the season, winning — back-to-back-to-back — local, sub-regional, and regional tournaments. Eventually, our ride ended in the last eight teams in the state of Florida. A feat that no coach had previously achieved within their first five years of coaching at the club. If I am completely candid, the good results offered some vindication from the ‘doubters’, yet what truly mattered to me was the heart-felt messages like this, from one of my former athlete’s parents:

“Your approach with the boys created something massive for them to remember for the rest of their lives. I never told you this, but before the season started [so-and-so] wanted to quit soccer

⁶ Football from here on refers to world football or ‘soccer’ in the United States, and Australia.

before he came to play for you. I'm convinced his turnaround has been because of your coaching. I don't really know how you did it. I can just tell you that I have never seen him so pumped about anything before! He is in love with soccer again. Thank you!" (Personal Information, Louis Houle, 07.04.19).

My take-away from that successful year would be that while coaching success is certainly subjective, results are not. When you focus solely on results, you tend to sell your own coaching effectiveness short — taking a quantity over quality approach — that even may begin to curtail your players' motivations and indirectly affect your winning record. Instead, by connecting with my athletes, I realized how much more I could 'affect' them, but ironically, upon reflection, I think about how much they truly have affected me.

Within a similar vein, this paper explores the experiences of Finnish youth football coaches embarking on qualitative research to tap their inner leadership capabilities. As described throughout this introduction, a central principle that each of these remarkable coaches share (excluding myself in that category), is the ability to create strong interpersonal relationships with their athletes. In doing so, fostering a deep connection allows them to attract devotion and performance beyond normal expectations. Despite this information being shared through personal stories, quite convincingly, within the literature pertaining to leadership in youth sport, a paucity of information reflects the need to explore ways to build coaches' leadership knowledge, skills, and behaviors in very interpersonal, and intrapersonal ways (e.g. Lefebvre et al., 2016). Through exploratory workshop design the Transformer Research Project is an attempt to fill the gap. Notwithstanding, this process brought forth an enriching learning experience for the lead facilitator and writer of this dissertation, both from personal and professional perspectives.

1.1 Structure of the thesis

The following chapter consists of the first section of the literature review, which focuses on the effects of youth engagement in sport⁷. This includes information from a scientific perspective regarding various effects that youth acquire from sport. The aim is to ensure that youth sport organizations are well informed themselves — and indirectly making sure coaches are well informed to effect positive outcomes — within the youth sport coaching environment. Next, the literature review shifts to discussing how to curb player and volunteer coach dropout, while proposing various models and examples through exemplar cases. Then, the main purpose of the Transformer Research Project is introduced, specifically relating to coaching development programs (CDPs). This has two-fold reasoning: 1) First, to expose the gap found within literature of the disproportionate number of CDPs initiated by institutional sport governing bodies oriented at the national and communal levels; 2) To set the stage for the Transformer Workshop⁸. Chapter 4 introduces the theoretical framework as the guiding force driving the Transformer Research Project forward.

The research task and methodology is presented in chapter 5. This includes discussing the purposes and aims of the study. In totality, this dissertation tracks the process, formation, and description of the Transformer Research Project and the Transformer Research Group⁹, which includes — ten interviews, four stakeholder meetings, one workshop, fifteen observations, rigorous journaling, and five feedback sessions — all-encompassing a period of seven months. The results include the outline of the Transformer Workshop (content, objectives, and modes of delivery), the thoughts, perceptions, and behaviors of the entire project with suggestions for improvement. Lastly, the discussion, limitations, and suggestions for future research are highlighted in chapter 7.

⁷ ‘Sport’ is used from here on to describe either team engaged physical activity or freely chosen physical activity, unless expressed otherwise.

⁸ See chapter 6 Results. Transformer Workshop is the exploratory CDP aimed to enhance coaches’ interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge, skills, and behaviors.

⁹ Transformer Research Group refers to the five coaches and lead facilitator of this study.

2 ADOLESCENT SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

“Building a solid foundation in the early years of a child’s life will not only help him or her reach their full potential, but will also result in better societies as a whole”

Novak Djokovic

This chapter focuses on the benefits and pitfalls associated with sport engagement from various constructs, which affect the human mind and body. This information helped to inform the Transformer Research Project in a scientific, yet general way. Thus, to improve the coaching environment for children one must first educate themselves (albeit by seemingly commonsense information) on the positive and negative effects that sport accrues on adolescent lives from physical, intellectual, psycho-social, and emotional constructs.

The purpose behind this discussion is to affect knowledge through various ways to reinforcement it. Therefore, information sharing through scientific proof regarding the ways in which youth are effected through sport is a tool that can make practical use of formal knowledge by putting it into action in live settings. In other words, youth sport organizations — by default of being associated with the development of children — are practically, morally, and ethically obliged to obtain and make use of this knowledge with great purpose. In addition, coaches who show strong knowledge in these constructs are more informed and capable to construct sporting environments where kids feel safe, empowered, and in control of their own development (Côté, 1999; Turnnidge & Côté, 2016).

Over the past few decades, researchers have grown concerned that social forces have negatively influenced the behavior of youth. Post-modern households with both parents working or single parent homes, and increased unsupervised time of youth have all affected growth patterns (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). While changing home-life situations certainly puts pressure on adolescents, those that remain physically active are not immune from negative outcomes either (Kokko et al., 2016). With the advent of several technologies in today’s rapidly changing world, from instant messaging to the internet, relentless streams of information exist within a simple reach into our pockets, and have drastically changed the course of human civilization. As Gould and Weinberg (2015) argue, these demands have taken its toll through adversely affecting the optimal levels of mental health and psychological well-being in our society.

The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (NRCIM) has outlined a few areas affecting positive youth development (PYD), physical, intellectual, psycho-social, and emotional factors. Youth acquiring personal and social gains within these constructs are known to benefit through layers of support (Eccles & Appleton, 2002). Expanding on this condensed conceptualization, Benson's (1997) 'developmental assets' approach represents a wider avenue to drive positive effects on youth lives. Further divided into forty external and internal assets however, this categorization goes beyond the scope of this dissertation. Nevertheless, it forms a valuable basis for supporting youth gains. Dialogue between various segments in society must be present, ranging from schools and sport organizations, to neighborhoods and congregations. Essentially, to ensure the optimal development of youth, a human development approach is required (e.g. Benson, 1997). Sport organizations are encouraged to make connections with schools, teachers, parents and other leaders in the community to interconnect youth with 'layers' of support.

2.1 Positive Outcomes of Sport

Youth sport activity build habits that last into adulthood. Through enabling youngsters to develop the necessary skills of building strong and healthy lives, PYD outcomes become self-perpetuating behaviors. Habits become traits, and traits become personality characteristics (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004). This positive effect is multifaceted, which leads to enhanced professional skills required in occupational settings to instilling self-awareness. Both results affect youth by initiating the intrinsic motivation required for self-reflection. By focusing on youth's strengths and optimizing them through a human developmental approach, they begin to tap into their own innate potential. Using the NRCIM's framework and constructs affecting PYD, positive occurrences relative to physical, psycho-social, emotional, and intellectual outcomes through sport activity are discussed.

2.1.1 Importance of Physical Development

The adolescent experience is one of the most complex and fascinating transitions in our lifetimes. Certainly, youth being physically active is a major prerequisite during the growing years if normal growth and development are to be maintained (Bar-Or, 1983). As the onset of puberty begins, the rate of changes occurring in the body are surpassed only by the infancy stage in the human lifespan. Characterizing this duration of time are intense biological processes taking place, in which interactions between the brain, pituitary gland, and the gonads are all incredibly sensitive and reactive to each other (Sallis & Patrick, 1994).

With youth obesity on the rise (e.g. Segel, 2011), coupled with physical inactivity being associated with a variety of adverse outcomes — increased hypertension, risk of heart disease, increase risk of cancer, and doubling the effect of obesity (e.g. Thompson et al., 2006) — means supporting and encouraging active lifestyles takes a front seat in the discussion of PYD. Boding well for active youth sport activity increases cardiovascular fitness and enhances muscular strength, stamina, and stable bone structure (Sallis & Patrick, 1994). In addition, deposited physical gains during the highest growth spurt period (i.e. peak height velocity) during adolescence increases an individual's 'ceiling' for muscle growth, strength, and performance capabilities (Borges et al., 2017). Furthermore, this perpetual benefit of health continues into their adult lives as youngsters who develop physically active lifestyles early on in life reduce the likelihood of developing physiological related diseases (just mentioned above) in later ages (Sallis & Patrick, 1994).

Interestingly, as Sherar and colleagues (2010) posit, as growth and maturation occur, although rooted as biological processes, the fundamental concept of physical activity is rooted at the behavioral level. This suggests that physical activity is required for learning basic motor-mechanical skills. With increases in physical activity through movement, neuromuscular maturation is propelled forward. Then, perpetual motor-mechanical skills become salient (i.e. first we learn how to crawl, walk, and then run), and eventually this process lends itself towards executing more complex movements and behaviors (e.g. joining a gymnastics team and learning to do cart wheels). Thus, enabling youth to become physically active through various experiences in sport opens the door to other facets of their development that affect other PYD outcomes (i.e. psycho-social development).

2.1.2 Positive Psycho-Social and Emotional Development

If sport is fashioned correctly by sport directors, coaches and parents, youth may build healthy habits that leave lifelong tracks. These become noticed not just through physical traits, but also in personality and psychological ones as well. One's personality and emotional stability becomes enriched through higher self-esteem (Harter, 1999), self-concept (Gilman, 2001), and self-mastery (Rosenfield, 1992). Furthermore, research posits that higher satisfaction with one's own life is more salient amongst sportive children (Gould & Weinberg, 2015). Notably, youth who participate in less structured extracurricular activities (e.g. the arts and music) also deposit psychological/emotional development in their lives through reducing stress and increasing well-being (e.g. Gilman, 2001).

Socialization is a lifelong journey, which dramatically speeds up during adolescence. During this time, youngsters start developing self-concept, self-identity, and individualistic behaviors (Côte & Hay, 2002). Through the vehicle of sport and physical activity, social development begins as we learn to interact with each other and become acquainted with the social world around us (Coakley, 2009). Within a team or group-oriented environment, irrelevant of competitive or structural levels, youth become acquainted within different peer groups as they learn the social skills necessary to interact with others (Bailey, 2005). In addition, within the sporting environment, they learn moral competence through obeying rules and ethical behaviors set by their coach. This has overlapping effects, as it fosters understanding of how to function in a law-abiding society (Seefeldt & Ewing, 1997). Therefore, being involved in sport allows youth to feel support from their peers and coaches while learning how to build and maintain strong peer relationships, mentor skills, and leadership behaviors (Evans et al., 2015; Wright, 2003).

2.1.3 Intellectual Development

Larson (2000) argues that in the Western cultural contexts of today, youth must learn to develop their own initiative skills. This requires the ability to activate one's internal will, and engage upon a task with concerted effort over an extended period of time in which they face obstacles along the way. Within the sport setting, youth learn to develop this type of initiation as they are routinely presented with new challenges. As Fraser-Thomas et al., (2005) argue, youth learn to incorporate initiative skills within their social settings when they become adept at overcoming personal challenges that are commonly presented through sport.

While showing initiation certainly helps one overcome difficult social moments, it also teaches one how to network and understand the social world around them. This expands youth's capacity to relate with others, foster intergroup relationships, and embrace community integration while navigating through social status and mobility (e.g. Wankel as cited in Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). Without any question, the potential for transferable social skills (i.e. initiation) orientated from sport is great (e.g. Marsh, 1993).

When it comes to scholastic ability, as Dwyer and colleagues (2001) found, sport participation enhances academic performance. This is evidenced through biological processes being spurred on by physical movement. As active children exude greater stimulation in physiological processes of the brain — cerebral blood flow increases — stimulating growth of inter-neuronal

connections. After increases of physically activity, children's physiological response enables a fertile 'after-effect period' where improvement in memory and verbal functioning is aroused (Bidzan-Bluma et al., 2018). Thus, more active children have more 'stimulated' brains than their more sedentary peers (Shephard, 1997). The interplay between increased levels of being physically active reflect positive correlations with increased cognitive functioning of the brain.

2.2 Negative Outcomes of Sport

While research renders mostly positive reviews of sport and PYD however, potential pitfalls call for cautious measures to be taken to avoid any negative occurrences. Youth have resilient bodies, but they are not immune to physical injury, and the probability for physical injury correlates with activity level. Thus, the more physically active a child is, the more likely they are to get physically injured. Sport injuries however, are not just limited to being physically orientated outcomes. Rather, injuries may surface in various ways afflicting their physical, psycho-social, and emotional states (Budgett et al., 2000).

2.2.1 Negative Physical Development

From a global perspective, as the growth of sport has increased youth sport organizations are placing a higher value on winning. From the physical training and development standpoint, we have witnessed an increased amount of training routines which have caused physical breakdowns through overtraining (Hollander et al., 1995). Routine overtraining precipitates a negative succession of occurrences in the body that eventually lead to overload. Unpleasant sensations range from muscle fatigue, joint tenderness, body weight loss, changes in hormonal levels (i.e. blood concentrations of testosterone and cortisol), to elevated resting heart rates (Budgett et al., 2000). Therefore, proper rest and recovery should not be neglected.

Astoundingly, today there is remarkable concern over the way adolescent teens, specifically girls, are influenced by media driven outlets which promote a singular vision or image of beauty (Lagowska & Jeszka, 2011). Female athletes are more susceptible to developing eating disorders relative to their more sedentary peers. This manifests through excessive dieting to promote leanness, physical appearance, and body image of figure skaters, cheerleaders, and gymnasts (Reel, 2013). In addition, female ballet dancers are at greater risk to develop eating disorders relative to their non-dancing peers (Anshel, 2004). Within the United States, both male and female adolescent wrestlers practiced routine 'weight cutting' on a weekly basis during their respective seasons. As this rapid weight loss occurs, as much as four to five pounds

are lost each week from athletes who are generally below the recommended standard of body fat (Case et al., 2016).

2.2.2 Negative Psycho-Social and Emotional Development

As previously mentioned, the increased importance placed on winning today has compounded stress in other areas which adversely affect youth's mental states. Over the last few decades, research displays striking evidence of a global rise in depression and suicide rates (Rutz & Wasserman, 2004; Stokes et al., 2016). This demands our attention, and necessitates us to provide support for athletes from psychological and emotional perspectives. Undue stress inhibits athletes from performing not only at their optimal levels, but also can cause detrimental and irreversible harm. In best case scenarios, athletes will dropout. Therefore, proactive discussion is warranted.

Moreover, precursors to dropping out of sport are highlighted after briefly mentioning the emotional response elicited, and then some adverse social outcomes subsequently follow. This is to ensure coaches have an understanding and can be proactive at preventing negative pitfalls. Lee and Ashforth (1993) argue that as sport burnout happens the psychological response causes emotional exhaustion, whereby depersonalization occurs with decreased personal satisfaction with one's work. When this becomes the norm, it is detrimental for an athlete's self-belief. Feelings of self-worth and self-perceived competence deteriorate, causing one to lose enjoyment. They fall victim to psychological withdrawal, and then dropout (Raedeke, 1997).

Precursors to burnout remain varied across the literature. Coakley (1992) suggests that adolescent athletes experience burnout in connection with two things. First, when they feel they are missing important life opportunities at the expense of their sport involvement. Second, when they feel a lack of autonomy to control their own development. Further research showed a distinction between burnout and dropout. Schmidt and Stein (1991) found that burnout occurs when athletes perceive their alternatives to be less attractive than their current sport. This contrasted with sport dropout athletes, who perceived their alternatives equally compelling, or even more attractive than their current one.

In addition, adverse social development in the form of aggression, drug use, and sexual promiscuity is seen within the youth sport context. Unfortunately, this is found to reoccur as delinquent social behaviors become learned and accepted through self-perpetuating behaviors (Bredemeier et al., 1987). Defined as the interpersonal behavior intended to cause any physical

or mental distress (e.g. Gencheva, 2015) — aggression — has even become legitimized when such acts as fist fighting occur routinely within the youth sport setting (e.g. Bredemeier et al., 1987).

In conclusion, while this chapter focused specifically on the effects that sport has on youth, creating sporting environments with these positive pillars in mind became the basic premise of this entire paper. Therefore, youth acquiring these beneficial assets cannot be overstated. Thus, to bring out the very best in youth, coaches and sport planners need to be aware of these topics. In addition, this knowledge became the foundation on which the Transformer Research Project was built. By drawing scientific information related to the youth sport environment on a very general level, an additional purpose was to build credibility from the reader's perspective that the writer was competent to speak about such matters. Next, the direction of the discussion shifts towards the roles that youth sport organizations may play to steer on PYD and also induce player and volunteer coaching engagement.

3 ROLES OF YOUTH SPORT ORGANIZATIONS

You build a house brick-by-brick, from the ground up. There is no substitute for a strong foundation. Anything else leads to a weak frame, and it's sure to collapse when the weather gets heavy”

Anonymous

This chapter aims to elaborate on effective ways youth sport organizations can focus their programs to meet the challenges they face today. First, curbing player dropout through exploring ways to create sporting environments conducive to keeping kids engaged is discussed. Then the focus changes to the volunteer sport perspective, starting from a European Union (EU) reference, and then narrowing the scope to explore the Finnish situation. In order to make the context become ‘real’ a brief history is drawn which helps to convey how sport and volunteering has developed throughout the past century in Finland. Finally, the discussion identifies the target for this study — the Finnish volunteer youth football coach — and seeks to build a better conceptualization of the various barriers and constraints affecting volunteer engagement while postulating numerous ways to improve the situation. Thus, all this information helped ‘set the stage’, form the perimeters, and narrow the focus for the Transformer Workshop.

It is important to remember this fact: youth sport organizations would not exist if it was not for their youth staying involved in the program, or the efforts that volunteer coaches make year-after-year. Thus, youth sport organizations must care deeply about retaining their athletes and staff. The programs they install play a significant role in shaping their athletes’ experiences, lives, and developmental outcomes (reminiscent of chapter 2). Unquestionably, this also extends to their volunteer coaches — because — their roles have a great influence on youth athletes as well. Therefore, youth sport organizations need to understand how to keep kids, and volunteer coaches annually retained in the program. Exploring ways to tap internal and external motivators would be a good place to begin, but curbing the player dropout is discussed first.

3.1 Curb Player Dropout

Sport organizations must prioritize keeping kids annually enrolled in their programs. Astoundingly, two-thirds of youth around the globe between the ages 7-18 are dropping out of sport each year (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2008), and in any given year, approximately 35% of

North American youth give up on sport (Côté, 2008). The predicative adverse outcomes relative to continued participation (i.e. aforementioned benefits of physical activity), means the attrition rate of dropout should be of high importance for youth sport organizations to curb.

Despite the methodological challenges of conducting longitudinal studies geared towards discovering the precise reasons behind adolescent dropout, sport policy makers are encouraged to focus on bringing love back to the game (Gardner et al., 2017). Arguments posited throughout the literature reflect the necessity for sport policy makers to adapt their practices to remedy the escalating trend of declining rates of annual enrollment (Weiss, 2004). Relating to common reasons of why youth dropout, research reports that one must first understand the core of player motivations (Deakin et al., 2008; Weiss, 2004).

For example, a child's decision to discontinue their sport engagement may arise from several factors. Research shows one reason is a lack of effective communication between coaches, staff, and parents. This leads to a reduced ability to respond effectively to varied personalities of children (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Gould & Weinberg, 2015). In combination with increased conflict of interest (over-engaged parents, and goal-oriented training regimes), these compound factors inhibit sport programs to effectively keep kids annually engaged in their programs. Gould (2015) argues that the motives youth provide (surface level responses) are an effective way to understand why they discontinue. For example, children who dropout of sport often focus on external outcomes like results (i.e. did we win or lose the game), exhibit more stress, and have lower self-esteem. In other words, if you see this from your athlete, chances are high that they could perceive you to focus more on external factors like performances and/or results. Therefore, you must find a way to increase self-perceived abilities by changing your approach through giving more recognition on the process of development and praising effort (e.g. Dweck et al., 2016).

In addition, taking a developmental approach is beneficial. This seeks to understand how one's own self-perception of their abilities can enhance through better-quality interactions between social-environmental factors (i.e. relationships between significant others like teammates, coaches, sport directors, parents and siblings). So exploring various ways to get them involved is a good stepping stone for youth sport organizations to consider (e.g. Weiss, 2004). Moreover, it helps to explain, describe, and understand the psycho-social and behavioral changes that youth go through while adapting to meet their needs as they grow and develop. Understanding the differences and similarities that exist between individuals at various developmental stages

is required as well. This means considering environments that are conducive to keeping youth engaged in sport by focusing on quality interactions with key role models (e.g. Baltes et al., 2009). Therefore, this principle of enhancing a variety of stakeholders for the Transformer Research Project was key. For the coaches themselves, direct roll-playing exercises were conducted in the Transformer Workshop, to equip them to handle a variety of situations that could assist them to foster high quality interactions between themselves and their athletes.

3.2 Allow Kids to Find Their Sport

According to Ericsson et al., (1993) attaining expert performance in various fields such as the arts, sports, and science requires basic skills training (i.e. tutelage from coach and teacher instruction), deliberate practice over an extended period (e.g. ten years), and operating under constraints of motivation, effort, and resources. Aspects of Ericsson's theory held up well when investigated within the youth sport domain (Helsen et al., 1998; Roca et al., 2012; Forsman, 2016). Yet, helping youth obtain excellence in sport under this model is not enough to predict why some youth engage in deliberate practice, or why others tend to dropout (Starkes & Ericsson, 2003). From a sport director's point of view, supplying resources for children in the form of quality coaches, equipment, and ideal training conditions is standard. Yet, it is not enough. It becomes relevant to bring various stakeholders to the discussion table (parents, friends, siblings, and teachers), which we know have a direct influence on their sport engagement (Côté, 1999).

Côté's (1999) research provides an intriguing examination set in the grassroots domain. It highlights three stages athletes go through as they progress towards higher levels of achievement. Specifically, early diversification is favored over early specialization (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). The Developmental Model of Sport Participation (DMSP) builds off Ericsson's categorical research (1993), which comprises three phases: the sampling years, specializing years, and the investment years. This encompasses early childhood to late adolescence (e.g., 6-19). Proof of high achieving athletes going through these stages is visible throughout the literature and even in cross-cultural cases like in Finland (e.g. Forsman, 2016). Within the confines of this dissertation, it bares mentioning that all coaches excluding one, involved within this study worked with children in only the first two stages. Therefore, the last stage is mentioned only briefly.

Smith and Green (2016) argue that the framework laid down by the DMSP takes into account the influence of one's environment within their developmental stage, and provides opportunities for objective outcomes to be measured (unfortunately not in this study). Despite this, understanding how various psycho-social, emotional, environmental, and intellectual factors may affect youth in their development bodes well for enhancing self-esteem, persistence, competence, and skills that transfer into other facets of youth's lives (e.g. Starks & Ericsson, 2003; Côté, 1999). Therefore, for this purpose alone — parents, coaches and sport directors who all have invested interest — are encouraged to pay careful attention to the DMSP elaborated on next.

3.2.1 The Sampling Years

This initial stage describes the first introduction of youth to sport, occurring generally between the ages of 6 and 13, and involves the central principles of fun and excitement. Parents are primarily responsible for opening the door for their kid(s) to experience a range of activities that may suit their personality and needs. Providing opportunities for children to experience free play, the aim at this time is to derive inherent joy from the activity itself (Starks & Ericsson, 2003). Essentially, a youngster's first sport experience should be a fruitful social experiment where he or she is free to engage how they wish, without worry or fear of external pressures (Côté, 1999). Additionally, parents have the role of 'pilot' supplying their children with safe and varied experiences (i.e. flying their kids around). Thus, leading them to go wherever they practically wish — whether they display clear potential — talent or not. The latter point is crucial in building your child's self-belief, and not your own ego as a parent. This is a necessary component to keeping them engaged long enough so that they feel empowered to continue out of their own free will (e.g. Dweck, 1986).

Despite the traditional research example however, according to Hill and Hansen (1988), many sport programs have favored specialized training regimes during this initial stage as a way to improve athletic performance, bolster winning seasons, and enhance the probability of gaining a collegiate scholarship or financial reward for their respective club. Notably, early specialization — as it limits sport participation to one sport — fosters routine practices and development as youth compete on a year-round-basis. Nowadays, sport organizations provide off-season training camps annually — summer clinics, camps, other programs — that children participate in all-year-round. Yet, research implores sport planners to re-think pushing athletes

into one sport domain too early, as it has proven to have adverse outcomes related to psychological burnout (Hill & Hansen, 1988; Shank, 1983).

Unequivocally, while specializing certainly has merit in later stages of adolescent development (see below), providing youth with opportunities to sample a variety of activities early on in their sport experience gives them time to figure out what they like to do (Côté, 1999). It provides a healthy balance of intrinsic and extrinsic sources of motivation. In addition, it has achievement and non-achievement related outcomes as well (McCarthy & Jones, 2007). Within the Finnish context, talented adolescent footballers progressed through the DMSP by diversifying sport activities in the sampling years (Forsman, 2016).

3.2.2 The Specializing and Investment Years

The second stage of the DMSP resembles a greater involvement in a specific sport, generally starting between the ages of 13 and 15. Although a much shorter period than the first stage, a reduced involvement in other activities is seen (Côté, 1999). While central tenets of the sporting experience still rest on fun and excitement, a pronounced focus on sport-specific, skill-enhancement becomes more noticeable. Athletes are encouraged to focus on fewer sports. This is the time when encouragement from siblings, friends, and peer groups start to ‘kick-in’ as contributing factors to prolonging engagement. While the overall quality of the experiences during the specializing years should be positive to ensure young teens remain in sport, as Csikszentmihalyi et al., (1991) posit, teenagers tend to drop out the most during this phase. Oftentimes, the root cause of dropout tends to be because they never really got the chance to figure out what it was that they really enjoyed doing the most. One can assume from this reasoning that a reduced amount of ‘sampling years’ may lead to failure to enjoy a given task later in the developmental process.

Nonetheless, this period of youth sport development requires increased practice time for acquiring optimal skills (French & Thomas, 1987). Yet, as adolescents become more committed to fewer sports, play and enjoyment should remain central tenets during their specializing years (Larsen et al., 2013). Essentially, this period shows that successful athletes perceive this time in their development as being both challenging and fun. Parent roles tend to change by emphasizing higher expectations, but is limited to fewer domains (e.g. school and sport). Parents assist the learning process most when taking on a co-pilot role, helping to steer their child forward, but letting go of significant control (Côté, 1999). Certainly, parent’s time

and financial commitment increases during this period, in addition to, older siblings and peers playing crucial-motivating roles as well — modelling work ethic, and providing encouragement — all contributing factors to higher levels of sport engagement.

The Investment Years

While most athletes who reach this stage are approximately fifteen years old, some reach it sooner. As previously mentioned, despite only one coach having athletes at this level, some younger athletes were already engaged in this stage of their development. Therefore, research shows that younger athletes may display as little as three years of ‘sampling’ with a wide variety of play activities to approximately only one year in the ‘specializing’ stage before hitting the investment phase. Most notably, the common denominator remains a steady foundation of excitement and fun (Beamer et al., 1998 as cited in Côté, 1999). The main difference between the specializing and investing periods is the amount of focus and effort needed throughout the last phase as sport becomes primarily funneled to just one domain of focus.

3.2.3 An Exemplar Case

While reflecting back on the constraints postulated by Ericsson (1993), developing elite performers certainly rests on quality interactions between parents, coaches, sport directors, and the players themselves. While operating under the barriers of various constraints — conflict of life situations, schedules, intense biological changes occurring during the adolescent period (e.g. puberty), and the need to retain both youth and volunteers — sport organizations certainly have work to do. This information provides purposeful, yet challenging ways to encourage various stakeholders to sit at the discussion table.

While keeping the DMSP in mind — in consideration of volunteer retention and recruitment goals of sport organizations — a way to bridge these aims is to provide various opportunities for personal and professional growth of coaches. This would offer professional growth for volunteer staff, create challenging leadership programs that would stimulate a variety of beneficial outcomes (i.e. PYD and athlete development), and enhance stakeholder interest and collaboration (i.e. activate parents, community leaders, national sport governing organizations to take part in the designing process). Moreover, while keeping in line with retaining volunteers, Baker and Young (2014) argue that providing professional development holds great significance in attracting and retaining volunteer involvement. Thus, although on a very

resource-limited scale, the Transformer Research Project aimed to be a spark in the right direction with this in mind. Table 1 clarifies beneficial parameters and characteristics reflecting PYD settings which invested stakeholders from national, communal, and individual levels could collaborate on to help operationalize.

Table 1. Characteristics of Positive Developmental Settings (modified from NRCIM, 2002)

1. Physical, emotional, and psychological safety
2. Appropriate, age specific structures
3. Supportive relationships with effective lines of communication
4. Opportunities to belong
5. Positive social norms
6. Support for efficacy and mattering
7. Opportunities for skill building
8. Integration of family, school, and community efforts

Moreover, an explorative case study conducted by Larsen et al., (2013) examined what made a Danish youth football academy so successful when discussing PYD and athlete developmental outcomes. Uncovering the salient features of the program, they argue in support of the DMSP, as results reflect similar environmental and structural comparisons seen in Table 1. A holistic approach was used where meaningful life experiences and athletic outcomes shared the teaching objectives, which encompassed school education, self-growth, and athletic progress. This includes fostering strong values and principles related to life balance (i.e. school and sport), and providing various other opportunities for individual growth. Reflecting on the importance of meaningful life experiences, from a holistic perspective, this explorative study exemplifies the value that collaborative discussions have within the youth sport domain.

Despite the prominence that the DMSP shows throughout the literature, questions arise about how to embed it properly within varied cultural settings. Enabling athletes to maximize their talent both on and off the pitch is crucial, yet differs from country to country. Therefore, local stakeholders must be included in the programming phase. Questions sport organizations are encouraged to ask are: How can sport organizations team up with other community leaders to

assist their youth and athletes to cope with social, school, and sport life? What ‘risk factors’ do our youth face? How can we enhance both volunteer coach and player retention?

While sport organizations can argue and complain about constraints of finances and time, within the Finnish youth sport context, exploring ways to tap volunteer coach motivation and providing professional development through collaboration provides an interesting avenue that would work well within the DMSP. Nevertheless, regardless of the aims and arguments, understanding volunteer motivations is essential to the functioning of youth sport organizations.

3.3 Monitoring Trends of Motivation

Volunteer work is described throughout as any activity or work provided for which no payment is received, and for which the activity engaged upon was to support a sporting activity (Benenson & Stagg, 2016). From a global perspective, sport organizations situated at the grassroots level essentially function off the tireless work of their volunteer coaches (Wiersma & Sherman, 2005). In most parts of the EU more than 80% of volunteer leaders believe that serving at the grassroots level in the community contributes to young people’s respect for cultural diversity, tolerance, and solidarity (European Commission, 2016). As trends in volunteer sport participation in the EU are sensitive to socio-demographics — various influential factors related to age, job, gender, cultural heritage/pastimes — these all predict volunteer engagement in sport. Reflected in Table 2 (European Commission, 2017), are predictive factors to volunteer sport engagement found within the EU that include age, job, and tendency to exercise.

Table 2. Respondents who engage in volunteer work in sports in the EU (Special Eurobarometer 2017; N=28,031)

	Yes	Only seldom, at individual events	1 to 5 hours per month	6 to 20 hours per month	21 to 40 hours per month	More than 40 hours per month
EU28 -%		30	31	30	7	2
<i>Gender</i>						
Men	8	29	30	31	7	3
Women	4	32	33	28	6	1
<i>Age</i>						
15-24	8	37	22	32	6	3
25-39	6	32	33	24	8	2
40-54	7	28	34	29	7	2
55+	4	27	31	33	7	2
<i>Socio-professional category</i>						
Self-employed	9	24	40	26	9	1
Managers	11	30	36	28	4	2
Other white collars	6	34	26	26	10	2
Manual workers	5	30	25	32	8	4
House persons	3	15	51	33	0	1
Unemployed	4	23	44	30	3	0
Retired	4	27	28	34	9	2
Students	8	41	25	28	5	1
<i>Exercise or play sport</i>						
Regularly	12	32	30	28	5	5
With some regularity	1	28	31	31	8	2
Seldom	4	34	26	29	9	2
Never	2	30	38	26	5	1

It is important to state that this research must be examined carefully and with caution. While this displays the general landscape of people volunteering in sport related activities within the EU — Member States (28) during 2017 — a specific country analysis cannot be made, because the margin for error is too high. The sample size for individual countries is small, and there is no way to determine any personal characteristics of those who did not fill out the survey or

check the credibility for those that did. Despite this however, socio-demographic trends are notable to report.

From this evidence alone, summations can be made showing that on average males report volunteering more often than females (8% verses 4%). While age does not greatly affect volunteer engagement until after 55+ years, one's professional occupation, proclivity to exercise, and longevity in education do have an effect. For instance, people staying in school for longer (students, 8%), tends to lead to career-oriented jobs (good pay, high benefits, time off from work, etc.). Thus, they volunteer in greater frequency, in addition to managers (11%) and self-employed people (9%). One could assume this means that they have more tradeoff time to engage in volunteer work. In contrast, manual labor jobs (5%), house persons (3%), unemployed (4%), and retired folks (4%) all volunteered far less frequently. Moreover, 12% of people who exercise more routinely volunteer more often than those who exercise seldom (4%), or hardly ever at all (2%).

These correlations are consistent throughout the literature in support of various socio-demographic factors — gender, predisposition to exercise, and education — to predict whether or not people choose to participate in volunteering throughout the past decade (Farrell and Shields, 2002; Berger et al., 2008; Hallmann et al., 2015). In order to go deeper, however, cross-analysis of years is required to convey more clarity. Therefore, the general trend in the EU from 2009, 2013, and 2017 is compared relative to factors related to gender, education, and proclivity to exercise.

A slight majority in the gender difference for sport volunteers within the EU from 2009 again show males (9%) volunteering more often than females (5%). Yet, both are down 1% each as of 2017 (8% and 4%, respectively). In addition, evidence clearly shows that education longevity (those staying in education for longer) remained consistent throughout the years. Notably, respondents who exercise or are engaged in sport themselves were strong predictive factors of volunteer sport engagement — 15% regular sport activity down 3% (2009 to 2017), and 12% seldom sport activity down 1%. Figure 1 reflects these socio-demographic trends from 2009, 2013 and 2017 within the EU.

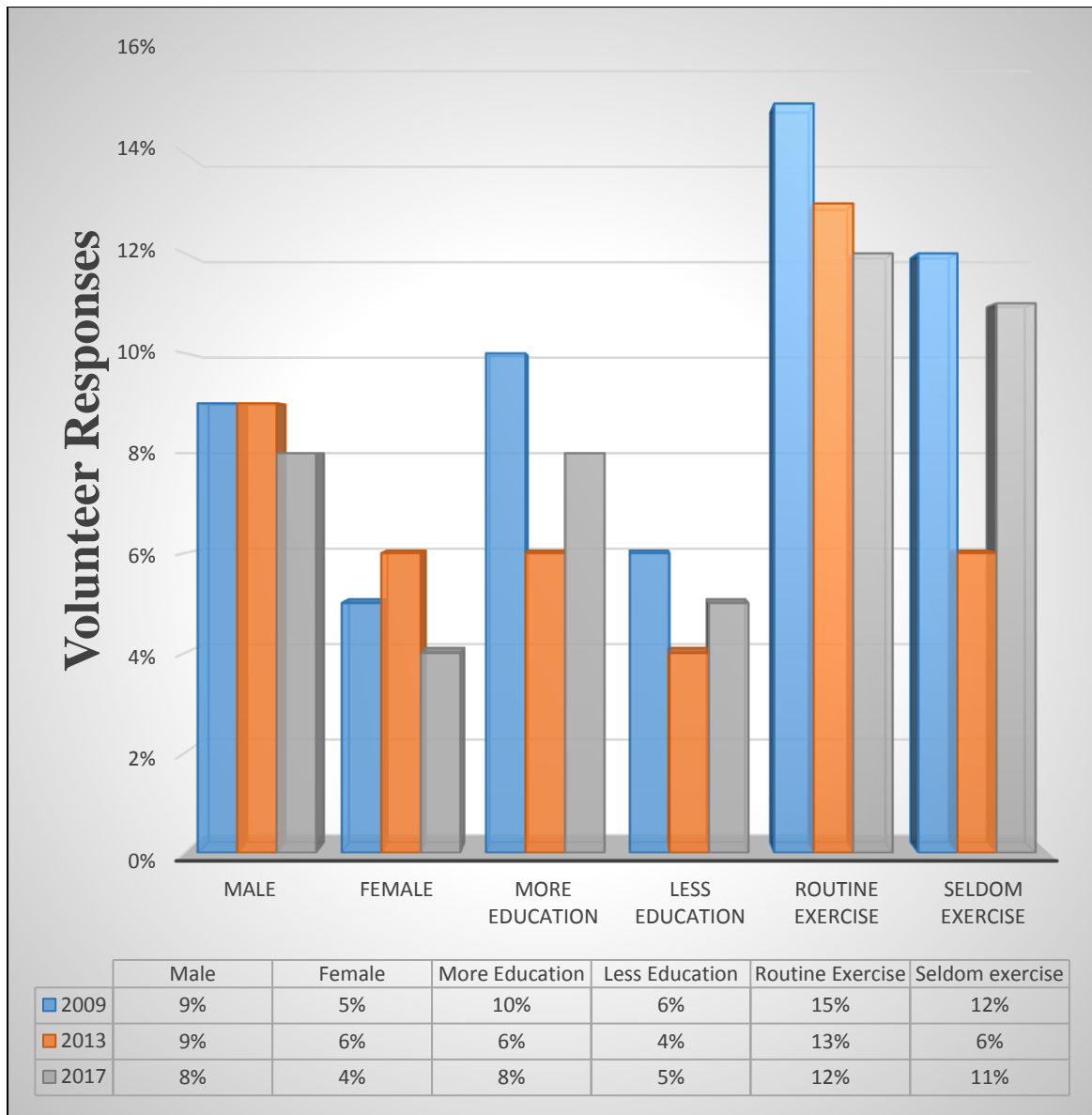


Figure 1. Socio-demographic comparisons of volunteer sport engagement (modified from Special Eurobarometer 2009, 2013, 2017)

This graph displays the percentage of volunteers by gender, amount of education, and frequency of exercise throughout three different time periods (2009, 2013, and 2017). Notably, the EU as a whole remained relatively stable, and as previously mentioned, no specific country analysis could be made from this condensed generalized depiction. When viewed from a grand scale (i.e. EU Member States) only insofar as developing trends from previous years — one can assume — that despite the drop of 6% from 2009 to 2013 in volunteers who seldom exercise, results are resoundingly in favor again with socio-demographic factors previously mentioned.

Thus, people who are more educated, those that lead more active lifestyles, and males generally tend to engage in more volunteer sport activities. This helps to distinguish the aims and purposes that sport organizations may focus their attention towards when thinking of recruiting sport volunteers. The discussion now turns to uncovering how sport activities have developed within the Finnish context.

A simplified sport-analysis: Finland — past to present

The Finnish economy of today is an indisputable reflection of great success, a triumph over various social and political hardships¹⁰. Necessary when speaking about volunteer sport engagement, from the 1860s to the early 2000s, the gross domestic product (GDP) in this region of the world (i.e. monetary value of all goods and services produced within a region or country in a specific period) has witnessed a 21-fold increase. This has had a huge impact on the ability of Finns to partake in sport and sport volunteering. The Finnish case has been quite successful — relative to the average rate of other EU Member States — which experienced an 11-fold increase in GDP during this same 140+ year period (Ojala et al., 2006).

Certainly, this brief description barely scratches the surface when speaking about how geopolitical and economic factors have influenced the sport sector of Finland today. Yet, it provides a backdrop which may explain the disparity between the Nordic region compared with the rest of the EU, relative to sport from a holistic perspective. Specifically, Finland boasts over 300 municipalities with approximately 9,000 sport clubs, and around 30,000 sport facilities today (Vehmas & Illmanen, 2013). Finns are consistently some of the top performers in providing sport services, physical activity, and volunteer sport engagement throughout Europe (Special Eurobarometer 2009, 2013, 2017).

Notably, the sport bylaws in Finland are a root cause. Serving Finns through promoting physical activity, and supporting sport initiatives with non-discriminatory practices — thus, secures sport equality for all — as it strives to reduce the barriers of participation for disabled persons who would like to engage in sport (Vehmas & Illmanen, 2013). The results today have not come easily however, as Finland struggled to gain independence from the Soviet Union. But in 1917 they managed to do so, and this sparked increased public and civic engagement in various sectors of society (sport, education, culture, etc.). It was not until after the Second

¹⁰ See Ojala et al (2006). *The road to prosperity: an economic history of Finland*. Helsinki, Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.

World War, however, that sport administrations and associations began to sprout up throughout municipalities across the country in large numbers. Social and political movements during the 1960s spurred on momentous sport policy ‘papers’ that would establish the protection, provisions, and sporting rights for Finns. Moreover, these works helped to tangibly set, ideologically form, and culturally stamp the importance of sport and physical activity onto the Finnish way of life. It formed the ethos of active Finnish society that still resonates today. Arguably, the sparks that set the phenomena into motion were the Primary Health Care Act in 1972 and the Commission on Physical Fitness from 1970-1977. Both encouraged health services, gender and social equality, sport for all, and the awareness of leisure time activities (Salmikangas & Itkonen, 2015). So, when we examine the Finnish case relative to sport volunteering from a historical perspective, Finns have a healthy and strong foundation that continually strives for improvement today.

Sport volunteering in Finland nowadays

In 2009, the Special Eurobarometer survey on the prevalence of volunteerism at the country level, found 18% of respondents in Finland recorded that they volunteer at sport related events or activities. Sweden and Finland represented the top two EU nations. Although reported volunteerism at sporting events has recently declined (7% from 2009 to 2017), sport volunteerism in Finland remains quite strong, as they ranked fifth highest in volunteer rates in 2017 (Special Eurobarometer, 2017).

Very little change occurred from 2009 to 2013. Annual reports show volunteers decreased 1% at sport events, while 1-to-5 hours (monthly) grew 3%, 6-to-20 hours decreased 4%, and volunteers who dedicated 40+ hours grew 3% (Special Eurobarometer, 2013). There is no clear evidence on how many hours each month Finns dedicated to volunteering in sport in 2017. Key findings throughout the EU however, generally reflect 3% increases in both 1-to-5 and 6-to-20 hour ranges, a 1% increase in the 21-to-40 hour range, and no changes were seen regarding 40+ hours per month. Table 3 provides a visual description of active engagement of Finnish sport volunteers and their hourly patterns throughout the last decade.

Table 3. Frequency of Finnish volunteers, their capacity rates and changes (European Commission, 2009; 2013; 2017)

Finnish Volunteering Capacity, Rates and Percentages	2009	2013	2017
Finnish sport volunteers	18%	13%	11%
Sport event volunteers	43%	42%	37%
Volunteering 1-to-5 hours per month	26%	29%	NA
Volunteering 6-to-20 hours per month	23%	19%	NA
Volunteering 21-to-40 hours per month	5%	4%	NA
Volunteering 40+ hours per month	2%	2%	NA

Comparing the evidence provided within the Finnish volunteer case from 2009, 2013, and 2017, a noticeable drop of 7% in active engagement of volunteer sport events is seen. Although this drop arouses questions, for this research project the decrease in volunteer percentages for sport volunteering is negligible relative to volunteer coaches. Despite definable evidence of what activities were engaged in, one can assume that while volunteer coaches spend anywhere between 5-20 hours a month coaching, the 4% drop from 2013 to 2017 remains a little suspicious. Further evidence is needed to determine what may be the cause. Having an understanding of the decline in sport volunteering may be an important step in directing sport policy that would encourage rates to increase, but only if certain volunteer activities are pinpointed first. The discussion now turns to understanding volunteer coach motivations.

Understanding volunteer coaches' motivations

Certainly, being effective at running a youth sports club requires keeping up with the latest trends in volunteering, while knowing how to motivate and retain active volunteers helps as well. The argument is asserted that having an inspiring vision with clear programs that provide professional development (CDPs) for active volunteer coaches could improve retention rates and raise the interest for various stakeholders. At least as reflected in the literature, this is a worthy postulation as providing inspiring vision for club members may reduce the load on sport

directors by decreasing their annual recruitment duties, and help their organization's sporting, communal, and financial goals (e.g. Bouchet & Lehe, 2010).

In a study conducted on how sport clubs function with various stakeholders (municipalities, commercial businesses, and grassroots clubs), Hallmann, Feiler and Breuer (2015) suggest that sport services provided through collaboration with community support and paired with sufficient miscellaneous income from the contributing volunteers (i.e. parents and coaches having enough tradeoff money and time), represent key factors in predicting active involvement in the program. Thus, sport organizations may reduce inhibitors for annual enrollment by working with local authorities to supply affordable and sufficient sporting services that would induce active involvement of their volunteer bases (Breurer, Hallmann & Wicker, 2011).

Breaking these arguments down, one can assume that lower levels of income generally restrict the possibility of signing up to coach or play a sport. Certainly, when available resources (time and money) are tight, the services and benefits supplied by the club should be enough to offset the tradeoff costs. When these are minimal however, this weakens motivation to continue with increased internal and external constraints. From the volunteer coach's perspective, when there is poor organizational support — lack of leadership, vision, career or professional development paths, feedback, and/or poor quality programming measures — coupled with the amount of resource constraints just mentioned (time and money), sport organizations' volunteer coaching enrollment may continue to decline. Additionally, the same argument applies to families with parents spending many tireless hours at work. From their perspective, as the massive time consumption of being involved with a sports team entails laborious financial and personal commitments (long working hours, commuting, playing and coaching fees, etc.), services provided by the club should be high (great programming, coaching and leadership development, transferable skills, facility use and infrastructure, etc.). When this expectation is not fulfilled, this compels families to make decisions on what is best for their priorities. Both examples represent commonplace (external and internal constraints) that inhibit volunteer coaches and youth from engaging annually in the program. Yet, if we go deeper in one case (coaches), for the purpose of this dissertation, we examine further the root of the volunteer coach's motivation.

According to Bouchet and Lehe (2010), volunteer motivations have two basic principles: intrinsic and extrinsic factors. First, the experiences of self-growth that come with helping others succeed and being able to play a significant role within a youth sport context builds one's self-esteem. This is regarded as the 'enhancement motive' where people are more willing to be internally driven as they feel connected to a larger group, and are able to grow tighter social networks (Eley & Kirk, 2002). Additionally, there are many students on college campuses who are motivated to donate their time in exchange for leadership skill-development, and to gain new experiences that look great on a resume (e.g. Bouchet & Lehe, 2010). Volunteers need challenges, but also experiences that will allow them to tap their altruistic beliefs and desires (Hankinson & Rochester, 2005). By focusing on internal and external motivators, sport organizations may consider various ways of keeping coaches internally motivated and professionally 'turned on'.

Thus, as the oscillating trends in volunteer engagement that we have witnessed over the years continue (according to the latest research), one may reflect that the need for a fresh approach to encourage sport volunteers is now. As we know, volunteer engagement is hard to predict in the youth sport settings (fluctuating rates that are trending down over the past decade), and this requires organizations to explore ways to recruit new, as well as retain their former coaches (e.g. Bouchet & Lehe, 2010). One clear way towards this path of improving volunteer engagement is to take a more skills-based approach towards examining the volunteer coaching experience. This means utilizing volunteers in various ways, giving them challenging responsibilities, and offering concrete ways to build professional skills needed in various workplace settings ("Volunteering to learn", 2014).

3.4 Coaching Development Programs

Coaching development programs (CDPs) are effective tools for driving learning and steering athletic outcomes (Turnnidge & Côté, 2017). They are systematic and applied through learning activities designed to inform or change coaching behaviors through education, social interaction, and personal reflection (Evans et al., 2015). According to Lefebvre et al., (2016), the vastness of CDPs today produces a wide range of beneficial effects. Yet, understanding their growth within an expanding field necessitates elaborating on various differences first.

Firstly, as this growth has witnessed increased levels of intervention based CDPs throughout recent literature, understanding how they fit within a larger domain helps to establish their

credibility by elaborating on various uses and purposes. Therefore, this section offers clarification on how programs operate from both wider — curriculum based CDPs to lower scaled community and research oriented ones — like the Transformer Research Project.

3.4.1 A Shift in Conceptualizing Coaching Development Programs

Although the practical use of CDPs has been widespread throughout the literature and continues to grow, evidence posits that for many years there have not been efficient ways to describe and understand coaching education (McCullick et al., 2009; Evans et al., 2016), and in some ways it has even become outdated. A literature review conducted by Lefebvre et al., (2016) generated a classification system of CDPs which allows researchers to assess these different forms of coaching knowledge, as well as what kinds of behavior changes were intervened throughout previous programs. Throughout the search 1,579 articles were examined from 1980-2014, each categorized by aiming to affect professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal coaching knowledge (i.e. described as three separate knowledge domains).

Results yielded 285 cases that satisfied the criteria of fitting into one of these three domains. Countries or political unions that were represented in this literature review included Canada, United Kingdom, United States, Australia, Spain, Norway, and Switzerland. Therefore, it is essential to point out that no argument can be made regarding Finnish CDPs, and their proportional difference of domain focus. Regardless, there is strong evidence that supports a far greater emphasis on formally directed and professionally oriented CDPs found throughout the literature (261; 92%), with interpersonally oriented and research driven CDPs representing far less (18; 6%), and intrapersonal-focused programs representing a minuscule amount (6; 2%). The pie graph (Figure 2) helps to illustrate the disparity of action oriented CDPs and their proportional differences between these domains. Subsequently, comparisons are used to describe how this study is best served to fill the gap in research.

Moreover, the results show that a majority of CDPs are being focused through professional knowledge domains. These are indistinguishable from various programs conducted by well-funded broader national curriculums or university based programs. Thus, they have marketing strategies and motives — requirements and fees, ending with diplomas or accreditation for successful graduates — that steers one towards professional employment. Oftentimes, these are necessary parameters to gain employment opportunities and are valid reasons to engage in them. New knowledge obtained within this domain is necessary for coaches, as it is conducive

to developing top athletes (e.g. Evans et al., 2015; Lefebvre et al., 2016). It is important to note that classifying various CDPs presents a rather time-consuming and exhausting challenge for researchers, as many domains apply in various forms from one-to-another. It is valuable to consider ways to break apart contrasting forms of knowledge utilized within the coaching experience however, as it expands the practical use, rhetoric, and the potential to apply research to various constructs within such a dynamic field. Figure 2 shows the disparity in knowledge domains focused through contemporary CDPs.

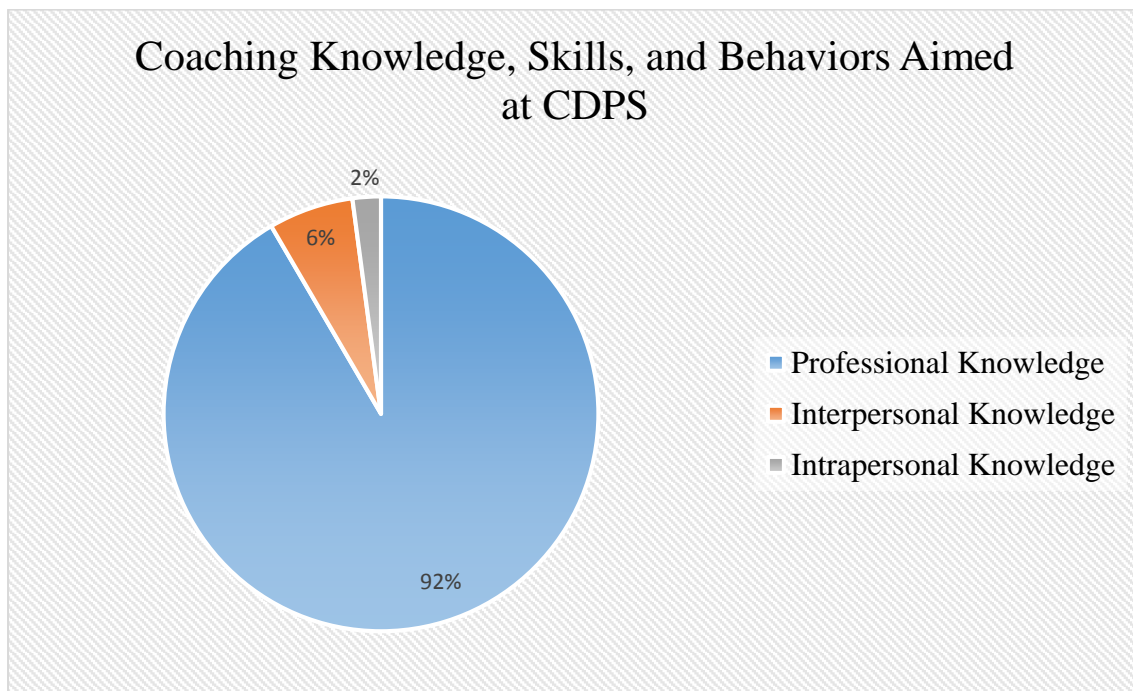


Figure 2. Conceptualizing the disparity in intervention-based CDPs (modified from Lefebvre et al., 2016)

When analyzing this, it is fair to note that the lead facilitator is not trying to categorically describe various programs, but rather reflect on practical considerations that extend across domains — each program crosses over concepts in some ways — as they all encompass the field of coaching education. For example, CDPs whose primary focus is professional development may cross domains when covering the topic of injury prevention by exploring ways to affect coaches' interpersonal skills, which could be helpful in the coach-athlete relationship. However, this predominate view reflected throughout the literature could be argued to show a confirmation bias (either intentional or unintentional from institutional, communal and individual levels), as the dominance clearly shows professional knowledge being highly favored. Thus, the inference can be made that technical and tactical traits are seen to align more with traditional conceptualizations of effective coaching (Lefebvre et al., 2016;

Turnnidge & Côté, 2017). In addition, breaking Figure 2 down even further, a notable correlation across orientations of initiation (those who implement the program) from national, communal, and individual levels corresponds to greater emphasis being placed on professional knowledge domains (See further, Figure 3).

Intrapersonal CDPs represented by far the least amount of attention paid to coaching knowledge advancement with six total (2%). By definition, this includes one's ability to self-monitor their behavior, use reflective strategies (goal setting and checking), and develop a basic coaching philosophy and style that fits their own personality. CDPs that explore this domain encourage coaches to reflect on their own personal values, and monitor personal behaviors as a means to promote intrapersonal knowledge, skills, and behaviors. This increases their self-awareness (e.g. Gould & Weinberg, 2015). While key to point out that only six programs have focused on this domain, nearly all of them used sport-specific concepts to drive the learning outcomes. And these were introductory level courses on a progression path to further one's credentials, i.e., for accreditation purposes (Lefebvre et al., 2016).

Interpersonal CDPs represented 18 out of the 285 total (6%). Highlighting this knowledge domain is the ability for coaches to connect well with their athletes. Having knowledge and strategies for interacting with members of their team, which extends to the community around their team as well. This skillset seeks to build off intrapersonal knowledge and affect learning through executing action goals to better coaches' connections with their athletes. Also, it includes developing an understanding of how to build team cohesion and strategies to develop healthy relationships. CDPs which focused on this domain explore leadership styles that build a team environment in which athletes have an ideal setting to bring forth PYD and athlete development outcomes (Turnnidge & Côté, 2017).

Professional CDPs represent the lion's share of attention throughout the literature. As previously mentioned, they explore ways to enhance coaches' understanding of the technical and tactical aspects of the game. How to stimulate learning through effective ways to plan a session, coordinate coaching objectives and progressions, yet also to convey messages so athletes may learn swiftly and effectively. It also incorporates a human development approach, where coaches learn the latest pedagogical and basic psychological skills. In addition, it includes establishing competencies in a variety of ways from adaptation, health and well-being, to helping coaches identify and manage injuries (Lefebvre et al., 2016).

Below, Figure 3 offers a further breakdown and concrete examination of CDPs found throughout the literature.

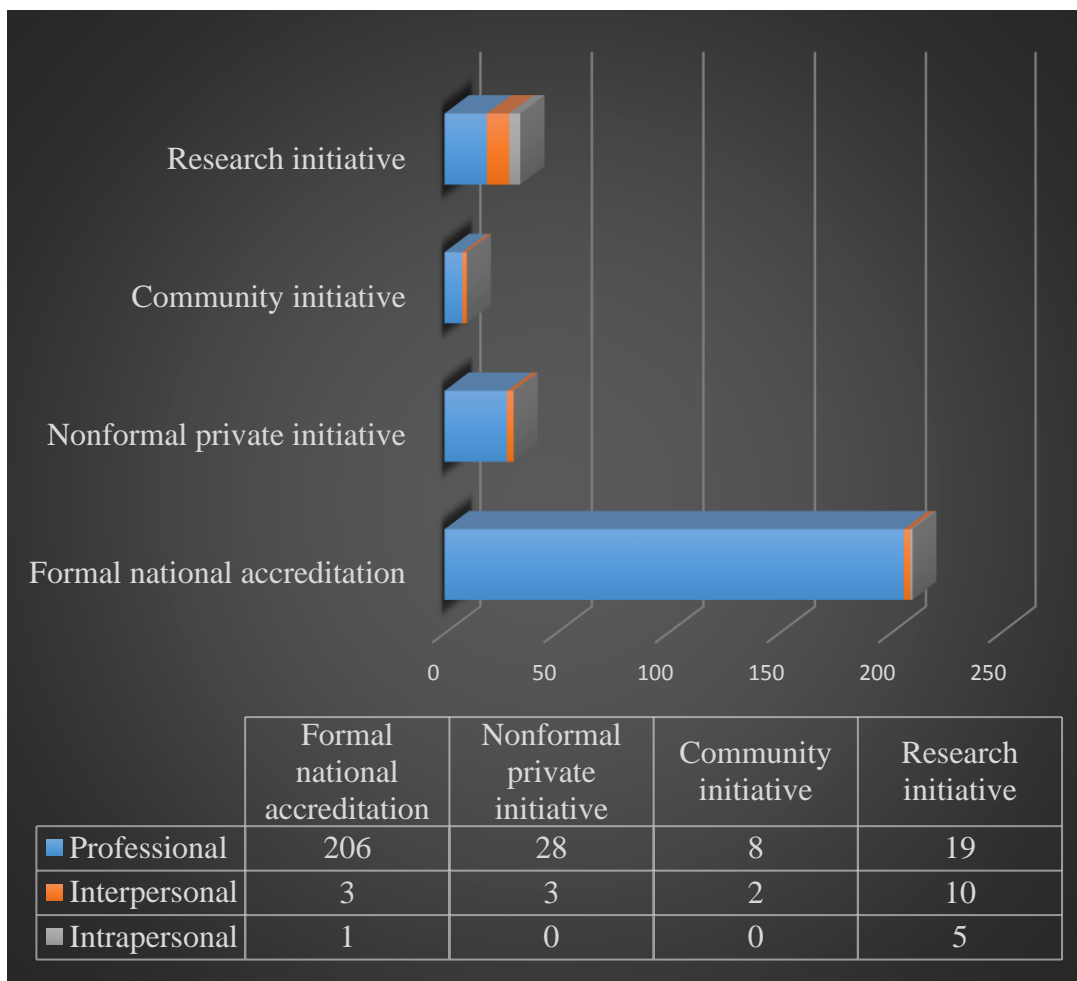


Figure 3. Number of CDPs by orientation and aim 1980-2014 (modified from Lefebvre et al., 2016)

As the evidence in Figure 3 shows, the vast majority of CDPs originated from the professional knowledge domain conducted through national accreditation contexts (72%). When looking at the organizational context being predictive of the domain of coaching knowledge, a remarkably high rate of evidence supports correspondingly high proportions of professionally focused CDPs throughout all contexts, excluding one. For example, all but four CDPs were for national accreditation initiatives (98%), all but three for Non-formal private initiatives (90%), and all but two for Community initiatives (80%). These were focused on the professional domains of coaching. Yet, only 56% of research led initiatives focused on this domain of professional expertise. Interestingly, none of the CDPs led by private or community efforts focused attention solely on intrapersonal skills development while national initiatives were very low (0.5%) and research led initiatives had the highest rate in this regard (15%).

As this research displays a paucity of attention pertaining to intrapersonal and interpersonal knowledge domains, this requires more collaboration between national, communal and research orientations to design exploratory CDPs. While this paper is initiated from a research orientation, efforts were made to communicate with various stakeholders to help fill the gap within the literature. Moreover, effective coaches exemplify: 1) strong professional expertise and knowledge of the game (game tactics, developing physical, technical and creative players); 2) an adeptness to create deep, strong, and very interpersonal connections with their players (gain trust, inspire, motivate, and show care); and 3) self-reflect and calibrate one's own behaviors to improve their coaching 'practice' through finding ways to monitor their own thoughts and behaviors by keeping a coaching journal (Turnnidge & Côté, 2009). The Transformer Research Project focuses solely on points 2 and 3. While having both scientific and practical benefits, such as making the sport experience more enriching for coaches and their players, effective coaches by this conceptualization represent a marginal aim throughout the literature on CDPs (Fleishman, 1982; Turnnidge & Côté, 2017; Turnnidge & Gilbert, 2009; Lefebvre et al., 2016).

Despite the literature review reaching its full conclusion at this juncture, the research area is well drawn, and situated for the reader to understand the purpose, aims, and parameters that the Transformer Research Project encompasses. While finding the proper ways to affect the sport environment through focusing on volunteer youth football coaches presented many challenges, the potential rewards far outweighed the risks. Moreover, the lead facilitator took a leap of faith that this research could better serve the Finnish youth sport setting. Certainly, a strong background and sport experience helped — from playing and coaching to personal life experiences — all rendering effective support in addition to the aforementioned topics researched. We now turn to the chosen theoretical framework which forms the fuel that drove this action research forward: transformational leadership theory (TFL theory)¹¹.

¹¹ Transformational leadership theory is referred within the text, from here on in abbreviated form, as TFL theory

4 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader”

John Quincy Adams

This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework chosen to guide this project. First, transformational leadership (TFL) theory is discussed from its inception. Then, the four I's (4I's) — which form the skeleton — are put forth (iidealized-influence, iinspirational-motivation, iintellectual-stimulation, and iindividualized-consideration) with a brief sport related example of each. This is followed by transformational leadership relative to various other styles of leadership (e.g. transactional and laissez faire), which are elaborated on with comparative descriptors of each. Next, the strengthening effect of TFL theory is described. In addition, sport experiences are used to help understand its transferability to the youth sport domain.

Contemporary research conducted over a three-to-four decade span reflects considerable strides towards improving the leadership landscape in varied settings across the world. Especially within the youth sport setting of today — by default of producing winners and losers — this implies the importance of supporting the full range of leadership development of volunteer coaching staff. While reflecting on increased diversity, financial constraints, and external pressures of winning with fickle psycho-social factors at play — all topics spoken at length in the literature review — the exposition of TFL theory is validated through developing mentally strong and resiliently minded youngsters.

4.1 A Historical Perspective

Although a detailed review is beyond the scope of this dissertation, a brief historical perspective is called for, in order to convey how transformational leadership does hold interest for students, scholars, and practitioners alike. As Bass and Riggio (2006) expound, its emphasis on intrinsic motivation — and the positive development of turning followers into leaders — represents a more appealing perspective towards leading people compared to the more frigid exchanges of transactional leadership. Thus, transformational leadership allows for a more human developmental approach (Bass, 1990). This suits the youth sport domain. Moreover, this is prevalent within a variety of workplaces around the globe today, where environments are

present with people not only seeking inspirational leaders to help guide them, but who also want to be challenge and developed in meaningful ways (e.g. Cascio, 1995).

From its original inception, leadership scholars exchanged offerings in what typified effective leaders — what came to the forefront of discussion — was that some sort of ‘transaction’ routine occurred. An exchange or compensation for a desired behavior became a noticeable theme emerging from numerous studies on leadership throughout the years (e.g. Podsakoff & Schriesheim 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006). The idea of an exchange is used as ‘contingent reward’ (CR), meaning a reward which is subject to change is implicitly used to direct some kind of behavior that is desirable and agreed upon by both leader-and-follower. In most cases, this type of leadership is pronounced with reasonable, and effective results (e.g. Homans, 1950; Avolio & Bass, 1991).

According to Riggio and Bass (2006), contingent reward is used as an external motivator for followers while transactional leaders display correcting behaviors either before or while mistakes are occurring (i.e. management by exception-active, MBE-A). In addition, transactional leadership includes conveying a more passive approach — as the term goes “If it isn’t broke don’t fix it” — which refers to passive behaviors (i.e. management by exception-passive, MBE-P). However, as Levinson (1980) argues, if you limit leadership to a reward and corrective punishment ritual, despite having — agreed upon ‘transactional’ objectives — self-worth and true commitment (internal motivation) for followers to engage will plateau in the long run.

If we go deeper — Downton (1973) was the first to conceptualize the variances noticed amongst transactional leaders — differences were seen amongst various revolutionary, rebellious, reform, and ordinary type of leaders, all of whom were capable of getting results. However, it was not until Burns’ influential book *Leadership* (1978) that the concept of ‘transforming leadership’ was introduced to the discussion. It was the harbinger of change that precipitated numerous studies — and the refinement of what is referred to today — as authentic transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Burns postulated that most leaders fall somewhere between transactional and transformational. The roots were beginning to grow back then, as Burns argued that political leaders are transactional in their approach. They can be seen promising citizens, colleagues or political constituents favors in return (exchange) for their votes. Yet, this does not explain how other leaders have such a transformational effect, such as being able to lead their followers to heightened levels of awareness, inspiration, and

motivation. For example, some raise their followers' interest where values become deeply expressed through action by an entire group (both good and bad). Certainly, these types of leaders have concrete strategies to achieve their own ends, and a strong basis of transactional leadership skill-sets do help.

If we try to divorce the two — transactional and transformational — the latter goes beyond the former by encouraging followers to put aside their self-interests for the good of the group (e.g. Bass & Avolio, 1995; 2000). They do this in varied ways — encouraging autonomy, affiliation, and self-improvement through team-related objectives — all of which transcend egotistical drivers for the greater importance of the collective vision. While transactional leaders offer rewards for specified measures of productivity or deny them on the basis of not fulfilling set criteria — transformational leaders — stimulate and inspire their followers to achieve exceptional outcomes that also develop their individual leadership skills along the way (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This is a fundamental principle of transformational leadership — developing the future leaders of tomorrow. Now, could this be a bad thing? Let's take the devil's advocate perspective and assume the leader has malicious intent — could he or she inspire their followers to achieve extraordinary things? Yes, they can.

Therefore, it is important to note that although transformational leaders are all charismatic, the conceptualization first envisioned by Burns (1978) found it hard to diverge a path between charismatic and transforming leadership. By defining charisma — compelling attractiveness or charm that can inspire devotion in others — this also means that transformational leaders could be stretched to encompass those leaders that have wreaked havoc on the world (e.g. Hitler, Stalin, etc.). As McClelland (1975) posits, charismatic leadership can be based on personal dominance with authoritative behavior — serving the interests of the individual or a specific group — which allows these leaders to gain followers through inspiring and motivating them to help exploit individuals or groups that are in their way.

However, to clarify the difference between transformational and charismatic leadership is not to claim that charisma is a bad trait, although the lead facilitator of this study is not ignorant to the fact that it has been used to achieve ill-intentioned means. So, to pave the way for ideal charismatic leadership requires introducing the four components of TFL theory. According to Bass and Riggio (2006) the distinction between the two (transformational and charismatic) is that the former is distinguished by representing an ideal leader — one who shows individual

consideration and concern for their followers. Therefore, this paper refers to the authentic, genuine transformational leader, and not the pseudo type.

4.2 The Four Dimensions of Transformational Leadership

From a conceptualizing reference, transformational leaders are charismatic. They know how to gain peoples' attention and lead by example. Gaining followers' trust through being an ideal role model is a prerequisite for inspiring them to achieve great things. Just being a good 'character' or having charisma is not enough. Although — in some sense — having charisma certainly helps to induce initial devotion between the leader-and-follower — this does not hold for very long if left alone. Just as being a strong and ideal character would not suffice without diligent effort to improve one's social interaction skills. Credible knowledge paired with consistent behaviors are required (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

For example, let's take a hypothetical situation. Think of Zinedine Zidane giving a presentation in your city on sport governing laws. Surely, your interest would be great — as he was a phenomenal player and coach who has dealt with (in some fashion) sport bylaws or player-and-coach contracts. You might quickly find that his credibility fades if he is unable to connect with the audience within this knowledge domain. For all intents and purposes — going to see him talk about this subject would have been justifiable from charisma alone — since his perceived character is that of legend and lore amongst football lovers, fans, and experts — despite being a little rough around the edges. Eventually, however, his charisma would not be enough to keep him in good graces with his audience — hypothetically speaking — if he was not an authority on the topic. Thus, without credible knowledge and upholding moral values, perceptions can be reformed negatively despite past success, which could leave a flawed character perception. Inspiring and motivating through charisma does not seem to be enough — and what is worse — it seems to be playing 'Russian Roulette' with your leadership reputation. Therefore, the four I's of TFL theory help to quell this risk by allowing these thoughts to sink in within the sport environment.

Idealized Influence (I.I.)

This encompasses being an upstanding role model. Leaders should act in ways that are consistent and based on values that are ethical. Followers believe in their leader, and they even feel devotion to their leader's character. This is reflected by iconic leaders (coaches) such as John Wooden or Coach Lucy, as their followers wanted to be just like them (examples from the introduction to this paper). Also, followers tend to believe that their leader has extraordinary capabilities, persistence, and determination (e.g. Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Thus, there are two aspects that can be attributed to this specific component of transformational leadership: the leader's behaviors and the descriptions that their followers attribute to them (Bass, 1990). In addition, any leader who has a great deal of 'ideal influence' are found to take more calculated risks (e.g. Howell & Avolio, 1993). Maybe this is because they feel more autonomy from their own followers — allowing or forgiving them of their own mistakes or character flaws — and this has multifaceted approaches. In other words, subordinates, colleagues or bosses can feel this way from top-to-bottom or bottom-to-top approaches. Perhaps, from a former player's perspective, when coaches 'believe' in somebody to achieve a great performance and — putting them into the game — this inspires one to squash any consequence of risk by turning in a great game. For example, it evokes courage from their followers to take calculated risks themselves — focusing and preparing well — to repay that belief-and-trust of the coach. As another example, a leader showing vulnerability through sharing personal stories encourages his or her athletes to be more connected with them and feel safe to do the same.

Inspirational Motivation (I.M.)

The second component involves motivating and inspiring followers by providing unique and varied challenges. When work becomes routine, the leader finds ways to 'spice it up.' Team spirit becomes aroused through more enthusiasm, optimism, and collective approaches to achieve a given task. Leaders that have strength in this component influence followers by clearly expressing a vision for the future, and communicating goals and expectations clearly (Bass, 1990). Interestingly, both I.I. and I.M. are constructed in similar fashions (e.g. Howell & Avolio, 1993).

Maybe this is due to the emotions which can be evoked through the vehicle of delivering a team-talk. Constructed with the aim to arouse both ideal and inspirational behaviors together

— a coach sees an opportunity to share a truly inspirational moment with his or her players. It could be that their team has struggled to find resilience, or that challenging tasks seem too much for them. So the coach decides to connect the two by telling a heart-felt story about a cancer patient who has only two months to live. Although this a tough scenario to imagine, perhaps the leader sees this as a chance to create a theme of resilience, adaptability and mental strength for his or her athletes. So the coach asks his/her players to envision what it would feel like — having only two months to live. What would you do? Then the coach describes how the cancer patient decides to live life to the fullest. His character is as strong as ever and does not seem at odds with cancer taking its' toll. Instead, this person decides to travel the world and hike in places he has always wanted to see, but was afraid to go before his cancer diagnosis.

Intellectual Stimulation (I.S.)

Leaders having strength in this component find effective ways to stimulate their followers by reframing problems in creative ways. Thus, they approach traditional issues or problems by looking at them in new ways and are not afraid to implement various strategies to solve them (e.g. Bycio, Hackett, & Allen, 1995). Therefore, followers are included in the problem-solving process, and finding practical solutions requires reciprocated interactions. In other words, leaders give their followers managerial practice which increases their ability to view a problem from various perspectives (e.g. Bass & Riggio, 2006).

For example, let's say Coach Pete has instituted a vision for his ultramarathon running club titled "Never Quit". Despite having a catchy phrase and resonating nicely for this sport — while also converging dual dimensions (I.M. & I.I.) — ironically, he notices that many of the members on his team have quit running for the club. "What does it mean to Never Quit?" he asks himself. So he decides to do his own qualitative research and poll his lost members. Interestingly, what he finds out is that the mission statement provided no intellectual stimulation for some — and this stifled their motivation to continue. Some individuals need more than just catchy slogans to become motivated or inspired — they need intellectual stimulation. Also, the interviews relayed that most former team members would consider coming back if they had varied roles and responsibilities that would challenge them in different ways, so he decides to include their insight into the mission statement process.

Individualized Consideration (I.C.)

Lastly, transformational leaders pay attention to the details affecting individual performances by adopting a human approach when needed. They create both task and team-oriented projects, which are conducive to bringing out individual and team oriented goals. This requires individual or group tasks that involve layered support through coaching, teaching, and directing (Bass & Avolio, 2004). Also, leaders strong in this component exude behaviors that show acceptance for individual differences, yet are authoritative when necessary.

For example, interactions between the leader-and-follower are dependent on the individual's personality, and how they may require more or less encouragement, autonomy, rewards, standards, structure, etc. compared to other followers. This leads to a two-way exchange that enhances the interaction of the pair and morale of the group. Lastly, the leader effectively delegates tasks and spends time developing themselves as well (e.g. Bass & Riggio, 2006). Now the strengthening effect of TFL theory is discussed relative to the importance of transactional leadership.

4.3 A Full Range of Leadership

The four I's of TFL theory have been provided to help conceptualize how the Transformer Workshop was designed to enhance coaches' knowledge of transformational leadership within the youth sport environment. Before going further into the applications and implications within the youth sport setting, it is important to understand a wider range of leadership behaviors first. This helps to support how TFL theory 'stacks up' comparatively speaking. Table 4 tracks these three leadership styles—laissez-faire, transactional (MBE & CR), and transformational—with participative (passive) and directive (active) forms of each with examples provided to help convey their meaning.

Laissez-faire is largely characterized by avoidance behaviors. In the most passive or inactive form it represents a non-transaction. Necessary decisions are delayed or not made, which conveys the perception that a leader may not be ready to lead or displays avoiding behaviors (Bass & Avolio, 2000). According to Bass & Riggio (2006), laissez-faire is found to be the most ineffective form of leadership, yet at times nearly all leaders will express this style in some form or fashion. Transactional leadership in contrast, is reasonably effective in motivating high levels of achievement (as previously mentioned). It has two forms: contingent reward (CR) and management by exception (MBE). The latter can be broken down further into

MBE-A, active or MBE-P, passive. Interestingly, while transformational and transactional leadership are found to be used in both directive (active) and participative (passive) forms, including authoritarian or democratic, transformational components are connected with higher levels of inspired motivation to achieve a given task (e.g. Bycio, Hackett, & Allen, 1995; Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Table 4. Descriptions of participative versus directive leadership and the components of the Full Range of Leadership Model (modified from Avolio & Bass, 1991)

	Participative (passive)	Directive (active)
Laissez-faire	“Whatever you think is the correct choice. This is okay with me.”	“If my followers need answers to questions, let them find the answers themselves. This is best.”
Management-by-exception (MBE)	“Let’s develop the rules together that we will use to identify mistakes. That way we can agree when and how to correct them.”	“These are the rules, and this is how you have violated them. Now you will receive this punishment.”
Contingent reward (CR)	“Let’s agree on what has to be done, and how you will be rewarded if you achieve the objectives.”	“If you achieve the objectives I’ve set, I will recognize your accomplishment with the following reward...”
Individualized consideration	“What can we do as a group to give each other the necessary support to develop our capabilities, and to achieve our objectives?”	“I will provide the support you need in your efforts to develop yourself in the job. Additionally, I will try to notice when you achieve in other facets of your life. I think that is important as well.”
Intellectual stimulation	“Can we try to look at our assumptions as a group without being critical of each other’s ideas first, until all assumptions have been listed?”	“You must reexamine the assumption that a team mission statement includes self-destructive behaviors. Revisit this problem and question your assumptions. Drinking as a means to build team cohesion is not an optimal solution.”
Inspirational motivation	“Let’s work together to merge our aspirations and goals for the good of our group.”	“You need to say to yourself that every day you are getting better. You must look at your profession and continue to build upon it over time.”
Idealized influence	“We can be a winning team because of our faith in each other. I need your support to achieve our mission.”	“I’ve invested all my energy and commitment to this team. There is no turning back, and quitting is not an option.”

4.3.1 The Strengthening Effect

In describing TFL theory, it would be impossible to ignore the underpinning support of ‘transactional’ leadership. When applied to the sport arena — effective coaches need to develop strong professional knowledge — this is reflected within the large focus which predominates throughout the literature on coaching development programs (e.g. Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Lefebvre et al., 2016). Interestingly, as coaches by default are in leadership positions — directing a team of individuals — this becomes very sport relatable. In its corrective form, transactional leadership encompasses setting standards of behavior, expecting progress to be made, and reprimanding and adapting to athlete(s) or team(s) when results or behaviors do not go according to expectation. In its active form it involves closely checking for mistakes, and monitoring the results (e.g. Avolio, 2004).

In addition, while having the knowledge and experience to do so, transactional coaches express clarity in shaping behaviors that bode nicely towards building team cohesion. This includes setting individual-and-team-oriented objectives with progressions. Effort levels are managed according to the discretion of the coach, but it can be viewed again, as a transaction (i.e. adaptations-and-exchanges made as rewards or punishments when good or bad effort is displayed). Monitoring the process includes expert knowledge and use of proper tools in both trainings and games (e.g. heart rate monitor, game analytic software, video analysis, etc.) to help navigate optimal trainings and performances for the future. Thus, when consistently done, this style of leadership is found to create the confidence needed for subordinates to exert necessary effort to fulfilling tasks and objectives (e.g. Burns, 1978).

Moreover, the transactional leadership style certainly fits the youth sport context as quality coaches exhibit these behaviors to fit the parameters and demands of the youth sport setting. For example, effort (by players) with selection (by coaches) becomes a reciprocated exchange (transaction) as coaches expect these athletes to compete at a high level. Thus, selecting them to play at the elite level brings with it an expectation for performance. Reprimands or ‘punishments’ occur in the form of demotion to lower level teams or sitting on the bench. If left alone, as previously mentioned, this approach does not keep follower motivation high. Also, it fails to convey how coaches can extend greater meaning for their athletes which goes beyond the realms of competition. By focusing solely on transactional approaches, although within the integrated definition of coaching effectiveness (see further e.g. Table 5), this is not enough to fill the complete picture of effective coaching.

Nonetheless, a strong foundation of transactional knowledge can lead to heightened motivation, extra effort, and then to performance beyond expectation, but only with the augmentation effect of transformational leadership. First, roles and expectations are set while strategies for monitoring results (management by exception-active & passion, MBE-A & P) are paired with contingent rewards (CR). Figure 4 conceptualizes the transactional leadership process, and how transformational leadership strengthens it.

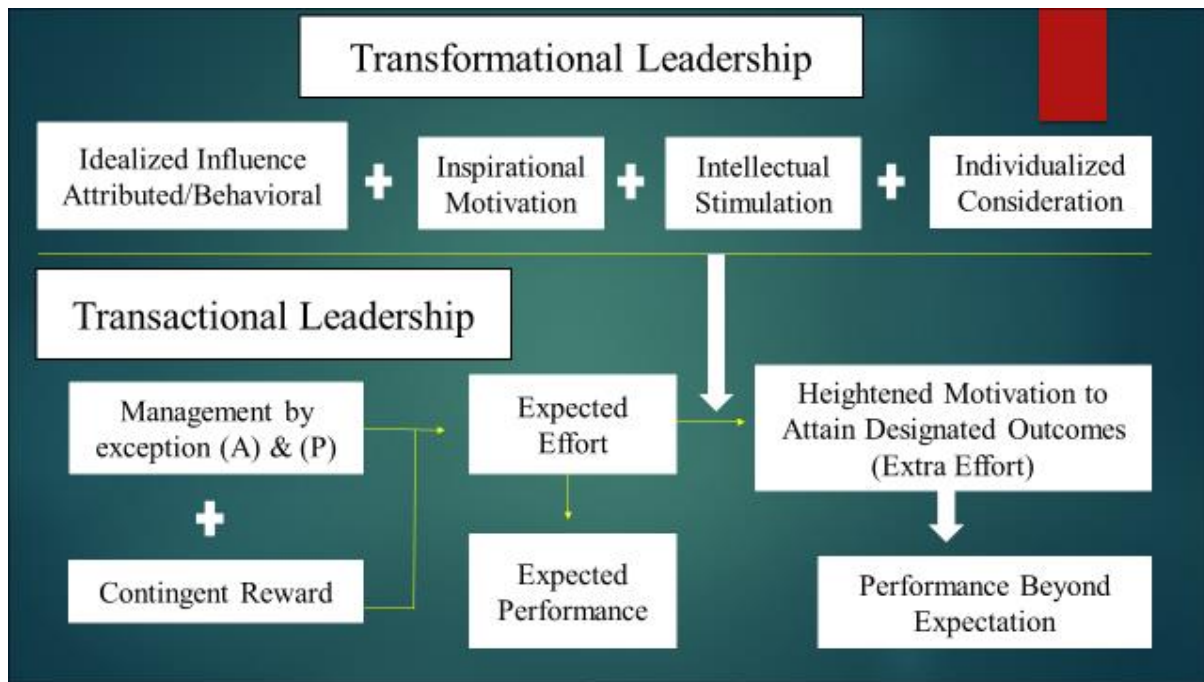


Figure 4. The process of transactional leadership and augmentation effect of transformational leadership (Bass, 1985)

Transformational coaches allow themselves to get to the second-order exchanges seen in Figure 4 ('extra effort' and 'performance beyond expectation') with a proper foundation of transactional leadership. This allows them to shift their focus away from transactional goals (not abandoning them, however) and progress towards motivational outcomes that inspire followers to achieve beyond what they thought possible. Researchers have explored this approach within the youth sport setting with promising results. For example, when coaches showed transformational behaviors — ideal role modelling, inspiring, motivating, and being considerate — this led to increased athlete satisfaction, effort, intrinsic motivation, performance, psychological well-being, and group cohesion (e.g. Arthur et al., 2011; Callow et al., 2009; Charbonneau et al., 2001).

Furthermore, taking it a step further within the youth sport environment, transactional coaches can be ‘transformed’ through transformational practice. By taking a more interpersonal and intrapersonal approach, connections foster beneficial effects in youth by creating competence and confidence in their own abilities (Anderson, 1982). We have known this for some time. So as coaches learn to be more ideal, inspirational, motivational, or considerate, this may stimulate athletic outcomes and affect PYD simultaneously. Therefore, TFL theory was chosen because its ability to affect these outcomes, which presented an interesting opportunity within the Finnish youth football context. Table 5 conceptualizes the integrative definition of coaching effectiveness which states:

“The consistent application of integrated professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge to improve athletes’ competence, confidence, connection, and character in specific coaching contexts.” (Côté & Gilbert, 316).

Table 5. Athletic outcomes from effective coaching (Côté & Gilbert, 2009)

Competence	Sport-specific technical and tactical skills, performance skills, improved health and fitness, and healthy training habits
Confidence	Internal sense of overall positive self-worth
Connection	Positive bonds and social relationships with people inside and outside of sport
Character	Respect for the sport and others (morality), integrity, empathy, and responsibility

If we now take a step back and reflect on the transformational coaches mentioned in the introduction: did their approaches encompass the type of knowledge listed in Table 5? If we ask what makes players feel devotion, courage, and motivation to perform beyond the expected level, it seems transactional leadership, albeit effective and essential, falls short of the potential range of knowledge that coaches would ideally exhibit. Thus, for the Transformer Research Project, the lead facilitator wanted coaches to display their transactional knowledge but also embrace the challenge to create devotion and admiration amongst their players through challenging themselves to become more transformational leaders, and to inspire performances beyond expectation¹².

¹² See Bass, B. (1985). *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations*. Free Press: New York.

4.4 TFL Theory Applied to Sport

The last section of this chapter displays how TFL theory is applied to fit within the wide parameters of youth sport. Table 6 shows the 4 I's of transformational leadership with descriptions adapted for the sport environment (e.g. Côté & Turnnidge, 2017). Each component was used to help set the objectives for the goal setting program of the Transformer Research Project. This allowed for coaches to expand on concepts individually in two-eight-week macrocycles, which were each broken down into four-two-week microcycles (see next chapter for details).

When reflecting back on the integrated definition of coaching effectiveness — i.e. incorporating professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge — coaches were challenged to expand their interpersonal and intrapersonal skills by reflecting on strategies to improve the sporting experiences of their youngsters. Ultimately, byproducts were to increase the coach-athlete relationship and improve the 4C's of athletes' competence, confidence, connection, and character.

Table 6. Transformational coaching dimension and behaviors (Turnnidge & Côté, 2017, 316)

Transformational Coaching Dimension	Example Coaching Behaviors
Idealized Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Discussing pro-social values (e.g. respect, teamwork, compassion) and role modelling -Showing vulnerability (e.g. sharing personal stories or apologizing when a mistake is made)
Inspirational Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Discussing short and long term goals and setting expectations -Expressing effective approbation -Implementing a collective vision (e.g. creating a mission statement) -Providing challenging and meaningful tasks (e.g. enhancing meaning by offering rationales and explanations)
Intellectual Stimulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Eliciting athlete input (e.g. asking questions and challenging assumptions) -Sharing decision making and leadership responsibilities (e.g. providing opportunities to lead sport activities or mentor peers) -Emphasizing the learning process verses results (e.g. providing effort-related feedback)
Individualized Consideration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Showing interest in athletes outside of sport (e.g. discussing social and school related matters) -Recognizing roles and accomplishments (e.g. providing individualized feedback, and fitting activities to suit individual needs)

Each macrocycle was comprised on using each dimension listed above in two week microcycle patterns. Coaches were free to choose an action or activity that they believed would work well within their own coaching sessions, and also fit within the parameters of each dimension. A more thorough description is displayed in the results (6.2.6). This concludes the theoretical discussion. The research task and methodology is presented next.

5 RESEARCH TASK AND METHODOLOGY

“The journey is better than the end”

Cervantes

The aims and purpose of this study are discussed first. Secondly, the chosen method of action research is justified for the purposes of this study. Then, the lead facilitator’s role and past experiences within the sport is mentioned in order to establish credibility. Next, the coaches are introduced with brief descriptions of their past experiences of playing and coaching football. Subsequently, the role of trustworthiness is discussed, which is worth mentioning when conducting qualitative research. In addition, as this project encompassed seven months, two chronographs are included to convey the eventful happenings in a visual format.

5.1 Purposes and Aims

The purpose of this study was to plan, implement, describe, and evaluate a leadership program to enhance coaches’ interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge, skills, and behaviors. While there has been much research to date covering the effects of the coach-athlete relationship related to PYD, CDPs initiated by research with support from communal and national programs have seldom been reflected throughout the literature (Lefebvre et al., 2016; Turnnidge & Côté, 2017). Therefore, the aim was to affect coaches’ knowledge within these two domains, initiated through a research orientation which sought to collaborate with both communal and national level organizations. Yet, collaboration with community and national level organizations was minimal. This occurred only during the forming phase of the project. Nonetheless, this helped to mobilize the content and form the research group while also providing suggestions for future studies. Also, it encouraged different organizational settings (communal and national levels) to be informed and stay engaged throughout the process.

Furthermore, this research describes a pilot leadership program through the experiences of Finnish volunteer youth coaches as they implemented transformational coaching behaviors into their coaching ‘practices.’ Specifically, the aims were to: 1) outline the development process of the leadership program; 2) describe the experiences of the coaches implementing transformational behaviors and actions into their coaching environments; 3) explore perceptions of the program; 4) to provide suggestions to improve the program. A byproduct of this experience was to increase coaching effectiveness. As there was a heavy dose of both interpersonal and intrapersonal communication — due to the primary mode of reaching these aims through action research — useful professional knowledge was also enhanced.

5.2 The Lead Facilitator

The lead facilitator (i.e. writer of this dissertation and research initiator) of the Transformer Research Project had an important role. Rather than impose change, the ability to be a catalyst to stimulate change was key (Stringer, 2007). This required finding appropriate times to meet with coaches, discussing sensitive topics at opportune moments, and supporting the essence of the learning process — the ways that things should ideally be done — rather than the results that could be achieved. Moreover, the lead facilitator acted on behalf of the research itself by helping coaches analyze their situations and be a voice of reason. His professional background, life and football experience supported the efficacy of the project.

In order to establish credibility for delivering this research topic to its fruition, especially when gaining the immediate attention of the volunteer coaches, the lead facilitator’s sport experience helped to arouse coaches’ interest, which is a fundamental element of successful action research projects (e.g. Springer, 2007). This includes 25+ years of experience within the football environment at various levels and roles, from playing amateur to professional and coaching and directing at the youth academy level. Breaking it down to fit within the DMSP model — five years spent in the ‘sampling years’ at the participatory levels playing a variety of sports (basketball, swimming, soccer, and surfing), then moving to the ‘specializing years’ for three years (less basketball and swimming), and going into the ‘investment years’ for a further three years at age 14.

As a youth player the lead facilitator earned recognition as a United States youth national pool player (top 50 players in the country), training at various camps and playing in select tournaments across the world (e.g. Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Costa Rica, Chile, and various

states in America). Moving into the semi-professional levels, accolades ranged from individual recognition ('Florida State Player of the Year' in 2003; named 2-time All American), to team recognition (winning 2 National Championships with West Kendall Optimist). Collegiately, the lead facilitator played for the NCAA Division 1 level team, University of North Carolina ("Tarheels") and led the team during his senior season as captain to the National Championship "Title" game. After his amateur career and bachelor studies were complete, the facilitator's journey included five years of professional football playing experience that was paused at times, and eventually subdued by injury. This "journey man" status included stints with clubs in the lower leagues of the United States and Finland. Leagues that were played in included Finnish Futsal League, Kakkonen (2nd), United Soccer League, and the North American Soccer League. Notable playing achievements include: 19 "man of the match" awards, and "rookie of the year" in Finnish Futsal League for 2014.

Coaching experience was briefly mentioned in the introduction, but the lead facilitator has five years of coaching experience (two years coaching middle school girl's 11-14 years at St. John's Country Day School in Orange Park, Florida and three years coaching boys' elite academy teams aged 12-13 and 13-14 years at Ponte Vedra Storm and Jacksonville Armada). Most recently, as Mental Coach, the lead facilitator helped Liikunnan Riemu Futsal achieve Finnish Futsal Cup Champions for 2019, and promotion back to the premier league. In addition to coaching, the lead facilitator has two years of youth sport directing experience, where he developed coaching training programs for participatory to elite level boys teams with e-learning objectives which ensured quality programming and created feedback measures to enhance the program by pointing out any weaknesses. Also, the lead facilitator has over three years of intermittent experience as a substitute school teacher in Jacksonville, Florida (teaching primary to upper secondary aged kids). This included completing a six month intensive teaching course back in 2009. Lastly, a basic level coaching course was completed at the time of this study.

Despite this past experience, the lead facilitator role was a completely new one. While the professional experience and background helped his confidence to drive the research forward, this would not automatically translate to positive gains. Therefore, quality work, strong relationships, and learning objectives needed to be sustainably made. There were many challenges along the way.

As any lead facilitator of an action research project would know first-hand, it requires much attention to detail, long hours of writing and observations, and it often involves a human-developmental approach. Thus, the Transformer Research Project's success rested not only with the content, methods of data, and validity of the results within a semi-structured environment, but also on the strength of the bonds created with the coaches invested in the research itself (e.g. Springer 2007). Fortunately the lead facilitator grew much closer to all the coaches involved within the study. The relationships which developed throughout the process made the communication lines tighter, and this is evident by the fact we all remain open to communicate. Ultimately, the goal of action researchers themselves, is to report back to the organization, or policy makers to enhance the living experiences of those it may directly affect (i.e., athletes, coaches, youth sport organizations), either by removing outdated practices or implementing certain positive ones (Denzin, 1989).

5.3 Stakeholders Involved

Identifying credible messengers was the first step in this process. First, the lead facilitator had to get to know the right people in the community. Seen as the preliminary stage to enhance knowledge mobilization (e.g. Gainforth et al., 2012), this required finding relevant and invested stakeholders in the community (e.g., two professors, two athletes' parents, and one Finnish Football Federation representative). Specifically, these stakeholders assisted by strengthening the project's content, orientation, initiation, and collective intelligence. As this Transformer Research Project began to form, the lead facilitator worked to collect communal and national level information that would be useful to orientating the project to serve more than just the immediate effect of a master's dissertation. In other words, interest and information in the community was sparked and sought after — to include their opinions, intelligence, and guidance — which was an attempt by the lead facilitator to bridge various gaps in the literature pertaining to CDPs orientations and initiations (chapter 3.4.1).

For example, collaboration through stakeholder involvement was useful to collect the right research materials, resources, and strategies needed to put the Transformer Research Project into action. Professors gave valuable suggestions to mobilize the content through proposing effective strategies to conduct scientific research within the given domain and context. Also, suggestions helped inform the data collection process, securing research subjects and useful teaching methods. Parents gave insider information which helped to familiarize the lead facilitator with the community itself, which provided insight into any local problems or

precursors of negative behaviors that helped inform the content of the Transformer Workshop. This included topics of sedentary behaviors, sport burnout, and dropout. The Finnish Football Representative provided an entry way into the youth sport network. This helped to secure coaches to participate in the study. No further cooperation or collaborations were made.

Once the meetings took place with these initial five stakeholders, the youth football coaches were contacted. Meetings were held and commitments to participate in the project took place, as the consent forms were signed by each coach (see Appendix 1). First round interviews were conducted, and these also helped inform the content of the Transformer Workshop. All coaches were male and volunteered at the same youth football club. Each coach was given a pseudonym (Valderrama, Larsson, Ceni, Dinho, and Zizou) to protect their anonymity. They ranged in age from 20 to 38 years old with a mean age of 26.2 years. All coaches excluding one had completed one basic coaching course at the time of the study. In addition, one coach had completed a goal-keeper training and coaching course. Two coaches were certified B-licensed coaches by the Finnish Football Federation at the time of the research. Three coaches had professional playing pedigrees, and one coach had international level experience. For the purpose of this study, all coaches worked as ‘participatory coaches’ in addition to other roles and occupations. In other words, three coaches were students, one was also a full-time professional coach, and the other was a full-time professional player. All coaches, excluding one, worked with youth players between the ages of 8 and 14. Also, one coach was an assistant coach. And, as previously mentioned, only one coach worked with players in the ‘investment years’ stage.

5.4 Trustworthiness

Action research is situated in very social settings (e.g. Stringer, 2007). By default of being subjected to the very social world of the youth sport context, the Transformer Research Project’s trustworthiness did not rest on establishing tightly controlled measures or rigorous routines for establishing credibility. Fact checking was not that simple or easy to do, such as when conducting research in a laboratory. So it was open to perceptions of truth that were based from the social setting and open to subjective nature (i.e. opinions that fall victim to biases or memory that fails). Yet, action research was chosen because it is useful at finding solutions to problems that occur within these environments. Thus, the Transformer Research Project’s trustworthiness rested on other factors.

More attention was paid in other ways to ensure internal validity. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest, this calls more attention to enhance trustworthiness by using credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable sources. In order to ensure higher transferability several modes of triangulation were used. Encompassing a total of seven months there were many forms of data collection. This period allowed for multiple sources of information to be gathered (e.g., interviews, workshops, observations, journals, and feedback sessions). More forms of data lent itself to cross-referencing, and double-checking, and emerging themes began to arise. As previously mentioned, stakeholder meetings also informed, directed, and mobilized the content for the Transformer Workshop and Project at large. This also ensured credibility through engagement with leaders in the community (credible sources) and respected workers within their own expertise (coaches and sport directors). Moreover, this strengthens the case for transferability as prominent (local, communal, and national) stakeholders were consulted (Patton, 2002).

5.5 Collaborative Action Research

In order to achieve the aforementioned aims, action research was chosen as the method. Like the discovery phase in scientific epistemology, it is a mechanism for discovery that commences without stopping, raising questions to provoke answers, and involves planning ways to solve specific, everyday problems (Wadsworth, 1998). A noticeable difference between its vast and flexible nature compared with contemporary scientific methods, rests on its' collaborative nature. This enabled the Transformer Research Group to assist one another to solve issues they confronted in their daily coaching practices. Action research is effective in altering — for the better — professional settings, social routines, and personal lives (e.g. Springer, 2007). The underlining processes are well suited for the dynamic nature of the coaching environment. Reflecting on issues leads to planning and executing actions that evolve naturally, yet change rapidly. Trying out new ways to promote growth became an exploration as the cyclical process ensued.

Developing from social psychology, action research has had success in various organizational and educational settings (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1999). Being suitable to affect knowledge mobilization, it addresses problems that arise in wide-ranging environments (Evans & Light, 2008). It requires collaborative discussions and learning that stimulates change in the way people think, act, and feel about their experiences. A strength of action research rests on the various ways of collecting data. Also, due to its semi-controlled research environment (in social

settings), there's an obvious disadvantage with less control in fact checking, and controlling variables. Despite this fact, as things happen in quick succession within the coaching environment (i.e. in a rapid-fire way), it held value within this context due to its versatility aligning well with the coaching experience (e.g. Springer, 2007).

In addition, action research served a greater purpose in the Transformer Research Project because it tested the workability and efficacy of the program itself. As Rovio et al., (2012) expound, when conducting action research (i.e. intervention-like studies) it becomes an effective tool to expose, develop, and enhance organizational settings. For this study's purpose, it is notable to point out that action research methods exposed various ways and elements that could enhance a variety of outcomes for the future. Moreover, it also exposed the weaknesses of this study as well. Oftentimes, as the Transformer Research Project unraveled, profound results were not fully understood until after the conclusion of the project.

5.6 Procedure

The Transformer Research Project began in April of 2018 at a local football club in Central Finland, in the city of Jyväskylä. Figure 5 conceptualizes the Transformer Research Project's entirety. While it is a simplified version of the complete program, it helps to affirm dependability and confirmability as this conceptualization shows the timeline, events, and planning stages that took roughly seven months. Moving from left to right (April to October), the four bottom-left arrows (Research Group, Stakeholder Meetings, 4I's of TFL Coaching, Literature Review) informed the 1st major event (1st Round Interviews) which directly shaped the 2nd major event (The Transformer Workshop). Goal-setting routines were implemented in two cycles of 8 weeks with one-on-one feedback sessions (5), which were held with every coach during the mid-season break. Observations (15), reflective journaling, and informal routine feedback sessions were conducted throughout both cycles in person and through text messaging. The 3rd and last event was the five Final Interviews conducted post-season.

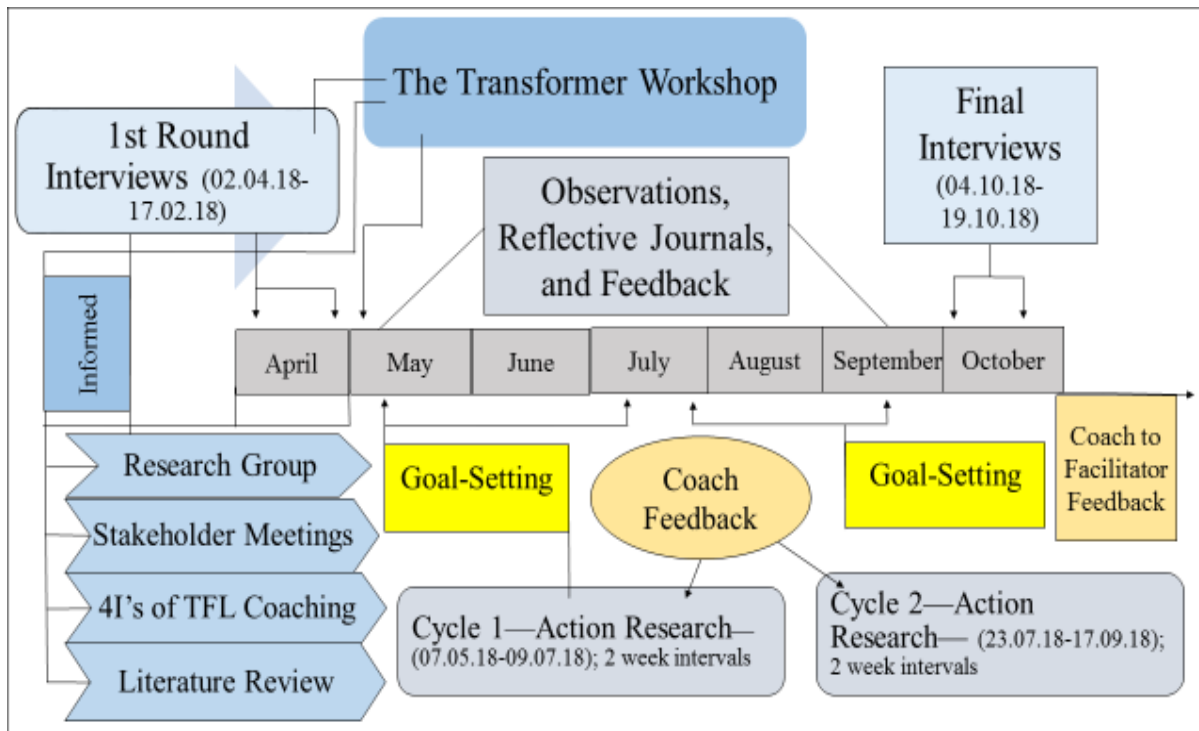


Figure 5. Diagram of the Transformer Research Project, 2018

5.7 Modes of Data Collection

The modes of data collection consisted of two rounds of interviews and the reflective journals. Observations supported the lead facilitator's perceptions of how the coaches' transformational behaviors unfolded. The semi-structured interviews allowed the coaches to talk openly and freely while providing rich knowledge related to their actions, ideas, and beliefs (e.g. Brinkmann, 2013). This gave important information needed for the data analysis. Moreover, the reflective journals allowed the coaches' to assess their own progress, and stimulate their intrapersonal skills.

During the first round interviews, the four dimensions of transformational coaching were utilized as guideposts for the questions (e.g. Turnnidge & Côté, 2017). This allowed space for the participants to expand on their own experiences, definitions and meanings, while keeping within the parameters of the dimensions of transformational coaches: role modelling, inspiring, motivating, and being considerate. Moreover, the reasons for conducting two rounds of interviews could be summarized in three ways: 1) to get to know each coach on a more personal level; 2) to 'test' their knowledge of transformational coaching behaviors; 3) to reach the aims of the research (see appendix 2 and 3 for details).

These data collection techniques allowed for each coaches' progression in transformational coaching behaviors to be tracked. Thus, while setting up their training sessions and activities, the lead facilitator took notice of how each coach gradually interacted with their players from an interpersonal perspective (e.g. proximity, hand and body gestures, eye contact), and comments were written down that described these behaviors in full detail. This encouraged the researcher to make notes, jotting down any positive feedback or recommendations that would be given during the appropriate time (e.g. Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). Feedback sessions took place during the mid-season break in late June through July, and was the ideal time to offer any advice or give support to each coach.

In addition, reflective journaling was implemented by each coach individually. This supported intrapersonal knowledge, skill, and behavior development. Due to the cyclical nature of action research, journaling became an essential aspect of knowledge remembering and development. The process of stepping back from one's work allows contemplation of good and/or bad actions/occurrences, therefore allowing for adjustments in behavior before moving on to plan new actions (Springer, 2007; Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). This cyclical process of action research is conceptualized in Figure 6.

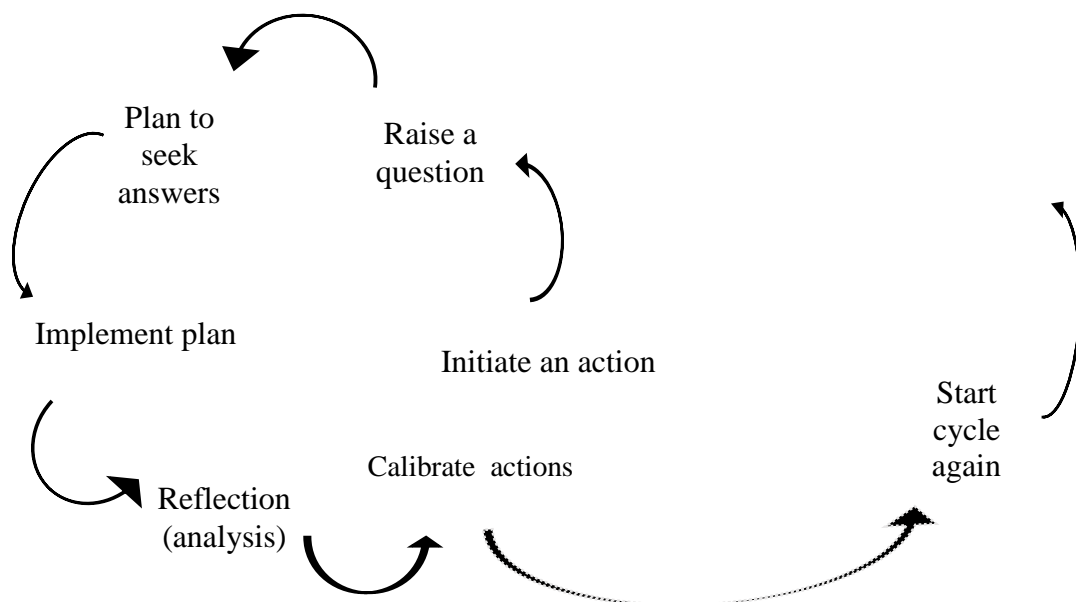


Figure 6. The cyclical process of action research

Notably, as the coaching journals were collected post-season (approximately 2-3 weeks after concluding their respective seasons), feedback was also administered through second round interviews (see appendix 3). This provided valuable information regarding their perceptions of the entire research process. Their answers included recommendations to improve the Transformer Research Program. Figure 6 represents the journaling process that coaches were encouraged to complete before each training. As they embarked on this process, each coach was tasked with the same transformational coaching dimension in two-week-cyclical patterns. First, they initiated an action within the parameters of how that dimension could be used to enhance the coach-athlete relationship. Next, they raised various questions that came up when implementing it, and this began to stimulate more reflection to seek ways to calibrate those actions for improvement. By the next week, the plan was hopefully improved and then executed on again. Then, when two weeks were complete the cyclical process for that specific dimension was paused until the 2nd macrocycle began. This is described further in the results chapter.

5.8 Data Analysis

Thematic content analysis was used in a 2-step process. During the first stage, the researcher identified and coded emerging themes from each coaches' experiences separately. Secondly, each coaching case (experience) was examined individually and then bi-laterally to detect similar themes emerging throughout all the cases (e.g. Tenenbaum & Driscoll, 2005). Next, a variable-oriented strategy of cross-case comparisons helped identify any similarities or 'stand-alone' factors. Thus, similarities and differences between the coaches' experiences began to emerge (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

All data utilized in the results came from content of the Transformer Workshop: coaches' journal entries, lead facilitator's observations, and the second round interviews. Data analysis was used to describe the coaches' perceptions of the evaluation of the Transformer Research Project in three segments: Transformer Workshop, goal-setting routines, and overall improvements. Also, this aided in the discovery of leadership frequencies of transformational behaviors, and which are compared through table form. Stand-alone themes also emerged, and are expressed as they were described by the coaches themselves.

6 RESULTS

“We will discover the nature of our particular genius when we stop trying to conform to our own or to other people’s models, learn to be ourselves, and allow our natural channel to open”

Shakti Gawain

6.1 Transformer Research Project Description

In order to fulfill the requirements for the first aim of this research — to outline the development and process of the leadership program — the first two sections are focused solely on this objective. The first meetings were initially held in April, initiated by the lead facilitator, and this led to the main events within a six month period. Thus, ‘transformers combined’ — five coaches and one lead facilitator — all formed the Transformer Research Group (T.R.G.). As Figure 7 shows below, only one group meeting was held with all coaches present (TFW).

Networking began immediately as all coaches displayed strong interpersonal connections with each other, and cohesion amongst the group formed a strong bond for communication lines to take effect. This is noticed in the multiple weeks of T.R.G. and research-to-coach communication (R.C.C.). This helped to support the full-range of activities that would take place throughout the project—Individual Actions (e.g. journaling cycles 1 and 2), Sector Group Meetings (i.e. collaborative networking; C.N.), R.C.C., 5 individual feedback sessions in addition to 5 final interviews with suggestions for improving the program.

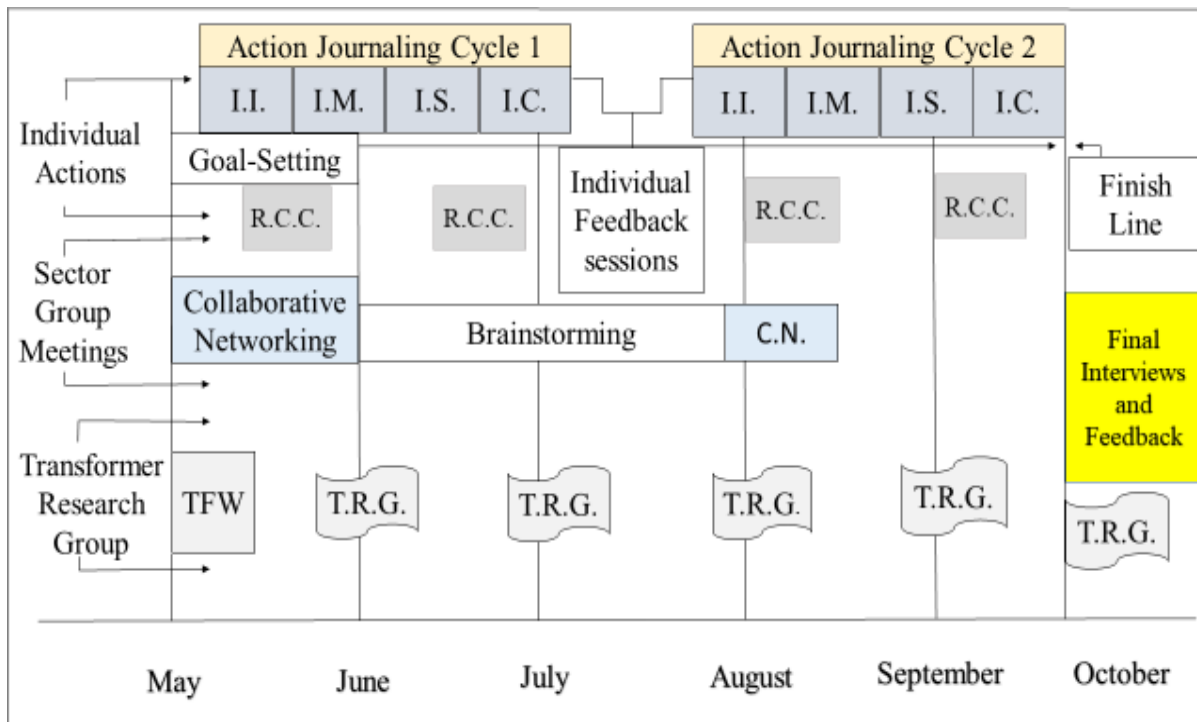


Figure 7. Social network configuration of the Transformer Research Project, 2018

As Figure 7 displays, there was only one workshop throughout the entire six months. Time and scheduling conflicts were reappearing constraints for implementing more workshops. Moreover, the research-initiated orientation was very time consuming for the lead facilitator, as there were many responsibilities going on simultaneously and only one facilitator. Coaches also had very busy schedules, yet they initiated collaborative networking on a few occasions which showed that sector groups were emerging. This helped their efficacy as they utilized brainstorming in unique ways to implement transformative coaching dimensions and behaviors in unison. Facilitator-to-coach communication was conducted routinely and albeit intermittently. Interestingly, the hectic schedules coupled with the lead facilitator respecting the individual space of the coaches themselves became paramount to not over-step the boundaries of others. Also, it became a very delicate mechanism for control through effective communication (e.g. Springer, 2007). Text messages were sent out as reminders, suggestions, and also feedback, which encouraged coaches to engage with the material in practical, yet meaningful ways while going at their own pace.

At times this felt difficult, as much initiation came from the lead facilitator, and there was no way to credibly check (factually) if coaches were implementing action journaling in ‘real time’ after their trainings or if they filled their journals out before collection, just after the project’s conclusion. Nonetheless, observations of implementing action journaling constructs through behaviors (i.e. acting on the 4I’s of transformational coaching dimensions) were seen throughout the entire process. This included (see Table 6 for details) ‘idealized influence’ (I.I.), ‘inspirational motivation’ (I.M.), ‘intellectual stimulation’ (I.S.), and ‘individualized consideration’ (I.C.).

6.2 Transformer Workshop Design

The Transformer Workshop took approximately two hours. While the facilitator’s experience helped the efficacy of the content and modes of delivery, being subjective was a risk. Therefore, credible messengers in the form of a variety of stakeholders also contributed to the workshop’s content in addition to reviewing the literature. Furthermore, in order to captivate the coaches’ full-attention, the workshop needed to be informative but also compelling (e.g. Springer, 2007). So a few popular movie scenes were also utilized in addition to real speeches performed by renowned coaches from across the world.

The workshop was divided into three components. Table 7 reflects the structure, modality, and content of the Transformer Workshop. Thus, the first two segments consisted of 45 minutes, and the last 30 minutes wrapped it up. In order to convey an informative, yet compelling workshop, the lead facilitator sought a variety of teaching methods and strategies to make it interesting.

Table 7. The syllabus of the Transformer Workshop (May 4th, 2018)

Component	Mode	Objectives and Content
<p><i>First 45 minutes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the session • Building trust and rapport • Effective coaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture: getting to know each other • Interactive learning • Collaborative discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming message • Overview of content • Highlighting importance of youth engagement with sport
<p><i>Second 45 minutes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching Scenarios • Exploring Leadership • Introduction to TFL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture: exploring leadership • Collaborative discussion • Video-analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate coaches on core values of TFL • Increase awareness of leadership styles • Initiate effective learning
<p><i>Last 30 minutes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concluding activities • Wrapping up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture: facilitating self-awareness • Interdisciplinary teaching methods • Interactive learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage creativity and reflection • Self-awareness • Training journal and goal setting • Follow-up

6.2.1 Introduction to the Session

The Transformer Workshop began with various introductory activities, beginning with getting to know the background of the lead facilitator. The structure, content, and purpose then followed. According to Turnnidge and Côté (2017) the chief principle when designing a CDP is to make it interactive. To this point, the participants were engaged with a series of interactive activities. Firstly, they were encouraged to facilitate rapport amongst each other through engaging their interpersonal skills. Brief introductory speeches brought out their individual background related to sport and coaching. In addition, life experiences ensued along with reasons for participating, as well as something that they hoped to learn from participating in the Transformer Workshop.

At this time, the lead facilitator monitored the styles of communication related to non-verbal/verbal tendencies, personality characteristics, as well as taking note of important details such as years of coaching and playing experience. This information was helpful in tailoring messages to specific coaches in subsequent stages of the research. For the effectiveness of establishing a team-orientated environment, these introductions fostered deep connections of emotions, core values, interests, motives, and beliefs that helped the group bond while flowing nicely into the next component of the workshop (e.g. Gould & Weinberg, 2015).

Building Trust and Rapport

The first two interactive activities “Breaking the Ice” and “Stand by Your Quote” were purposely chosen to build trust and rapport. It was important to ensure that all the coaches felt comfortable to share their stories with each other early on in the session, as interpersonal communication skills help build rapport amongst the group (Sullivan, 1993). The goal of these two exercises was to allow everyone to express themselves in a small group setting and to build trust. As research shows that more than 50% of communication is non-verbal (Burke 2005 as cited in Andersen, 2005), and that interpersonal communication skills enhance social and emotional intelligence (e.g. Gould & Weinberg, 2015), these interactive exercises were chosen to stimulate these areas of growth.

“Breaking the Ice” Activity

As this activity began, the task was to walk around the room and engage in conversation with somebody for a two-minute duration. This concluded after five rounds, as each coach interacted with each other (facilitator included). Targeted aims from this exercise included creating a caring environment through effective listening and reflection strategies (i.e. active, supportive, and aware listening). Also, being aware of non-verbal cues and distractions (i.e., physical appearances, body posture/gestures, body position/proxemics, touching, facial expressions, focusing on relevant cues, disturbances, loud noises, phone calls, drowsiness, etc.). Lastly, reciprocating (i.e. mirroring) also helped awareness of the importance of connecting on a physical, social and emotional level.

“Stand by Your Quote” Exercise

Well-known leadership quotes of iconic leaders from around the world were displayed throughout the classroom. Among them were famous leaders within their respective fields such as music, health and well-being, religion, politics, business, sport, and finance (e.g., Bob Marley, Tony Robins, Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, Tarja Halonen, Steve Jobs, Alex Ferguson, Warren Buffet, etc.). As the process began, participants walked around the room, reflected on each quote, and stood next to the one that they felt the strongest connection with (i.e. spiritually, psychosocially/emotionally, or for trivial reasons). Targeted aims intended for this exercise included stimulating coaches’ intrapersonal skills by asking them to reflect why they chose a particular quote. This was also to provide thinking strategies of how they can implement this quote into their daily life and coaching experiences (e.g. Turnnidge & Côté, 2017).

6.2.2 Effective Coaching

The next phase in the workshop consisted of lecturing to increase coaches’ awareness related to the importance and potential that sport has in affecting the lives of youth outside of driving athletic outcomes. Support drawn from the literature assisted the design of this component related to the four areas affecting youth development. Namely, physical, intellectual, psychosocial, and emotional factors which are reminiscent of the PYD outcomes outlined in chapter 2. As we know, youth acquiring personal and social support from coaches within these four constructs benefit greatly.

Bringing out Positive Youth and Athlete Development Outcomes

Unequivocally, athlete development (AD) is an essential goal of youth sport organizations, and therefore the task in this component was to connect PYD with AD using the integrative definition of effective coaching as previously mentioned (e.g. Gilbert & Côté, 2009). As we know from previous research, when these three domains of knowledge are sufficiently implemented from the coach-to-athlete dynamic, important outcomes related to building self-esteem, satisfaction, perceived self-confidence, and competence become salient (Chelladurai as cited in Tenenbaum & Eklund, 2007). Therefore, the target was to educate coaches to impart specific knowledge dependent upon the setting. In other words, the lecture facilitated learning of when to engage their own interpersonal, professional, or intrapersonal knowledge, skills, and behaviors based on what the context or situation was presenting, while keeping in mind the idea that creating a transformational coaching environment was the underlining message at this time.

It is important to note, that the limited scope of this research did not entail the expanded model of Trudel and Gilbert's (2006) classification system related to recreational, developmental, and elite sport coaching contexts. Yet, in order to generate more specificity among the varied contexts of the coaches' practice—to fit the wider confines of this dissertation—coaching settings were categorized into three general areas related to training (pre/during/post), travel (bus/hotel/etc.), and social contexts (planned or random meetings, both individual and group).

6.2.3 Coaching Scenarios Activities

The aim in this component of the workshop was to put 'knowledge into practice' with a series of exercises. Through using cross, multi- and inter-disciplinary teaching methods, coaches were encouraged to interact, reflect, and role-play using a few different exercises which tested various coaching behaviors and leadership knowledge.

An expanded purpose was to further coaches' knowledge and reflection through these various teaching methods regarding the full spectrum of leadership. To drive the teaching goals onward the lead facilitator examined his own perspective and experiences first. Then, coaches followed suit. This involved describing the worse coaching experience that each person had encountered, and then transitioned to the most positive one. The issue was explored from various viewpoints (i.e. how this was perceived hypothetically from other players, coaches and spectators) to gain

a better understanding of how leadership styles affect people. The two exercises are described below.

Best and Worst Coaching Exercise

For this activity, coaches reflected on the best and worst coaching behaviors they had witnessed and/or experienced from their adolescent sporting careers. The aim in this activity was to encourage critical reflection, and engage through discussion the good, bad or neutral behaviors which had lasting effects on their perceptions of leadership. Open-ended discussions ensued, and allowed us to share experiences in vivid detail. To stimulate discussion coaches were encouraged to decipher how these behaviors supported or differed from effective coaching as defined by Gilbert and Côté's (2009)'s integrative definition on coaching effectiveness.

"Player-to-Coach Role-Playing" Interactive Activity

For this activity, five coaching scenarios, which represent real-life situations common in the sporting environment, were drawn on notecards. Themes were pre-determined and each represented a few occurrences that the lead facilitator faced in past coaching experiences. Participants represented the coach, athlete, and spectators. Table 8 describes each scenario from the coach and athlete perspectives.

Table 8. Coach and athlete role-playing scenarios

#	Coach perspective	Player Perspective
1	Your team has just lost back-to-back-to-back matches. You noticed your spiritual leader on the team is starting to show signs of mental fatigue. What do you do?	The emotions of losing a third-straight game debilitates your motivation. You start to doubt your own abilities, competences, and confidence.
2	You notice more than a few times during an “away” game your athletes are sitting around the same groups during lunch, talking to the same people in the locker room, and cliques are starting to emerge. One particular player, who is new, is finally starting to fit-in with some of the players. What do you do?	You start to feel interpersonally connected with a couple teammates. It is nothing personal to the other players who have not fit-in as well.
3	An average player on your team, one that you can always count on, starts gradually missing 1-2 trainings every two weeks. What do you do?	You have always been to every training and your effort is usually among the highest on the team. Lately, however, despite your great demeanor and consistent effort, you feel that you are getting burnout. You do not want to hurt your team, but your physical and emotional fatigue is causing you to lose interest in playing.
4	Your team has been playing extremely well lately, and you have noticed an uptake in passion and enthusiasm at training and games. However, it comes to your attention that many are struggling in school. Numerous parents are voicing concern that their children’s grades are dropping, and they fear it is due to too much sport involvement. What do you do?	Your day generally consists of daydreaming about sport, and what “move” you will try at training tonight. Despite your grades slipping in school, your passion for sport overtakes all your desire to achieve success in the classroom. You are ok with that.
5	You have a tournament coming up this weekend that you and your team have been preparing for all season long. There is much anticipation looming for this tournament, as you feel your own professional development depends on how well your team does. Moreover, pressure from your club’s hierarchy (board and sport directors) hypothesize that if your team does well it could mean increased marketing recognition and brand awareness, generating wealth for the club. Upon arriving to training, you witness an unsettling event. Your most impactful player stands bullishly over a diminutive, frail-looking athlete, who plays victim to a bully incident. You realize upon sight that the victim is your least skilled player, rarely playing during big games. Your team looks on, expecting something to happen. This is your first notice of such an event. What do you do?	For the majority of the season, intermittently but often enough, you have noticed a bully dynamic within the team. Finally, you cannot take it anymore, and you decide to confront this person. The bully responds by knocking you to the ground with a direct punch to the face.

Coaches were tasked with creating an action question that triggered their player into conversation. The ones not directly involved were tasked with envisioning the scene unfold from various points-of-view (e.g. parents and sport director). After each scenario was role-played, a brief discussion ensued with the remaining three coaches acting as fact checkers for quality and quantity control of transformational coaching behaviors exhibited. Each role-playing period lasted roughly 5 minutes with another 2-3 minutes for discussion.

6.2.4 Exploring Leadership

For the next activity, a wide spectrum of leadership styles were introduced based on literature on leadership. These were adapted to the material through video clips taken from YouTube. Firstly, these included brief descriptions of laissez-faire (disinterested, passive, uninvolved), toxic (intimidation, manipulative), autocratic (authoritative, power-centered), transformational (related sport with life, highly inspirational), and transactional (value and results orientated) styles of leadership. These were highly generalized versions, yet, constructed to fit within the time frame of the workshop. Each conversation was discussed through relating the material with coaching behaviors.

Questions were asked related to how these various styles would feel, taste, look, smell, and sound like from a hypothetical perspective. Also, if this had occurred before, coaches were asked to describe the effect. To drive this aim forward, four movie-clips and one real-life clip was shown. Movie-clips viewed were all approximately 1-2 minutes in length, and included monologues from various depictions of these aforementioned leadership styles.

Movie-Clip Discussions

- Ron Ermey in *Full Metal Jacket*, acting as a highly ‘toxic’ drill sergeant in the US military
- Gary Cole in *Office Space*, acting as a passive and indifferent, ‘laissez-faire’ account manager
- Samuel L. Jackson in *Coach Carter*, acting as a highly authoritative, ‘autocratic’ adolescent/young men’s basketball coach
- Al Pacino in *Any Given Sunday*, playing the role of an American professional football coach giving a highly passionate, ‘transformational’ speech

- Zinedine Zidane of Real Madrid during the 2017 UEFA Champions League Final, being very pragmatic during half-time and taking a ‘transactional’ approach

The goal for this activity was to establish effective knowledge obtainment of five various leadership styles, while transitioning well into the next component of the workshop. The process unfolded as coaches were shown the video-clips one-by-one, asked to reflect on the leadership style(s) on display, and choose which one(s) were visible (note: possibility for more than one used per clip). Although offering some comic relief and entertainment value, nonetheless it was also conducive to stimulating conversation in the later phases of the workshop.

6.2.5 Introduction to Transformational Leadership

During this phase of the workshop, approximately 90 minutes into the session, the central theme fully emerged. This section specifically involved an overview of TFL Theory, a brief analysis of the word ‘transformation’ broken down, as well as a discussion of the myths associated with the theory itself. First, a brief review of the literature exemplified its wide versatility and strength. Next, the word “transformation” itself, was broken down into three working parts, trans-form-ation, to describe the idea of what is occurring. ‘Trans’, is the prefix which implies movement from one place to another, ‘form’ signifies the shape and configuration of either an animate or inanimate object, while the suffix ‘tion’ fuses and combines the latter two components. Thus, forming a unification after a process has occurred, describing a radical, sudden change, like a metamorphosis that happens as a cycle or progression of something (Oxford online dictionary). Used within a plethora of settings (e.g. physics, mathematics, linguistics, biology), the aim of this section was to equate it with practicality in the youth sport setting.

The four dimensions of Transformational Coaching were introduced with detailed descriptions of examples of how they can be applied within the sport setting. Through this illustration of the theoretical framework, the lead facilitator provoked critical reflection of the participants by requesting that they briefly imagine implementing these into their coaching practice and programs. For example, questions arose such as: “When is it appropriate to create a mission statement for your team?” “How do you do this?” “Describe a situation when using ‘individualized consideration’ would be conducive towards fostering both PYD and AD”.

Concluding this discussion, coaches were asked to reflect on how they would create action plans for implementing these 4I's into their trainings, with detailed plans and progressions.

6.2.6 Wrapping Up

As the workshop was nearing the conclusion, the lead facilitator challenged the coaches to choose the best leader that they ever had. This could be a teacher, coach, supervisor or colleague. Then they were tasked with coming up with a few behaviors that this individual did to make them feel this way (i.e. how did they motivate, inspire, develop, etc., and why they thought he/she was so influential). This was a chance for them to reflect without anybody knowing their thoughts. The goal of this intrapersonal communication exercise was to foster internal reflection while stoking realization of what effective leadership has felt, looked, and seemed like from their own perception. Chances were high that their explanations encompassed one of the four dimensions (4I's) of transformational leadership (e.g. Kelloway & Barling, 2000). The finality of the workshop concluded with a couple more activities that supported self-awareness and goal setting.

Facilitating Self-Awareness through Goal Setting

“An enslaved person uses stoicism to survive just as an emperor uses it to rule”

-Anonymous

Described as the ability to reflect upon one's behaviors accurately by Goleman (1998), self-awareness includes emotional awareness, being able to self-assess one's strengths and areas for improvement, while also being self-confident in one's own skills. In addition, it represents the maintaining of arousal regulation through varied social activities (e.g. Ferrari & Sternberg, 1998). The topic of self-awareness was discussed with various ways for coaches to reflect and implement effective approbation of their athletes.

Moreover, with these topics in mind, the final two discussions in the Transformer Workshop included exploring various ways to give effective feedback and praise. Exploring strategies to build self-awareness not only helped to establish a caring, and autonomic environment, but also increase the correspondence between coaches' own beliefs and practices, with the perceptions that their players have of those same beliefs (e.g. Millar et al., 2011). This knowledge of self-discovery involved using reflective journals with executing, monitoring, and re-working goal-setting routines into their coaching practice.

First, in an effort to integrate the material for the coaches even further, this phase of the workshop offered the chance for them to engage their leadership skills in new ways. According to Spintzyk and colleagues (2016) interdisciplinary methods applied to physical education (i.e. coaching) has relayed beneficial outcomes for cross-linking knowledge obtainment. In other words, skills learned in one setting are effectively applied to another. Therefore, using this method for the tasks to come, this required ‘stepping away’ from the ‘coaching perspective’ for a moment and reflecting on leadership throughout everyday life. For example, bringing various learning outcomes that have relevancy to us all. To this end, the final two activities engaged coaches’ leadership knowledge and transformational coaching knowledge learned up to this point. With the goal to embed TFL Theory into their personality trait from person-to-person contact, varied situations were created to drive this outcome forward.

“Poke Your Eye Out” Activity

The guidelines for this activity were designed to enhance leadership knowledge, skills and behaviors while activating interpersonal communication skills. The materials for this activity were just six playing cards (e.g., a king, queen, seven, six, three and two), with left to right (king-to-two) representing high to low values. Cards were distributed at random to every participant in the room including the lead facilitator. Each person represented an employee within a professional workforce, with hierarchical structures in place (i.e. CEO, entry level, etc.).

They were tasked with not viewing their card by placing it on their forehead (number away from eyes), and engaging in conversation with another person in the room. The objective was to assess the value of the other person’s card with appropriate non-verbal cues (e.g. eyesight, gestures), but without giving any telegraphing signals that reflected what the person’s card value was. In other words, if a person had a queen they should not address them as “your royal highness,” or if they had a two one should not equate it with being a peasant dweller. Note: the lead facilitator mentioned nothing of hierarchical structure (i.e. the king being the CEO or the 2 representing the peasant dweller). Thus, by ultimately learning to treat others the same despite their perceived abilities or ranks, the goal of this activity was to develop non-judgmental attitudes, and treat others equally (i.e. you should not judge a king differently than a peasant dweller).

“Make Your Own Hat” Activity

This last activity was designed to stimulate coaches’ creative thinking skills while being helpful to supporting the final lesson of the workshop: to be unique, charismatic, and understand that people learn in different ways and at different speeds. To drive this message forward materials needed for this activity were 10 sheets of newspaper (two pages per person), 4 pieces of scotch tape (3 centimeters each), and one scissor to share amongst the entire group. No person had completed this task prior to the workshop, so each viewed it as a new learning experience.

Each participant had approximately three minutes to complete the task, and could use only the tools given (tape, paper, and scissors). Other than these two rules, the creative allowance was immense. Upon finishing this objective, results displayed an array of hats which highlighted personality traits related to creativity and learning. As the main purpose of this activity was to enhance creativity, the message was conveyed that everybody learns differently. Some people may value space and few guidelines, while others may like more structure and order. Ultimately, coaches’ knowledge becomes enhanced through the realization brought forth that we each have unique abilities to produce creative works of art and various methods are needed by leaders to provoke them out of their followers.

Goal Setting

Lastly, just as coaches expect athletes to practice and improve themselves, self-reflection is a useful way for coaches to ‘practice’ their own methods through analyzing past coaching experiences (e.g. Kidman, 2005). As reflection is key to understanding one’s past behavior the lead facilitator distributed journals to all the coaches. The goal setting routine is broken down into two macrocycles (i.e. two, eight-week cycles with a two week feedback intermission), and four, two-week microcycles with an eight week dimension intermission (i.e. eight week break until that dimension was the central focus again). Figure 8 helps to convey the exploratory adaptation and approach of goal-setting methods that the Transformer Research Project utilized.

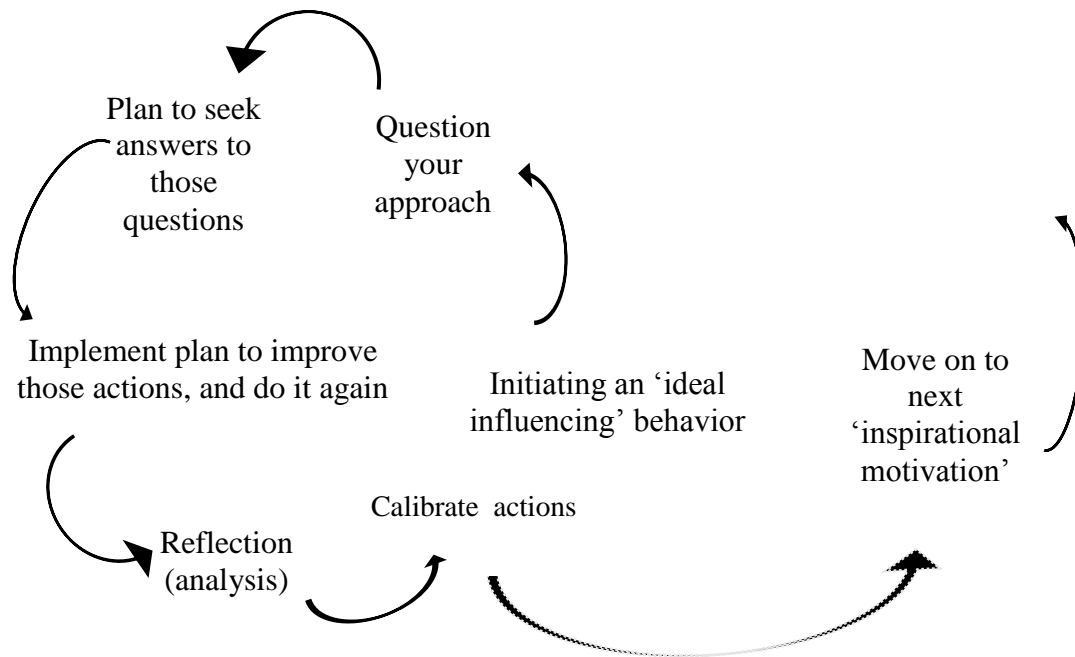


Figure 8. Conceptualizing the goal-setting routines

For example, Figure 8 shows the first cyclical pattern of the microcycle (e.g. in this example ‘ideal influence’ is used). In the first week of this dimension coaches embarked on ‘Initiating an ideal influencing behavior’—Step 1. Step 2—coaches reflected on the situation that was best, what context was most beneficial, and how to effectively incorporate it into their coaching plans. Step 3—this included questioning their approach and determining how to improve the same behavior, or initiate a new one for Week 2. Thus, ‘Implementing plan to improve those actions’ was the 1st step for the following week. The next week of the microcycle [one microcycle and one mini-microcycle] is shown in Figure 9, before eventually moving onto the next transformational coaching dimension.

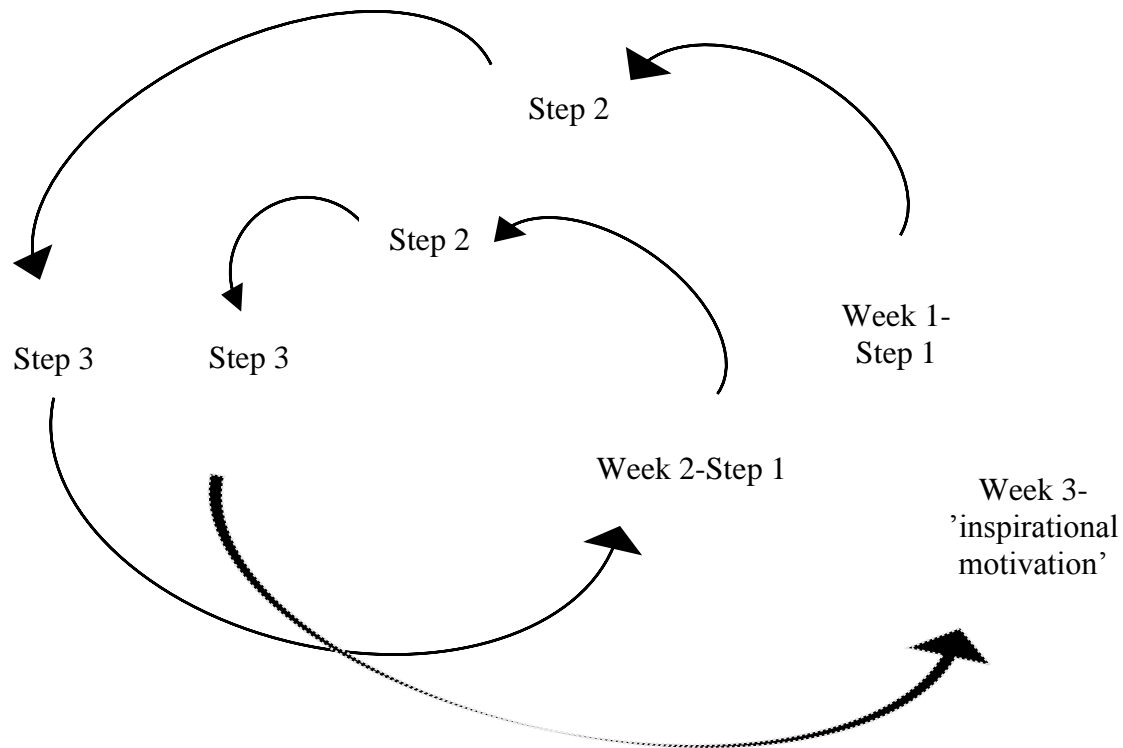


Figure 9. The microcycle and mini-microcycle example

6.3 Evaluation of the Transformer Research Project

In order to answer the remaining aims of this dissertation, coaches' perceptions, thoughts, and behaviors are explored, which track their experiences throughout the Transformer Research Project. First, the coaches' perceptions of the Transformer Workshop and the action journal cycles 1 and 2 are described. Then suggestions for improving the program follow. Next, transformational coaching behavior is tracked relative to activity of initiation. A brief analysis then follows related to general themes which emerge. Lastly, as qualitative data leans towards cross-case analysis, superordinate and subordinate themes are used to convey how coaches' experiences were used in 'practice.'

Moreover, as the results reflect the actual experiences of the coaches themselves within the highly dynamic social world of youth coaching, sensitive to a range of uncontrolled variables, thus, this means that the transferability was not high. Yet, this gave the lead facilitator some flexibility to 'paint the picture' of what was occurring as coaches implemented new and creative strategies into their trainings. Also, it became very intrinsically rewarding as the coaches themselves embarked on the process of internal reflection. They explored new ways

to positively affect their coaching environments, and a greater byproduct of this research became a rather meaningful leadership discovery¹³.

6.3.1 Coaches' Thoughts and Perceptions

At the conclusion of the project in October, the coaches' thoughts and perceptions of the entire program were measured using reflective open-ended questions (final interviews), and were compared to the first round interviews, observational field notes, and coaching journals. The coaches were instructed to discuss all facets of the project — workshop, action journaling as well as the transformational leadership components (4I's) — to provide 'takeaways' and bring forth suggestions to evaluate the leadership program's effectiveness. Also, the open-ended questions were necessary to understanding what emotions, thoughts, and/or behaviors that the coaches' exhibited throughout the process.

The learning outcomes are described as 'takeaways' that the coaches received from the overall program. Understood through their actions, yet clarified through thoughtful discussion, coaches' thoughts and emotions began to come out. When asked to what extent the Transformer Research Project had affected them, each coach was not short for words. Questions pertained to each dimension of transformational leadership applied to youth sport. Thus, 'takeaways' formed through content analysis that were cross-referenced with observational analysis—field notes—then compared to the first round interviews to optimize the veracity. Each dimension of transformational leadership represented a domain area of potential knowledge growth to enhance coaches' effectiveness.

Takeaways

Ideal Influencer

- Raised self-awareness on the importance of role modelling.
- Enhanced ability to raise levels of perceived respect and trust through initiating a variety of concrete behaviors and exercises.
- For example, story-telling and apologizing for mistakes were methods used as trial-and-error. This began to transfer to deeper conversations that took on new meaning.

¹³ A Leadership Discovery—coaches seeking to improve themselves with bravery and courage—reflects the reasoning behind the title of this dissertation.

Inspirational Motivator

- Enhanced creativity in designing effective ways to perceptively inspire their athletes through interpersonal communication skills advancement.
- For example, coaches started speaking in various ways, used multiple contexts, and related subjects of sport, school and social life together.
- Coaches found effective ways to create individual and team inspired methods to drive their own teachings forward, such as forming various social interaction groups that amplified their messages with guest speakers.

Intellectual Stimulator

- Increased self-assuredness through greater frequency to give athletes autonomy.
- For example, giving away some of their control through creating prominent roles for players and staff. Letting them ‘take charge’ in meaningful ways, but important for the efficacy of team’s competitive goals as well.

Individualized Consideration

- Increased self-awareness of the importance of making interpersonal connections with individual players.
- Perceptions of coach-to-player satisfaction increased, and vice versa as the coaches felt more appreciated by their players.
- For example, coaches increased their one-on-one ‘verbal’ time as the season progressed, and conducted post-season meetings to discuss sport and non-sport related matters.

Perceptions of the Transformer Workshop

These are the three topics and/or modes that the coaches believed to be most effective during the Transformer workshop:

1. Example videos of transformational leaders.
2. Interactive ‘role playing’ exercises between coach and athlete.
3. Lecture on effective coaching.

Areas for improvement

These are the three themes which emerged in similar fashion (most to least frequency expressed) when each coach was asked to improve the workshop's efficacy:

1. Goal-setting explanation, routines, and procedures.
2. Narrowing the focus to transformational theory applied to sport.
3. Follow-up measures (feedback and 'checkup') needing strict revisions with measureable results.

Perceptions of the Action Journaling Cycles

These are the three themes that frequently showed up as beneficial outcomes of the goal-setting routines:

1. Encouraged reflection of the theory.
2. Good progressions (bi-weekly) to expand on one dimension at a time.
3. Six month total time-frame adequate for knowledge obtainment of the theory.

Areas for Improvement

These are the five themes which emerged from the action journaling cycles which reflected areas for improvement:

1. Clearer structure with definable ways to measure results.
2. More concrete examples to implement each dimension individually.
3. Implement 'free weeks' so coaches have the autonomy to choose which dimension(s) to focus on (i.e. single focus or multiple dimensions used simultaneously), depending on team needs.
4. Periodic collaborative meetings between the coaches to share their experiences.
5. More measures to ensure internal validity, results, and equal reciprocation of the tasks involved (i.e. ways to keep all coaches accountable for their goal-setting).

Suggestions for Improvement

As content analysis was used to compare each of the five coaches' experiences — checking for differences, similarities, and emerging superordinate (dominant) and subordinate (less dominant) themes — this boded well for fruitful suggestions to improve the program. Moreover, the lead facilitator deciphered each coaches' experiences and perceptions, and this yielded interesting outcomes. A full description is seen in Table 9, which describes the effective educational methods with suggestions to improve the program.

Moreover, coaches felt that the goal-setting routines were unclear, vague, and less effective than the workshop and the feedback sessions. Although the workshop itself was rather broad-based, both the coaches and the lead facilitator strongly felt it was too short a time-frame to include all the topics discussed. In hindsight this resulted from the lead facilitator's poor planning. Scheduling conflicts however were added constraint. The workshop could have been broken down into two or three dispersed throughout the season, although it remains uncertain as to how this could be done considering the constraints. Nonetheless, more collaboration was needed throughout the program. A first workshop could be implemented through collaboration between the facilitator, communal, and national level stakeholders. Second, an additional follow-up workshop could then be conducted with the facilitator and coaches. Then as the season comes to an end a third and final workshop could take place with athletes. Throughout the process the same data collection methods would occur (i.e. journaling, goal-setting, observations, and feedback sessions).

The last workshop could include athlete participants that coaches and sport directors would choose as an 'award' based on outstanding character. By offering the chance to participate this would manifest as a contingent reward — yet, not limited to praise alone — and would stimulate internal and external motivation that is postulated to steer positive youth development. For example, during the season the coach could speak about leadership criteria amongst his or her players, and those displaying these leadership characteristics would be eligible to participate in the program. In addition, athletes could then fill out a questionnaire to test their perceptions of their coaches' transformational behaviors. This would also reduce the amount of scheduling constraints for all stakeholders.

Table 9. Suggestions for improving the Transformer Research Project

Topics & Important Themes	Suggestions for improvement		
<i>Transformer Workshop</i>	3 workshops throughout season		
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invite local, national, and communal level stakeholders 2. Discuss barriers and constraints from multiple perspectives (i.e. players, volunteer coaches, staff, parents, etc.), and propose effective solutions. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue with Introductory activities, transformational coaching behaviors, and interactive exercises. 2. Focus solely on TFL theory applied to sport 3. Observe coaches within first month. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand on recurrent or new problems that surface. 2. Touch on new topics related to leadership. 3. Compose an effective feedback measurement from player-to-coach for empirical results. 4. Invite captains of selected teams to participate. 5. Build criteria for building a leadership program for athletes.
<i>Action Journaling</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go deeper into each dimension by creating SMART goals for each micro-and-macrocycle (specific, measurable, assignable, relevant, and time-based). • Expand goals to assign athlete life-goals outside of sport (i.e. school/social). 		
<i>Sector Group Meetings</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign coaches to work in pairs to increase efficacy, accountability and collaboration within each dimension. • Schedule small group meetings with two or more coaches to mitigate perceived barriers and reduce conflict of schedules with inability to attend all the workshops. 		
<i>Transformer Research Council</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find ways to stimulate and activate coaches' transformational leadership behaviors by encouraging them to create a 'Transformer Research Council' comprised of coaches and players (each separate). • In other words, coaches 'find the time' to talk deeply about topics related to adolescent life. They encourage their players to do the same. This allows social groups to discuss healthy topics related to their development while indirectly creating layers of support. 		

6.3.2 Transformational Coaching Frequencies and Constructions

Using the Full Range of Leadership Model as a guiding reference, coaches' actions — either predetermined or spontaneously formed — were grouped within each dimension (e.g. Avolio & Bass, 1991). Subordinate themes began to emerge in addition to the effective tracking of the total amount of transformational activities exhibited. The number of activities are not equated with quality. Also, the lead facilitator did not attach value hierarchies to any dimension or specific behavior. Essentially, the results are depicted to show evidence that coaches varied in their experiences with the material. Interestingly, noticeable subordinate themes emerged which provided significant findings for the lead facilitator to report.

A spreadsheet display is outlined in Table 10, which reflects the frequency and construction of each leadership action. Actual behaviors are elaborated on in the final section of the results. Although constructs and dimensions show carry over potential (i.e. possibilities to provide more than one at a time), each action was separated in order to display their frequency while making it clearer to analyze participatory (passive; P) and active (directive; D) forms of construction. 'Passive' in this context refers to the implementation of an action, and 'active' was used to show when coaches conscientiously investigated their athletes' progress while providing feedback on that particular action. Ideal influence (II), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), and Individualized Consideration (IC), show up in abbreviated form.

Table 10. Frequency of transformational coaches' behaviors and constructive forms

Coach	Constructions & Frequencies							
	II-P	II-D	IM-P	IM-D	IS-P	IS-D	IC-P	IC-D
Zizou	I	I	I	I		I	I	
Ceni	II		II	II	I	I	I	I
Valderrama	III		I	I	II	I	I	II
Dinho	I		I	I		I	I	
Larsson	III		I	III	II	I	I	I

First, these results display that the level of playing experience had no predictive effect on likelihood of coaches' to favor any specific dimension or the frequency with which leadership constructions were initiated (i.e. probability to initiate transformational leadership behaviors). Interestingly, the youngest and least experienced coach surpassed all coaches by constructing his 'ideal leadership' action through both passive and directive forms. Secondly, a correlation was noticed between playing experience and perceived ability to gain immediate respect. Third, the number of coaching certifications was correlated with activity levels and adapting actions to engage within multiple dimensions simultaneously.

When analyzing the first postulation, however, it is important to note that potential barriers relative to each coaches' current life situation are not controlled. Thus, Dinho, who was also a professional footballer and part time school teacher, had higher day-to-day constraints than for example, Zizou or Larsson (both full time students). On the other hand, a stronger case could be made for the number of coaching certifications achieved, which is heavily predictive despite various constraints. In other words, Valderrama and Ceni both had reasonably high constraints, yet, both were amongst the highest (Larsson as well) in terms of the number of transformational coaching behaviors and actions. Thus, all three coaches with higher levels of coaching certifications varied in constraints but showed similar frequency patterns. The two coaches with the lowest number of certifications were far less active.

Second, all the coaches perceived their initial ability to gain their player's trust and respect to rest on their playing careers. This was not a limiting factor, however, to predict performing transformational coaching activities. It does show, nonetheless, that there exists some over-reliance on using charisma (perhaps a misconception as well). In other words, how to achieve immediate respect in other ways than worrying about playing experience became a subordinate theme. Maybe this has relevance at first, but more studies should be conducted as to why this is the case. Moreover, as most coaches relied on using their past experiences as either a constraint to overcome or a tool for steering their players' devotion, this dimension of 'ideal leadership' presented many intriguing dilemmas. For example, at what point in the coach-athlete relationship does an over-reliance on charisma fail, and when is it too late to substitute mechanisms to stimulate athletes' trust and respect in more sustainable ways?

Lastly, the final intriguing trend depicted from the results showcased that all the coaches who had achieved at least a C-coaching license initiated significantly more actions than their less certified peers. Again, the quality of actions is not predicted within this study, yet the

assumption can effectively be made that coaches' level of education through CDPs could have an effect on their engagement levels.

6.3.3 Transformational Coaching in Action

The final section of the results depicts the real-life experiences of each coach throughout their respective seasons. Examples used reflect both passive and active construction forms within each parameter of TFL theory. The chosen examples represent emerging subordinate themes that became salient features of all coaches, yet specific ones used reflect the greatest range of construction (both passive and active forms, and length of duration). This was how the lead facilitator chose to represent each coaches' mini story of one single action they chose. Thus, each chosen action represented a theme of continued persistence. In other words, the coach engaged in this action over an extensive period of time (i.e. at least three months), that was followed by consistent praise and encouragement (e.g. contingent reward).

Furthermore, these examples were chosen because they represent strong principles that relate with Bass (1985) theory of leadership, which demonstrates that transactional leadership — particularly emphasizing contingent reward — provides a strong, yet general basis of leadership which is strengthened by a greater amount of transformational behaviors. Thus, contingent reward is possible to be attached to, or rather visible to be seen even through their actions of praise, as coaches were demonstrating this in trainings, games, and social interactions away from competition. While focusing on the central principles of transformational leadership to guide the way — the 4I's — the purpose is to show how each coach 'affected' their coaching environment by taking transactional approaches and augmenting them with transformational behaviors. According to Antonakis et al., (2003), although contingent reward is a strong tenet of transactional leadership (e.g. such as a working bonus), however, when the reward features 'praise' (i.e. psychological) it becomes transformational. Figure 10 below reflects the subordinate themes of increasing self-awareness, skill building, enhancing commitment to goals, and showing empathy.

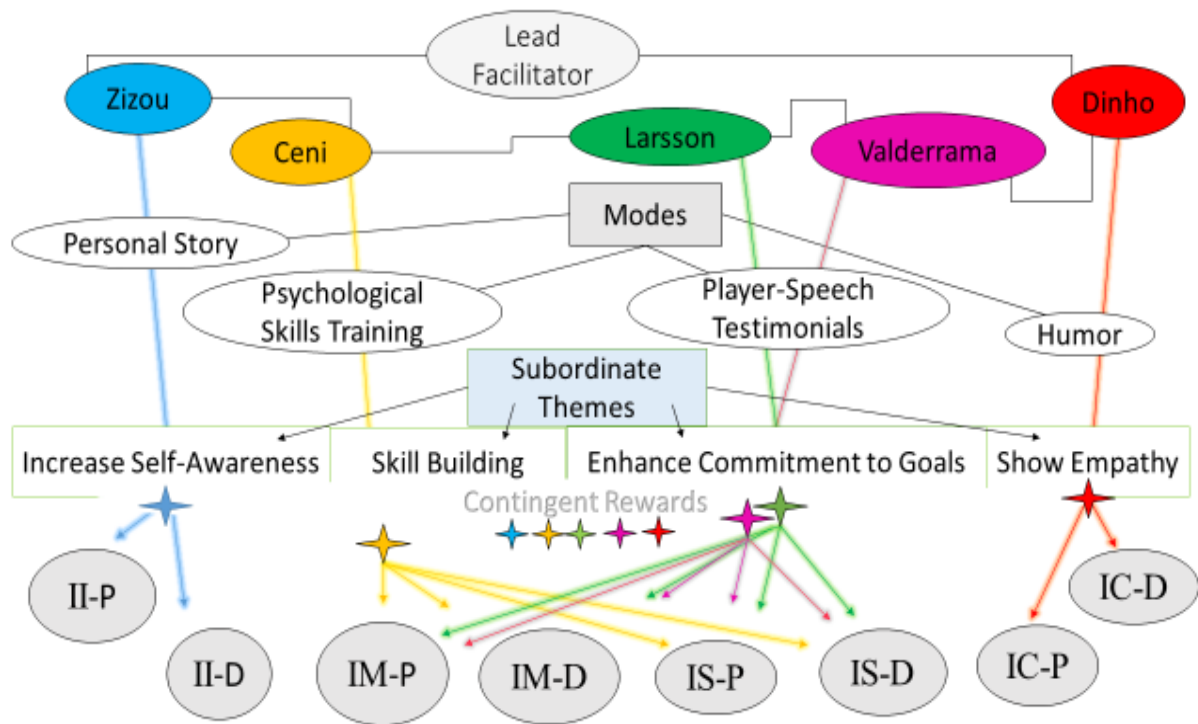


Figure 10. Superordinate themes with constructive leadership forms

Zizou

Zizou was the only assistant coach of the group. Nevertheless, he was strongly featured within this study to show both passive and active forms of constructing messages for his players which showed a great deal of ‘ideal influence.’ For instance, he engaged with his players in thought provoking conversations which ranged in topics unrelated to sport. These occurred on the pitch before trainings, pre- and post-games, in the city, on the bus or in the hotel during away trips. One specific example with the longest duration featured contexts reflecting the subordinate theme of increasing his player’s self-awareness through the mode of personal story.

“I once heard a group of players talking to one boy, you know, being very insulting to him. When I noticed this happening, it brought something out of me from way back, you know, something very powerful. I had to say something. I told them a story about a player who was once in my team when I was a junior player. And you know what I thought afterwards—that this player quit—because he didn’t feel like he belongs to the team. He felt like an outsider. I told a story about how I felt afterwards, when I realized that this had happened. And although it wasn’t me that teased or made fun of the boy, I told them that I felt like, regret over what happened. And I should have helped him out.”

Zizou was noticeably emotional when describing this incident. Yet, he showed maturity beyond his years in being able to perceive this situation from multiple points of view. He reflected on

how his values have been shaped from events like this. Reflecting on his own past gave him a direct link to the current situation, and supported his confidence and willingness to clarify his values to his players.

“If I think back now—how I was—I cannot be too hard on these guys, because, ‘Oh my god, I was an ass hole back then’ and sometimes you have to realize this. So I have to realize that I was not so different from them. I explained this to them, those that were bullying. I said that my way of acting has changed, because I realized that this player had quit. And how my perspective changed when I saw how something I thought was no big deal, became a really big deal. Now, it helps me to reflect on what was good and bad. I tried to explain this to the players. That you must be a good person first. Because you don’t know how your actions will change your teammates. We are a team. And we need everybody to feel good together to play good.”

He initiated an action to build more trust and rapport with his players by sharing personal stories from his past. Although it was just ‘below the surface’ of discussion, Zizou started expressing values such as building his player’s personalities through uncompromising ethics (e.g. treat each other how you would like to be treated). Through laying the foundation of respect and understanding first, Zizou noticed how his athletes began to change, and his own self-confidence to share personal stories, and relate to his athletes increased.

“You know, I felt that it was hard to share these types of stories with players at first. It became sort of easier and even felt very nice afterwards. So I began to do it more. And now players feel like they can talk to me. They even say ‘thank you’ when we talk about other matters of life. They have ask for my opinion on things more now. And I am happy to give them my opinion.”

Zizou’s teaching of self-awareness began to shine through as his athletes started asking for advice. Through using personal stories Zizou positively influenced what could have been a potentially nasty situation (e.g. bully incident). This showed very strong transformational character by shifting his athletes’ negative behaviors to follow his example. Moreover, he tapped into his past experience to create lasting messages for his athletes to learn. Rather than dwelling solely on reprimanding the offenders using verbal shaming, Zizou creatively reformed the problem by presenting it through his own perspective and history first. His affirmations were rewarded when players began to change their negative actions into positive ones, and he perceived that his team’s climate changed as well.

Ceni

What set Ceni apart from the other coaches was his construction of a team environment which was strong, resilient, motivational, and highly intellectual, while being comprised of players

that had the greatest range of age and background. Thus, constraints were higher, and this reflected in the results on the pitch. However, the results were not a reflection of the positive development of his work. Ceni displayed a wide-range of leadership behaviors with solid evidence to back it up. His team varied in playing ability and age, which showed strong variance in mental strength, and resiliency. Therefore, Ceni adapted his lessons to build-up his team's weaknesses and bring out their strengths. He created various roles and responsibilities for his players while instituting and emphasizing a team and player oriented vision — something no other coach in this study achieved — to such a great degree.

“During the mid-season break, I started reflecting on what was our weakness from both player and team perspectives. We have many young players competing against older players, their abilities are different, ok some are the same, but our mentality is definitely biggest difference. So I tried to bring out their strengths more. Basically, the first step was that every player was asked to write 2 or 3 things they can train to improve their weaknesses. Next, they had to reflect on bringing out their strengths to the pitch by creating a superhero image of themselves. This could be person they admire or animal. They had to show this trait on the pitch. The following step was to divide the team into three groups—defense, midfield, and attack. Each group created mental words that described their character.”

Ceni described a lot to be digested and reflected upon here. What became apparent as a subordinate theme under both dimensions of ‘inspirational motivation’ and ‘intellectual stimulation’ was how he instituted a ‘skill-building’ program that had wide ranging effects throughout a significant time period. First, he tapped transformational leadership by giving out various roles, dividing into groups, and allowing athletes to come up with effective solutions to problems. Next, he stimulated his player's interpersonal and intrapersonal communication skills. In other words, each athlete was given the task to reflect on their weaknesses and come up with concrete solutions for improving them. Thus, they were encouraged to increase their skills.

“You know, I think as results weren't going our way, we [coaching staff] attempted many things to get our guys on the same page, and to build them up. After the season ended, beyond the poor results, everybody was closer together. And players were actually improved. We were in this together. Even though there were many personal mistakes, nobody was the only person to blame. This was noticed when younger players have made a poor mistake, like losing ball in defensive half, and the opponent scores a goal. Our players were the ones encouraging them forward. And also, everybody understands that to improve they must show themselves, and work hard on their weaknesses for the next season.”

Although a concrete objective for Ceni's team was to compete for trophies (i.e. to win), his leadership behaviors began to create meaning that went beyond the pitch. The lead facilitator observed how he not only 'talked the talk', but also 'walked the walk'. When times were not going his team's way, Ceni was the leader of his pack by providing praise and not limiting rewards to results alone. A great byproduct of the work he 'put in' was through his steady transformational leadership, despite a disappointing season.

"You know, the season was shit. But at the end of the day, life is bigger than football. This was our main theme to discuss post-season. Yeah, we have had some evenings out together since then. And what I notice the most, is that yeah, we are still close. Guys can say things to each other, and nobody is judging. At the end of the day, we became closer. And players have thanked me for developing them into better players."

Valderrama and Larsson

Valderrama and Larsson formed a Sector Group which brought their teams together for player testimonials (i.e. players giving speeches on various goals, actions, and behaviors). This showed teamwork to affect their coaching environments, and it manifested in a rather interesting way. Both Larsson and Valderrama exhibited both constructs of intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation at the same time, while also doing so within their own coaching environments—independent of one another. Yet, by working together this provided their athletes with the unique opportunity to hear and give speeches in front of their peers. Through 'teaming up' together both coaches were actively attempting to augment their messages for the betterment of their players, and these were the only two coaches who formed a Sector Group.

"[Larsson] and I decided—as both our teams had various players that were on the 'short list' to compete for a national team place—that one good thing to do would be to have a player speech. Like to show how they behave on and off the pitch, how much they work, how they behave, things like that. We have had players go back and forth to trainings between both our teams so they were quite familiar with each other. It worked out really good. So we continued."—Valderrama

Both Valderrama and Larsson's teamwork shows an inspiring, yet, effective way to empower their players to think outside the box when formulating goals. Moreover, this was a second example of forming concrete 'team talks' which feature goals as a prominent theme. First, in the beginning of their respective seasons — within their own coaching settings — both coaches spoke of the importance of having goals. The player speech testimonials represented a second

‘go’ at reminding, reforming, and recreating the same message, but in a much stronger way. Thus, the subordinate theme emerged as reaffirming ‘commitment to goals.’

“At the beginning of the season, I spoke at length with my players. Like asking them, what kind of team do we want to be—a team that works harder than the rest—or a team that just does things normally? When we beat HJK recently, I asked them why they thought we won them 1-0 when it was the case that the previously we lost 6-0. They said that it was because of our hard work!”—Larsson

“We spoke many times at the start of the season that in order to be a top player, talent is not enough. It takes effort, commitment, and practice. Long hours of practice to become a top player in Finland. And as our team was the top team in the area, I also made sure that my players understood how they have the responsibility to work hard every training, because it is a privilege to be on this team. Players listened and I felt they truly understood, and valued my message.”—Valderrama

The player speech testimonials — indirectly — reaffirmed commitment to goals through ‘team talks’ which reinforced the vision of achieving a team-oriented goal. Both Larsson and Valderrama evoked their players’ intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation by presenting them with storied evidence, yet concrete and challenging methods to achieve. The speech testimonials aroused the emotions associated with upholding strong effort and commitment through the ups-and-downs of a season. Moreover, this showed strong investment for supporting task and team-oriented behaviors, taking ownership of behaviors, and empowering each other to reach the target in a very motivational and inspirational way.

Dinho

Dinho was very effective at providing individual consideration to his players in both constructive forms. His ability to display a range of interpersonal and social skills became a salient feature of his leadership style. Also, he displayed high emotional and social intelligence through being supportive and aware of individual differences. Thus, the common subordinate theme that reoccurred was his use of humor to show empathy towards his athletes.

“For me, as I am a player myself, I understand how the player thinks. This is my approach with the boys. I say that you must enjoy yourself to play beautiful. This is my style, and maybe why I am more spontaneous as a coach. Because I have learned that some kids, what you say to them about playing, may work for some, and not for others. So I try to get them laughing first. So they feel better to make mistakes. Then I can have a conversation with them to see what is the problem. This is how I like to be coached.”

Dinho's approach with his athletes was certainly reciprocated with enthusiasm, as observation showed much laughter, and great team morale. Players were noticeably enjoying themselves around him. When I asked if he had any concrete ways of showing concern for athletes, he reflected, and said:

“Well, it is something I have trouble thinking of one example. But basically, before every training, or every match I make them feel ok to be themselves by making them laugh. I think this is good way to build the team message. Like, what is their ‘why’ for being here. Is it to make friends, to play beautiful football, or is it that they want to win!?! (he laughs). Then I say to them, that all are ok, but you must believe in yourself, and try hard to do any of the three. We all make mistakes, and this is what I try to connect with them the most. If there is something to correct I always try to talk to them individually. But this happens after, when I can speak alone. Ok, sometimes it is not possible to do, but I try.”

Although Dinho's examples were rather broad and spontaneous, nevertheless, his ability to take a human-developmental approach with varied personalities was second to none amongst all the coaches. This was certainly effective at times, but it also showed an over reliance on his charisma. This was noticed through observational analysis, and the coaching journals and final interview relayed nothing to contradict this.

7 DISCUSSION

“Pursuing what makes you happy is a luxury, but pursuing what has meaning is a moral obligation”

Jordan Peterson

This study aimed to plan, implement, describe, and evaluate a leadership program which was designed to enhance coaches' interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge, skills, and behaviors. The goal was to increase coaches' effectiveness through collaborative design — as well as to fill the gap of research to date — pertaining to collaborative CDPs (e.g. Lefebvre et al., 2016; Turnidge & Côté, 2017). With these factors in mind, this was added fuel which helped to fulfill this project's objectives. To this end, the results reflect positive implications from the Finnish youth football coaching perspective, but also show much room for improvement.

Coaches valued the information shared, practical demonstrations, theoretical support, and the interactions made throughout the research. Their shared thoughts and experiences exemplified that they improved certain facets of their leadership. Yet, there remains room for improvement in designing and implementing similar CDPs. The limitations of this research will be presented in this chapter. And as far as CDPs are concerned, recommendations are strongly encouraged for implementing future research that seeks to affect coaching effectiveness through more empirical studies.

7.1 Conclusions

From the beginning stage of this research collaborative discussions took place with communal and national level stakeholders. By working in unison with varied professionals and invested parents this enhanced the amount of intellectual resources at the lead facilitator's disposal. The Finnish Football representative helped to gather relevant messengers (e.g. coaches) for the study. In addition, information sharing from parents brought new perspectives which the lead facilitator used in designing topics for the workshop. Professors helped to ensure that the lead facilitator was on the right track, and supplied appropriate information when asked.

All five coaches evaluated the program in segments, and results showed that the workshop helped the coaches the most. All coaches perceived the content, mode of delivery, and aims of the workshop to be relevant, and supported their leadership growth. Thus, this is an important factor when considering the revision of similar CDPs. By taking coaching perspectives as

important measures for improvement, this can lead to better outcomes in the future (e.g. Vargas-Tonsing, 2007; Wiersma, L. Sherman).

In addition, the coaches' thoughts and perceptions support previous findings that TFL theory can positively affect coach learning and bring out positive youth development outcomes (e.g. Côté & Gilbert, 2009; Saybani et al., 2013; Côté & Turnnidge, 2016). This was noticed as all coaches reported greater value and meaning from various tasks and objectives of the research itself. This increased their perceptions to respond to various social and practical matters that their athletes faced. Specifically, interpersonal skills enhanced as all coaches reported that their athletes' devotion of trust, respect, inspiration, and empathy increased. Furthermore, as trust building is linked with various positive outcomes related to athletes' perceptions of satisfaction, commitment, and well-being (e.g. Kelloway et al., 2000), PYD is postulated to have been affected.

The coaches varied in age, personalities, coaching background, and playing experience, which tempered my role as lead facilitator to encourage them to be themselves. This meant the lead facilitator took an individual approach with each of them. When reflecting on the overall process, there are many things to elaborate on. With this in mind, the results have brought up important things to consider for the discussion, but most importantly it brings this question to mind. What can coaches or sport organizations get from this study?

To put it frankly, apart from the positive perceptions that the coaches in this study reported, there is doubt whether these findings are adequate to explain the complex nature of what occurred this past season. Moreover, within the Finnish youth sport setting — funds being a constraining factor — without empirical evidence to 'back up' these proclamations, it is not certain that this research will be validated. However, one cannot truly learn about the complexities and intricacies of the coaching experience until they have gone through it first-hand. Certainly, the lead facilitator and the coaches in this study are no strangers to this experience. As simulated and calculated 'classroom' routines may have become within CDPs, nevertheless the Transformer Research Project brought out these complexities as much as possible, and gave a valiant effort.

7.2 Limitations

Several limitations were recognized immediately following this research's conclusion. Some were remedied while others were more difficult. In line with previous studies, collaborative

discussions helped to create credible messengers, supportive networks, and foster discussions that fought barriers against implementing transformational coaching behaviors through attempting to have supportive networks in place (e.g. Turnnidge & Côté, 2017). Yet, despite the initial support, once the content was formed at the beginning stages of the project the lead facilitator represented the lone stakeholder to give coaches support. This put many constraints on the lead facilitator's ability to do an optimal job. Other duties related to student life, being a volunteer coach himself, and also coordinating timetables of five coaches all played significant roles that took much energy. Thus, this limited the research's effectiveness.

Moreover, the data collection process was very limited for two reasons. First, the sample size of the coaches was small, and all had various socio-demographic differences (despite all being male and Finns). This meant that the generalizability of the results was low. Also, the language barrier was a limiting factor for both the lead facilitator and the coaches involved. As the lead facilitator spoke in English, the Finnish coaches were using their non-native language. This limited the scope and quality of the data itself, and also inhibited the lead facilitator to relate to the coaches within their own mother-tongue.

Furthermore, the evaluation of the project itself was limited. First, this research attempted to construct and implement an explorative intervention-based coaching development program, but it failed to use effective measures to monitor and guide behavior-change techniques. Second, by only using qualitative measures to collect the data, this meant that the results were subject to confirmation biases, personal opinions or fleeting memories. For example, as the interviews, observations, and journals were aimed to find commonalities and differences across different coaching experiences, the coaches were trusted to confirm the actions and behaviors they implemented themselves through journaling and interviews alone. No fact-checking measures were objectively in place besides the triangulation method of cross-referencing (i.e. journals with interviews and observations). Thus, the results were completely subjective, and up to the discretion of each coach and the lead facilitator. Ultimately, this limits the veracity and transferability of the results.

7.3 Suggestions for future research

As this study includes coaches working with athletes at various stages in their development, when considering Côté & Gilbert's (2009) proposition of coaching effectiveness, there could be more studies examining how transformational leaders' behaviors may influence their

athletes as a result of their specific developmental stage. For example, leadership behaviors could be examined as to the most effective actions concerning athletes at a given stage within the Developmental Model of Sport Participation (Côté, 1999). In addition, as the youth sport season is so short in reality (i.e. less than one year), more longitudinal studies are needed to support the evolving trends and fickle changes that are salient within the youth sport setting. Thus, more studies conducted over a longer range of time are needed, which could provide greater knowledge on how the coach-to-athlete interpersonal relationship evolves through time.

Moreover, a worthwhile avenue for empirical studies could entail the prominent use of questionnaires to measure TFL theory applied to sport. For example, a mixed method approach could utilize questionnaires that could corroborate or show discrepancies between coaches' and/or athletes' perceptions in various leadership behaviors, in addition to interviews. These could be done pre, and post workshop and/or season. This would also strengthen the veracity, as the athlete's themselves would be giving their anonymous feedback of their coach. Also, effective assessing measures in coaches' behavior-change need to be implemented with greater diligence. At times this was difficult for the lead facilitator because how to define what was transformational or not became a very subjective question.

Therefore, it is strongly encouraged that behavior change theories be incorporated to firmly guide, select, and operationalize appropriate behaviors to be focused on relative to intervention based studies (e.g. Michie et al., 2014). Lastly, to help the efficacy of exploratory CDPs it is strongly recommended that more collaboration between research, communal (youth sport clubs), and national level (sport governing organizations) be conducted to help achieve higher quality between the coach-and-athlete relationship. One interesting framework which could help to operationalize an exploratory design with all three levels of orientation in mind is the RE-AIM (reach, efficacy, adoption, implementation, and maintenance; Glasgow et al., 1999). Ultimately, this would help the coach, researcher, and club to identify and target any problems that athletes are facing within their communities, and then commit resources to help rectify it through collaboration.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Consent Form

University of Jyväskylä
Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences
Social Sciences of Sport

A Leadership Discovery — Enhancing Finnish Youth Football Coaches’ Effectiveness through the Transformer Research Project

Researcher:

Thesis Advisor:

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I, Garry Lewis, study in the master’s degree program of Social Sciences of Sport at the University of Jyväskylä. My thesis aims to promote a good quality coaching workshop that will improve volunteer youth soccer coaches’ leadership skills. During the research, coaching participants are asked to adapt, implement, and execute transformational coaching behaviors within their coaching ‘practices’. What the researcher asks is that you commit to two rounds of interviews, one coaching workshop, one feedback session, and allow the lead facilitator to observe your training sessions. Your participation in this research however, does not coerce you into making coaching decisions that are not of your own free will. For example, although you are asked to employ these strategies, nonetheless, what behaviors or styles of leadership you decide to embark upon are completely up to you. All the information pertaining to you will remain confidential. Only the lead facilitator (researcher of this study), and the thesis advisor listed above have access to the collected material. If, at any moment in time throughout this research project, you wish to terminate your participation that is completely your right. You can do so without providing any explanation, whatsoever.

Consent

I am aware that my participation in this research study is voluntary, and that the collected research material is strictly confidential. I agree, upon signing this consent form, that I have read the report above, and that I will actively participate in two interviews, and one coaching workshop, the feedback session, and allow the lead facilitator to observe my training sessions. At any point in time, I can conclude my participation in this research without providing any sort of explanation. Lastly, I give my permission for the researcher to use the collected information in this master’s thesis.

Date:

Print name: _____ Signature: _____

Appendix 2: First Rounds Interviews

Background Information

What is your name, and please describe your background of playing and coaching football.

Ideal Influence

1. In what ways are you a role model for your players, and how would you describe yourself as a role model?
2. What values do you live by, and do you discuss these with your team?
3. In what ways have you earned your players trust and respect?
4. In what ways have you improved this trust and respect?

Inspirational Motivation

1. In what ways do you inspire your team?
2. What short-term and long-term goals do you discuss with your team?
3. What short-term and long-term goals do you discuss with your individual players?
4. What collective vision do you create for your team?
5. In what ways do you focus on the process of learning or the result of the game?
6. How do you express confidence in your team's abilities?
7. How do you express confidence in individual player's abilities?
8. How do you set expectations for your team?
9. How do you set expectations for individual players?
10. In what ways do you encourage team unity?
11. How do you give meaningful and challenging tasks and roles to your team?
12. How do you give meaningful and challenging tasks and roles to individual players?

Intellectual Stimulation

1. How do you provide leadership opportunities for your players?
2. How do you share decision making with your team and individual players?
3. How do you offer choices for you team and individual players?
4. How do you emphasize participation in leading?

Individual Consideration

1. How do you discuss or show interest in matters that affect your players outside of playing soccer in either school or personal life?
2. How do you provide feedback for your team, and individual players?
3. How often do you do this?
4. How do you adapt your coaching style to suit individual player's needs?
5. How often to you adapt or design specific drills or activities to suit those player's needs?
6. In what ways to you provide recognition of individual achievements outside of football?

Appendix 3: Second Interviews

Ideal Influencer

1. Describe all the settings and contexts, in which you were a role model for your players, and team.
2. How were these environments created?
3. Tell me about some concrete examples, activities or strategies that you used to gain trust and respect, and enhance it.
4. Describe how this process went.
5. What have you learned throughout this process of being a role model for your players, and team?
6. How has this research project changed or influenced your coaching principles related to being an 'ideal influencer'?

Inspirational Motivator

7. Describe all the settings and contexts, in which you inspired and motivated your players, and team.
8. How were these environments created?
9. Tell me about some concrete examples, activities or strategies that you used to inspire and motivate your players, and team.
10. Describe how this process went.
11. What have you learned throughout this process of inspiring and motivating your players, and team?
12. How has this research project changed or influenced your coaching principles related to being an 'inspirational motivator'?

Intellectual Stimulator

7. Describe all the settings and contexts, in which you stimulated thought, challenging your players, and team.
8. How were these environments created?
9. Tell me about some concrete examples, activities or strategies that you used to challenge them, and to stimulate thinking of your players, and team.
10. Describe how this process went.
11. What have you learned throughout this process of challenging and stimulating your players, and team?
12. How has this research project changed or influenced your coaching principles related to being an 'intellectual stimulator'?

Individualized Consideration

13. Describe all the settings and contexts, in which you showed care and concern for your players, and team.
14. How were these environments created?
15. Tell me about some concrete examples, activities or strategies that you used to show care, concern and consideration to your players, and team.
16. Describe how this process went.
17. What have you learned throughout this process of showing consideration to your players, and team?
18. How has this research project changed or influenced your coaching principles related to giving 'individualized consideration'?

General Considerations

19. What barriers, constraints, and positives were there, considering the Transformer Workshop, Feedback Sessions, and Journal Tasks related to the learning objectives of the research? What are your overall impressions and feeling about this project?

“The problems we face as a society should encourage those in positions of authority and privilege, to reflect on making life a little less of a struggle for all—especially for those that are dispossessed—but also for those individuals who are misinformed or misguided”

Erica Lewis