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POSITIVE LIVING SKILLS FOR TEENS:
A YOUTH INTERVENTION

by
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MASTER'S THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The Positive Living Skills (PLS) program for teens is a personal life enhancement intervention program centered on teaching focusing skills, positive perspectives, and relaxation skills. To date the PLS program has not been introduced to an adolescent population. The purpose of this study was to introduce the PLS program to adolescents (in a classroom context) and to investigate whether the students enjoyed, applied, and found these skills effective in their daily lives. A secondary purpose of this study was to learn from the interactions with the students and teachers and explore the best ways to deliver the program.

Two grade 10 health and physical education classes (one boys' and one girls' class) participated in a 10 session PLS intervention over a period of 16 weeks. These sessions included PLS audio CD activities, interactive and person guided PLS activities, logbook exercises, discussions and practice using skills within the physical education context. Teens who participated in the PLS program enjoyed the program skills, applied and planned to continue applying the program skills, and found the program skills effective in daily life. These findings support results from previous PLS research conducted with younger students between the ages of 4-12 years of age (Cox & Orlick, 1996; Gilbert & Orlick, 2002; Taylor & Orlick, 2004). In addition facilitation and program delivery lessons learned are highlighted and discussed.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Adolescents are living in a world that can be demanding, stressful, and filled with distractions, and adolescents have reported having higher levels of stress and lower levels of coping strategies than adults. Skills for stress control, cognitive restructuring and focus of attention were found to be particularly low in adolescents (Allen & Hiebert, 1991; Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984; Steinberg, 2002). The need for further research on effective coping strategies is evident (Larson, 2000; Weissberg & O'Brien, 2004). It is essential that young people learn positive ways to cope with the ongoing challenges they encounter. While there have been advances in youth research investigating coping strategies for specific stressors, such as Hains (1992) and Hains and Szyjakowski (1990), there has been limited research on the enjoyment, application and effectiveness of coping strategies in daily life situations.

In the domains of positive psychology and positive life skills, researchers acknowledge that living the present moment enhances people's ability to experience more joy and less stress (Kabat Zinn, 1994; Orlick, 2001). Being truly 'where we are, when we are there' is a valuable lesson to nurture, not only in children and adolescents, but throughout life (Kabat Zinn, 1994, Orlick, 2002a). Educators, parents, and coaches often encourage young people to strive for the future, rather than nurturing their natural ability to embrace and live each experience (Orlick, 1995). Focus directly impacts a person's ability to fully experience (or *be in*) the present moment (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Orlick, 1998). Consequently focus also impacts how we learn, feel, live, and perform.

Focusing is the most important mental skill affecting learning and performance.

By developing the skills necessary to focus fully and constructively, you directly influence the quality of children's learning, performance, and living. Children

will learn to focus effectively through guidance and practice at connecting fully with essential things that are going on in the present. (Orlick, 2001, p. 113)

Frankl's (1984) experiences as a prisoner in a Holocaust concentration camp taught him that once all familiar life goals are removed, "the last of human freedoms, is the ability to choose one's attitude in a given circumstance" (p. 12). Although daily life stresses are not nearly as devastating as the Holocaust, Frankl's insightful lesson on choosing one's focus or attitude can be applied in everyday life. Other researchers agree that attitude and focus direct how we view and experience the world (Dyer, 2004; Orlick, in press; Zukav & Francis, 2003). "Your feelings result from the messages you give yourself *or the thoughts and feelings you focus on*" (Burns, 2000, p. xviii-italics added).

Researchers have acknowledged the importance of action-based positive psychology, including building personal strengths and positive mental skills in the school context (Chafouleas & Bray, 2004; Seligman, 2002). Past Positive Living Skills (PLS) research with elementary school children reinforce the importance of teaching focus, positive perspectives, and relaxation in the school context, the home, day camps and hospital settings. (Cox & Orlick, 1996; Gilbert & Orlick, 1996; Gilbert & Orlick, 2002; Hester & Orlick, 2006; Julien, 2002; Klingenberg & Orlick, 2002; Koudys & Orlick, 2002; St. Denis & Orlick, 1996; Taylor & Orlick, 2004; Theberge, 2002).

One elementary school principal highlighted the importance of teaching positive livings skills as follows:

I wholeheartedly advocate the inclusion of the [PLS] program in the regular curriculum of our school. If there are all sorts of extra things like feelings of

anger [...] coming into school, it will adversely affect school climate. (Taylor & Orlick, 2004, p. 14)

Orlick (1995) states that most young children are naturally absorbed in play and that this ability to focus on the present moment is something many people lose along the way. Teaching children and youth to find a sense of focus, harmony, and balance in life should be at the forefront of parents, teachers, and educators priorities (Orlick, 2002a).

In an article entitled *Nurturing positive living skills for children: Feeding the heart and soul of humanity*, Orlick (2002a) presents the spirit of the PLS program. The potential for children and youth to live more harmoniously is enhanced by an engaging focus, positive perspective, and relaxation and stress control. These same skills or ‘gifts’ as Orlick calls them have allowed many great performers including astronauts, surgeons, Olympians, musicians, and families to excel in daily life and performance situations (Garneau, 1998; Gertz, 1998; Hadfield & Orlick, 1999; Hacker, 2001; Orlick, 2002b; Talbot-Honeck & Orlick, 1998; Tribble & Newburg, 1998; Werthner, 2002; Zitzelsberger & Orlick, 1998).

The importance of nurturing positive perspectives and a fully connected focus is highlighted by Halliwell, Orlick, Ravizza, and Rotella (2003).

There is great advantage in nurturing positive, self-enhancing perspectives at an early age. If we continue to teach, promote, and value healthy perspectives with children and young performers, they will have their whole lives to live with positive perspectives and strong focusing skills. Children and young performers can apply positive focusing skills, imagery skills and simple refocusing skills not only in performance situations but also when dealing with little hassles at school, at home, and in games. Children have imaginations that can free their potential,

and have great capacity to “live in the moment”. This is worth preserving and nurturing because it is invaluable, and yet so quickly extinguished. We end up reteaching a lot of mental skills and perspectives that children once embraced naturally, because it was conditioned out of them. (pp. 41-42)

The purpose of this study was to introduce the PLS program for teens to young adolescents (in a classroom context) and to investigate whether the students enjoyed, applied, and found these skills effective in their daily lives. A secondary purpose of this study was to learn from the interactions with the students and teachers and explore the best ways to deliver the program.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Positive Living Skills Program

The Positive Living Skills (PLS) program is presented in the book *Feeling great: Teaching children to excel at living* (Orlick, 2001) and on Orlick's audio CD's (2005a, 2005b, 2005c). The PLS program provides a positive mental skills program for children and teens that can be individually applied after initial teaching. Focus is the key mental skill required for learning and applying all other PLS skills because maintaining a positive perspective, dealing effectively with stress or relaxing requires directing focus towards what makes one relax or maintain a positive perspective. This program was created by Dr. Terry Orlick and is based on his past research and consulting experiences with children, elite athletes, and exceptional performers.

Recently Orlick adapted his children's PLS program for use with teens. Similar to the children's version, the teen program is comprised of "life enhancing activities that teach people to focus effectively, deal better with distractions, become more positive, control anger, relax more fully, and find more joy in life" (Orlick, 2005a). Orlick's past consulting and research experiences have led him to believe that these skills greatly enhance the quality of daily life and performance pursuits (Orlick, 1995, 2001, 2002). Modifications integrated into creating the teen program included age-appropriate language, increased duration of recordings, and more challenging activities.

The following review of literature is presented in four sections including: a) PLS intervention b) adolescent development and intervention c) stress, effective coping strategies, and personal well-being and d) facilitation of interventions.

Positive Living Skills Interventions

Past research on the PLS program has shown that positive living skills can be learned, enjoyed and applied effectively by children between the ages of 4-12 when taught within the public school setting, alternative school setting as well as with special populations (Hester & Orlick, 2006; Klingenberg & Orlick, 2002; Koudys & Orlick, 2002). The first PLS intervention to be systematically assessed in the classroom setting included 266 elementary school children from kindergarten to grade 6 (ages 5-12) (Cox & Orlick, 1996). The research team and students engaged in regular discussions about stress, relaxation, and positive coping strategies. The findings of this study demonstrated that participants learned to effectively apply relaxation, focusing and refocusing techniques in their daily lives.

In the classroom the PLS sessions included regular discussions about stress, relaxation, and positive coping strategies. The students listened to a series of audio recordings that encompassed diaphragm breathing, locating muscles and relaxing them, positive imagery, relaxation exercises, positive thinking, positive focus, and changing thoughts from negative to positive. This study demonstrated that children from kindergarten through grade 6 learned how to lower their heart rates through PLS program strategies and also learned to apply relaxation, focusing and refocusing techniques in their daily lives.

St. Denis and Orlick (1996) also conducted a PLS intervention, this time with fourth grade students in another public school. This study focused on developing positive perspectives, specifically by teaching children to increase highlights in their daily lives. In a PLS intervention, highlights represent anything that lifts a person's spirit and makes him or her feel good. Participants in this study consisted of 20 experimental and 19 control participants at the same grade level in the same school. During the 10 week intervention the participants took part in tri-weekly 20 minute sessions.

The PLS intervention program was conducted by the researchers. The intervention took place in the classroom and included teaching the children about highlights, having children write their highlights in logbooks, and participation in other highlight activities. The control group continued with their normal school activities. The findings showed that children taking part in the intervention program were capable of learning to increase the number of highlights experienced and develop positive perspectives. The children in the intervention program significantly increased their highlights over the course of the study where as the control group did not show significant change the amount of highlights experienced.

Gilbert and Orlick (2002) introduced the PLS program with first, second, fifth and sixth grade students and assessed how well the students were able to relax themselves, implement the stress control strategies, and increase the amount of positive experiences in their day. This intervention program was facilitated by the teacher rather than the researchers. With the use of pre- and post-test measures it was determined that with the help of the PLS audiotapes, the teachers were able to teach their students to relax, effectively implement stress control strategies, and increase the amount of highlights or positive experiences in the day.

Logbooks were used to record stressful experiences, coping strategies need to deal with these experiences, and student's feelings before and after each coping strategy attempt. Pre- and post-relaxation heart rates and daily highlights were also recorded. The findings of this study, similar to Cox and Orlick (1996) and St. Denis and Orlick (1996), showed that the children enjoyed, learned from, and applied the program skills during the intervention and planned to continue to use the program in the future.

The PLS program was also implemented in an alternative school setting by Taylor and Orlick (2004). This study investigated whether the students increased their relaxation and stress

control skills, how the teachers adapted the program for their class' needs, and the teachers' perception of the programs impact on the students. Data collection procedures included heart rate monitors to assess pre- and post-relaxation skills, logbooks, interviews, questionnaires, and a final interview session to assess the enjoyment, applicability and effectiveness of the program.

Findings from this study demonstrated that the children learned to successfully implement the relaxation skills and positive coping strategies into their daily lives. The children were able to significantly lower their heart rates (at will) by the end of the program and almost all the children said they used the skills in their daily lives outside of the intervention sessions.

Taylor & Orlick (2004) also investigated the teachers' perspectives of the intervention and learning process. The teachers felt that the following points were important: Concentrate on one element at a time, let the children lead the discussions, get to know the activities well, repeat activities, seize opportunities to show applicability of skills, increase the duration and frequency of intervention if possible, and remain flexible in the delivery of the program.

Koudys and Orlick (2002) conducted a case study with a five-year-old pediatric cancer patient and his primary care-giver. They examined the process involved in learning and applying PLS skills while coping with cancer. The researcher introduced the PLS program to the participants on a weekly and biweekly basis. During these sessions the participant learned activities that focused on muscle relaxation, diaphragm breathing, focusing, refocusing, positive imagery, and finding highlights.

The sessions involved a discussion of each previous week's events, listening to a PLS audio track, and brainstorming ideas for application in the coming week(s). Researcher notes were recorded during the 8 week (16 sessions) intervention. E-mail conversations, with the primary care giver were maintained for 2 years after the intervention. The primary caregiver and her son

both learned and then successfully applied positive living skills in stressful hospital experiences and outside the hospital setting. The primary caregiver found these skills helped her to help her son and herself. This study demonstrated that PLS skills were not only effective with children but for adults caring for those children.

Klingenberg and Orlick (2002) conducted a single case study examining the process of using mental skills with a family with Special needs. Data sources included: Behavioural observations, conversations, interviews, interactions, and weekly notes. Findings from all of these sources demonstrated that the family was positively influenced by the intervention. The intervention provided the family with a number of positive strategies that were effectively used to deal with stressful life situations.

Hester and Orlick's (2006) conducted a PLS intervention study with 3 children who had Attention Deficit and Hyper Activity Disorder (ADHD). Similar to the Koudys and Orlick's (2002) study, a researcher worked closely with the children and the parents while implementing the program. This study demonstrated that the PLS program helped these children to cope more effectively with their stress by relaxing, focus more effectively and develop more positive perspectives about themselves and life. Hester and Orlick's (2006) study demonstrates that we can teach children to improve their focusing skills, even children who have difficulties with maintaining focus. This is relevant for teenagers as focusing is suggested to be a necessary skill for teens (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984).

The findings from these PLS intervention studies indicate that the program has been very effective, applicable and enjoyable for children in school and children facing special needs. At this point in time, the PLS program has not been implemented with a group of adolescents. A PLS program has been created for adolescents and introduced in different contexts, but no

systematic analysis has yet been conducted on the effectiveness of the program. Adolescence is a stage of life that differs from that of childhood and therefore different factors may need to be considered and accounted for mental skills interventions with teens. The next section discusses adolescent development and previous adolescent mental skill interventions.

Adolescence

Adolescence usually corresponds to people 12 to 18 years of age (Smith, 2004). The entry into adolescence is, among other aspects, accompanied by an increase in cognitive ability (Flavell, Green, & Flavell, 1998; Steinberg, 2002). This increase in cognitive ability is accompanied with an understanding that knowledge is relative and involves thinking; in terms of what is possible and real, about abstract things, and about the process of thinking itself (Steinberg, 2002). Although an increase in cognitive ability has many benefits, accompanying this change is often an increased sense of self-consciousness and self-doubt, creating new kinds of stress and anxiety and worry (Laugesen, Dugas, & Bukowski, 2003; Steinberg, 2002). Research has identified that directing focus has been a prominent problem for adolescents (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984).

In addition to cognitive changes, the period of adolescence involves numerous stages of physical and emotional development and social change, as teens enter into and experience secondary school. The combination of these external and internal factors can create a challenging time for teens. Developing focusing skills and positive perspective skills early on in life and throughout adolescence can be a strong advantage for teens, but rarely acted on in a systematic way (Halliwel et al., 2003).

Adolescent Interventions

To date most adolescent interventions have concentrated on reducing stress and anxiety due to specific stressors. For example, research by Hains (1992) and Hains and Szyjakowski (1990) showed that adolescents were better able to deal with anxiety in test situations once they were taught how to restructure their thoughts and thought processes. These studies showed the value of mental skills for specific stressors (e.g. fear of spiders, test anxiety). However both these studies were restricted to specific stressors and only assessed adolescent boys between the ages of 15 and 16 years of age. The application of mental skills in daily life with both boys and girls remains open for investigation.

A relaxation-based intervention with teens found that students' anxiety levels can be effectively reduced by progressive relaxation and self-hypnosis administered through audiotapes with grade twelve students, 16-18 years of age (Hiebert and Eby, 1985). As well Hiebert, Kirby, Jaknavorian (1989) found that high school students (age 15-17), in a school context were able to effectively learn to relax through progressive relaxation. Although positive cognitive and physiological changes were observed in the participants, the authors suggested that progressive relaxation was not as well received by some of the younger students (age 13), suggesting the need for examination of other methods of relaxation for teens.

An intervention designed to increase positive psychological characteristics such as self-esteem and internal locus of control, through a relaxation-response curriculum, was conducted by Benson, A. Kornhaber, C. Kornhaber, LeChanu, Zuttermeister, Myers, and Friedman (1994). The relaxation-response involved focusing on one word or activity and staying disconnected from any distracting thoughts (Benson et al., 1994). The participants practiced their relaxation-response together, as a class, for 15 minutes three times per week, and were asked to use the skill throughout the day during any anxious moments. This study used psychological

tests to assess self-concept and locus of control before and after the intervention. The results showed that the intervention significantly increased participants' self-esteem and decreased diastolic blood pressure, but there was no significant changes observed in participants' locus of control.

This study provided preliminary evidence that teaching a relaxation-response to adolescents can create a positive psychological change. Although this study assessed psychological change there is still a need to assess the students' perspective of the intervention, their sense of enjoyment and the impact of the program on how they felt the program impacted them in a relevant and meaningful way.

Benson, Wilcher, Greenberg, Huggins, Ennis, Zuttermeister, Myers, and Friedman (2000) also conducted a second, similar intervention. This intervention took place over three years with middle school students, grades 6-8 (ages 10-14), and found academic performance was improved for the students taking part in their relaxation-response curriculum intervention. The curriculum consisted of these core elements: "education on physiological stress; identification of personal stressors; elicitation of relaxation-response using mental focus or diaphragmatic breathing while developing a passive attitude towards distractions" (Benson et al., 2000, p. 158).

This study focused on the impact of a relaxation-response curriculum intervention on self-regulatory skills and academic performance. The findings showed a significant increase in participants' grade point average. There was no significant change found in work habits, cooperation, or attendance immediately after the intervention.

The one year follow-up showed a significant increase in grade point average, positive work habits, and cooperation. There remains a need to assess the enjoyment, application and effectiveness of mental skills in daily life situations for teens. Assessing the students' perspective

of enjoyment of the intervention and effectiveness of the program may be an essential factor in continued use of these skills.

The final section of the literature review centers on discussing stress, coping, and well-being as well as the connections between positive perspective, focus and relaxation.

Logic Behind the PLS Program

Stress and Coping

Stress is defined as a non-specific response of the body to some demand placed on it and often requires a person to react in some manner to cope with the situation (Seyle, 1974; Woodman & Hardy, 2001). Csikszentmihalyi and Larson (1984) define cognitive appraisal as how we think about or how we reinterpret experience. Up to this point in time, cognitive appraisal had been recognized as the vital mediator in people's response to stress and determines the level of stress being experienced, and whether this stress is facilitative or debilitating (Ellis, 1999; Franken, 2002; Hanton & Jones, 1999; Lazarus, 1991; Woodman & Hardy, 2001).

Depending on whether a person sees stress as facilitative or debilitating is greatly influenced by a person's belief in their ability to cope with the stress (Franken, 2002; Hanton & Jones, 1999). Consequently, being able to cope and modify perception of the stress is believed to be a key factor influencing performance, health, and psychological well-being (Hanton & Jones, 1999; Kern, Gfroerer, Summers, Curlette and Matheny, 1996; Orlick, 1998; Taylor, Kemeny, Reed, Bower, & Gruenwald, 2000; Woodman & Hardy, 2001).

Whether the stress is real or invented the impact on a person can be very debilitating if not dealt with effectively (Taylor, et al., 2000; Orlick, 2001). Seyle discussed the instinctive flight or fight response and how some people have difficulty recognizing which stress is worth fighting and which stress is better to let go (1974). Some researchers explain that being upset or

distressed is often a “mental slippage” (Burns, 2000). According to Orlick and colleagues once children realize they have the ability and the choice to let go of their worries, they do, and they feel better (Cox & Orlick, 1996; Hester & Orlick, 2006; Orlick, 2001). These findings emphasize the importance of studying and refining a means for children and teens to deal with life stresses.

Thinking, Relaxation, and Coping

The cognitive behavioural theory states that the philosophical-restructuring required to change our dysfunctional personality or perceptions involves these steps: (a) Fully acknowledging that we are largely responsible for creating our own emotional problems; (b) accepting the notion that we have the ability to change these disturbances significantly; (c) recognizing that our emotional problems largely stem from irrational beliefs; (d) clearly perceiving these beliefs; (e) seeing the value of disputing such self-defeating beliefs; (f) accepting the fact that if we expect to change we had better work hard in emotive and behavioural ways to counteract our beliefs and the dysfunctional feelings and actions that follow; and (g) practicing REBT (Rational Emotive Behaviour therapy) methods of uprooting or changing disturbed consequences for the rest of our life (Ellis, 2001).

In simple and practical terms, Orlick (2001) states that people need to learn and experience that they are the boss of their own mind and body. One of the most important contributions parents and educators can make is to help children and teenagers realize this and make the right “who’s the boss” connection. In support of this connection, when a grade 2 student was asked how the PLS program helped him, this student said: “It helps me cope with my mind” (Gilbert & Orlick, 1996, p.147). A 4-year-old, kindergarten child put it even more succinctly by saying: “I am the boss of myself” (T.Orlick, 2005 –Personal communication, April 6, 2005). The cognitive behavioural theory suggests that people need to practice choosing to

respond to their thoughts and reactions in a helpful way (Burns, 2000). The PLS program is designed to explain and nurture positive mental strategies in a simple straightforward manner, that makes sense to children and teens.

Positive Perspectives and Daily Life

Positive perspectives involve choosing to acknowledge the positive parts of experiences and finding the means of dealing with life in a constructive way. Every setback is seen as an opportunity for self-growth, and lessons can be drawn from every experience. Botterill and Patrick (2003) explain that the lack of positive life perspective can negatively influence situational focus or cause people to be distracted. Orlick (1998) explains that positive perspectives are determined by thinking, dreaming and focusing in ways that can open us to opportunities, possibilities and lessons in everyday life.

We have the ability to choose the way we think (Frankl, 1984; Seligman, 1998). Our thoughts or lack of positive thoughts influence how we feel (Dyer, 2004; Frankl, 1984; Orlick, 1995). Helping children recognize how much their focus and thoughts influence their daily lives and how they can change this pattern is crucial (Burns, 2000; Orlick, 1998). Practicing mental skills at an early age is also supported by Seligman's learned optimism studies (1998). Seligman found that children and teens have the ability to enhance how they feel by being more optimistic and he also found that people learn to be more optimistic by choosing and practicing positive thought patterns. Continually focusing and refocusing on the priorities of life and the opportunities in every situation allows people to maintain a positive life perspective (Orlick, 1998).

Finding and maintaining a positive perspective is related to overall life perspective and well-being (Botterill and Patrick, 2003; Macdonald & Orlick, 2004; Orlick, 1998). Well-being

has been defined as recognizing the many aspects of one's life and respecting the relevance, value, meaning, and balance of these aspects (Brown, Cairns, & Botterill, 2001).

The broader concept of affect (also referred to as mood) refers to conscious sensations and encompasses both emotions and feelings (Fredrickson, 2001; Vallerand & Blanchard, 2000). Positive affect or feeling good appears to buffer against stress because positive experiences and emotions seem to have an undoing affect on negative emotions, which means removing the signs and symptom responses to stress when a person experiences positive emotions. (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000; Fredrickson, Manucuso, Branigan, & Tugade, 2000). Specifically positive emotions have been shown to reduce cardiovascular reactivity (heart rate) in response to a negative emotional arousal (Fredrickson et al., 2000). Fredrickson and colleagues' (2000) found that the negative psychological and physical symptoms, fear, heart rate and blood pressure can be reduced by experiencing positive emotions for example emotions experienced when laughing. Past PLS research found that practicing the program skills, such as, relaxation, highlights, simple joys, and positive imagery allowed children to decrease their own heart rates (Gilbert & Orlick, 2002; St. Denis & Orlick; 1996; Taylor & Orlick, 2004).

Other means of creating positive emotions include embracing simple joys and finding daily highlights (Orlick, 2001; St. Denis & Orlick, 1996; Taylor & Orlick, 2004). Specifically, Orlick states that positive perspectives and finding joy in life through highlights and simple joys helps people to find more harmony and balance in life (Orlick, 2001). Highlights and simple joys are described as anything that lifts a person's spirit and makes him or her feel good. Simple joys are most abundant when they are small things, thoughts or connections that can be found on a very regular basis, for example, the warm sun on your face, a cup of tea, or a deep relaxed breath (Orlick, 2000). Researchers emphasize the importance of small positive moments (simple joys)

as opposed to the most hedonistic moments, such as winning a race, are what fuel happiness and well-being over time (Diener, 2000; Diener & Lucas, 2000). These positive experiences can create sustaining positive emotions and perspectives that help people find more joy and connect to simple joyful experiences throughout the day. It is suggested that these moments help us to feel better, more positive, and more fully alive (Orlick, 2000, 2001). Other researchers also commented on positive emotions and stated these emotions can build emotional resources (Fredrickson, 1998; Fredrickson, & Joiner, 2002; Fredrickson et al., 2000). Fredrickson and Joiner (2002) showed that positive emotions do more than just help people to feel better in the moment. Positive emotions also help to enhance subjective psychological and physiological well-being in the future.

This potential for positive emotions to enhance both physical and psychological well-being is thought to function through more effective coping (Tugade, Fredrickson, & Barrett, 2004). Tugade et al. (2004) suggest that positive emotions allow for what they call “broader attention” (wider variety of thoughts and actions that enter the mind), which allows for more effective coping. Tugade et al.’s view of broadening attention, does not contradict a narrowing of attention, but rather implies being very aware of the present moment, holding thinking patterns that are more open to possibilities, and as a result a person is more ready to respond and act in the moment. Being able to build resources can equip people to better deal with daily stresses and enhance their daily lives.

One means to develop a positive perspective begins by looking for the simple joys and highlights in every day life (Orlick, 2001). Finding and staying connected to the positive experiences that allow people to feel and be their best requires the ability to maintain and regain focus in the present moment. Relaxation and stress control play key roles in the interactions

between focus and positive perspectives. In a previous study with exceptional adolescent performers, adolescents shared that maintaining a positive perspective and embracing the positive parts of their lives helped them to focus and to shift focus (Macdonald & Orlick, 2004). . These teenagers also stated that positive perspectives helped them to live with balance and excellence in a variety of life domains including school, sport performance, music performance, and relationships.

Relaxation and Positive Emotions

In past PLS research, children as young as 5 years of age were able to significantly reduce their heart rates through the use of positive imagery. In this activity the students focused their thoughts on a place that made them feel calm, such as a quiet lake. As the students focused their attention on a positive experience they were able to reduce their heart rate, a physical predictor of stress levels (Cox & Orlick; 1996; Gilbert & Orlick, 1996; 2002). Gilbert and Orlick (2002) found "... that recognizing highlights and experiencing the positive feelings that are associated with highlights, helps children cope more effectively with stressful situations" (p. 62).

Orlick (2001) suggests that relaxation enables people to be fully absorbed in living positive experiences, highlights and simple joys. If relaxation can induce positive affect and positive affect has the potential to help people deal with stress more effectively, then within the state of relaxation people should be more capable of embracing positive emotions and connecting with their ideal focus. Relaxation with young people has been successfully taught through the PLS program via breathing techniques, positive thinking and positive imagery, diaphragm breathing, locating muscles and relaxing them, imagery, and relaxing to music (Cox & Orlick, 1996; Gilbert & Orlick, 1996; 2002; Hester & Orlick, 2006; Koudys & Orlick, 2002; Taylor & Orlick, 2004).

Focus and Well-being

The main component of the PLS program is to teach and nurture focus, positive perspectives, and relaxation. Orlick (1998) explains that one's focus is determined by what a person chooses to focus on. This focus determines how one views life, their situation, themselves, and the people around them. He defines it as the most important mental skill. Specifically a focused connection is being totally absorbed in the present moment; feeling so connected that all distractions fall away (Orlick, 2000).

Being attentive to, and aware of what is taking place, in the present moment has been shown to enhance psychological well-being (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Kabat Zinn, 1994; Maddux, 1997). Subjective well-being is one's own assessment of their life and includes the component of positive affect (Diener & Lucas, 2000). Specifically Brown and Ryan (2003) demonstrated that higher levels of mindfulness or connection to the moment were associated with lower levels of mood disturbance, lower levels of stress and enhanced feelings of well-being. Past research with teens (Grade 10-12 and age 14-18) suggested that teens especially are less able to focus their attention than other ages.

Day in, day out, (teens) appear to be more alienated from what they are doing; their personal goals are not in harmony with their actual behaviour. They do not use their mental capacities to the fullest because they are less involved in what they are doing [...] [They] appear to be less able or willing to mobilize their psychic energy [...] attend to the world less often and see it less clearly, because unless a person can concentrate on what is around him, unless he can actively focus his attention upon things, he is but a passive recipient of disordered information and stimuli. (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984, p. 87)

Researchers interested in positive well-being believe that people have the capacity to positively and constructively interpret the disorder of the world by understanding and modifying what they are thinking about or focusing on (Banks, 1998; Botterill & Patrick; 2003; Kelley, 2004; Orlick, 1998). However, it also appears that maintaining this positive perspective is not easy for many people, and requires both practice and maintenance (Burns, 2000; Orlick, 1998).

Within the PLS program, there are activities designed to develop and enhance focusing skills for being in the present moment. For example, one of the exercises has the participants follow their breathing, pay attention to the way the air feels, and encourages them to stay connected to this feeling. Another exercise has the students focus on a fixed spot and practice letting go of external distractions by focusing attention on a visual object and/or internal feeling.

Description of Key Positive Living Skills

Three key terms used in PLS program provides simple examples of the kind of mental skills that are taught in program. “Tree it”, introduces the concept of leaving worries or distractions behind and connecting back to the present moment. For example, if a person is thinking about a missed shot in a basketball game, and wants to refocus on the game they can try treeing it. Treeing it would involve mentally leaving the thought (e.g. by touching a tree or wall or bench) and reconnecting to the present moment.

Changing channels introduces a related concept of changing moods by shifting focus or changing thoughts to something else. For example, if a person feels sad and they want to feel good, then they can shift focus by thinking about something that make them feel good. Or if a person feels tired they can think about things that make them feel energized or use music to help them feel energized. Changing channels involves doing something to shift focus and feeling to some something more desirable or more helpful.

Positive thinking introduces the concept that one's thoughts and focus are within one's own control. A person can choose to focus on the positives and opportunities of a situation or the negatives. The main idea is to look for good things, opportunities or positive ways to see or cope with challenging situations.

The Delivery of the PLS program

Understanding and communicating the rationale behind the content of the PLS program is important for effective delivery. Equally important is understanding and discovering the best manner of facilitation for a given group. The following section provides a review of literature on the challenge of effective facilitation.

Sex Differences

Sex differences have been identified as an important factor to consider when conducting interventions (Klein-Hessling & Lohaus, 2002). Steinberg (2002) contends that the only sex difference in adolescent mental abilities known, to date, is spatial orientation; males being slightly better than females. Some researchers suggest that female language development occurs sooner than male language development (Halpern, 2000). Other researchers contend that men and women tend to have different perceptions of the value of discussions. For instance, Tannen (1990) speculates that women tend to appreciate the discussion as a form of involvement and communication, whereas men feel oppressed by long discussions about what they perceive as small decisions.

Male adolescents (12-18 years old) have expressed being turned off by "mental health" counselling in the past (Smith, 2004). Smith mentions the young men often have a "do it yourself perspective", and do not want to receive help from anyone else. When these young men were asked to suggest what would make a good counselling session they reported including group

activities, games and hands-on exercises such as art and drawing. Smith also emphasized the importance of designing counselling to expand personal skills rather than fix problems.

When introducing mental skills Orlick (2001) suggests using simple, concrete strategies, using an individualized approach, positive role models, being positive and hopeful, and drawing upon multiple approaches or options. As a result of past research with the PLS program, Orlick (2001) has provided several teaching tips for the delivery and facilitation of the program. These suggestions include starting each session by: Asking students to prepare themselves to relax, focus and listen; giving students time to settle in to the activities; remaining consistent with a set time for the program; encouraging or challenging the participants to live what they are learning by applying the skills in their daily lives, and creating a respectful environment that reinforces the positive concepts.

One of the main reasons that every audio CD exercise begins with a focus on relaxed breathing is to eliminate other potential distractions and get listeners focused on listening to the CD stories and instructions. Once the students are focused on listening, they can learn how to do the skills and why the skills can be so valuable for each of them.

Taylor and Orlick's (2004) study discussed how four different teachers modified the program to best suit their own classroom needs. Some of the teachers' modifications included splitting up boys and girls during relaxation exercises to eliminate distractions or lack of focus on exercises, reading a script of PLS activities before playing the PLS recording, adding some active activities on a certain day (e.g. stretching, martial arts), letting the children lead some of the activities, and alternating between audio exercises and logbook activities to leave adequate time for each.

The Learning Process and Reflection

According to Davies and Osguthorpe (2003):, students' intent of learning is very important in an effective learning process:

Of all the factors that affect student learning, a student's desire to learn may be among the most significant. The quality of one's effort to learn and the persistence and striving a student exerts are determined by the student's aim and commitment to fully achieve the desired learning in a specific situation. This is learner intent. (p. 1)

As the students' learning in an intervention is the central aim learner intent needs to be considered. The level of learner intent can be encouraged by giving the learners good reasons to learn, making the learning relevant and fun, and providing opportunities for reflection during and after interventions (T. Orlick, personal communication, March 5th, 2007). Gelter (2003) explains that the conscious 'I' (the part of the mind used to view thinking patterns or reactions) is used in reflective thinking and needs to be both learned and encouraged.

Reflection is believed to be necessary in the transformation from 'experiencing to learning' (Bourner, 2003). The facilitator should strive to actively engage in personal reflection and encourage the students to reflect on the programs relevance to their daily lives.

Facilitating the learners' intent and understanding a facilitator's personal intent is vital. Intention is a "strong purpose or aim, accompanied by a determination to produce a desired result" (Dyer, 2004, p.3). Dyer (2004) posits that "when you feel connected and in harmony with intention you sense a major difference in how other people react to you" (p. 97). Interaction with people goes far beyond words. Lloyd and Smith (2005) emphasize that, within the context of personal training, using a 'way of moving that carries intention' helps trainers to be in tune with their clients: "Feeling the aesthetic grace of a client's movement draws a trainer deeper into what

is happening within the client's body and what is happening with his or her own response.

Bodies become intertwined in sensation" (p. 10). The intention shown through body action by physical educators greatly impacts the teaching process (Lloyd & Smith, 2006). Similarly a program facilitator who applies this 'embodiment of teaching' will more likely go deeper into the students' experience, live it with them, and adapt and refine the sessions as best suited for the group. Wright (2005) emphasizes

We encounter the world in emotion: emotionally. Our communication (words and actions) ripples with it. The subtle nuances of contentment are no less emotional than the alienating terror of rage. To deny that constancy is to fail to acknowledge the richness of that through which we encounter [...] Thus it (emotion) is found in learning and the environment within which learning arises. To ignore, deny, or block, impede or otherwise overlook the learning brought forth through the interweaving of language and emotioning is to detach, and seek to know from without, an ongoing experience of immersion. (p. 92)

Dyer contends that forcing a point of view on someone is not an effective manner to get people to listen (2004). A person's presence, just being completely there, plays a large role in how they inspire other people (Dyer, 2004). Helping people become aware of the focus (and thoughts) that work best for them and being a very good listener are two effective ways to assist people with mental skills (Halliwell et al., 2003). By being aware and focused in the present and holding an intention of working together to learn, students will benefit much more from sessions. As a facilitator one must remember that it is not all in what we say and do, but also our presence and intention, which impact peoples' lives. Halliwell and colleagues (2003) clearly emphasize the importance of meaning to a group in a sport consulting context:

The most important part of this (meeting with group for first time) is to target issues or mental skills that are meaningful for the group we are addressing and to be confident in knowing that we have something valuable to offer [...] This is an opportunity to stimulate their interest and turn them on to the unlimited possibilities of human potential. (p. 27)

Rationale for this Study

The PLS program has been proven to be an enjoyable, applicable and effective approach to enhance positive living skills for children between the ages of 4 and 12. Recently adolescent research has identified a need for positive psychology and developmental interventions that encompass positive perspectives, relaxation, improved focus, stress control, and enhancement of daily living (Chafouleas & Bray, 2004). The PLS program has the potential to have positive impact with teenagers, but to date no research study has targeted this age group.

Therefore the purpose of this study was to introduce Orlick's PLS program for teens to young adolescents (in a classroom context) and to investigate whether the students enjoy, apply, and find these skills effective in their daily lives. A secondary purpose of this study was to learn from the interactions with the students and teachers and explore the best ways to deliver the program.

Ultimately, the researchers are committed to developing an effective school intervention program that enhances teenagers' lives, understanding how facilitators can nurture positive living skills, in a classroom context, and continuing to learn how educators can deliver life enhancing programs in a relevant and meaningful manner.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Research Paradigm and Design

Schools have been recognized as a viable option to introduce and nurture coping strategies and positive living skills (Chafouleas & Bray, 2004; Orlick, 2001; Seligman, 1998). As a result the exploration of students' perception of enjoyment, application and effectiveness of the PLS program was introduced and assessed within a school setting. This "real world" applied context allowed for a better understanding and, how lessons learned from this study can be applied in future PLS programs with teenagers. Patton (1990) emphasizes the importance to remain methodologically flexible when assessing a program. The emphasis should lie in methodological appropriateness rather than the methodological convention (Patton, 1990). According to Guba (1990), program exploration is best questioned with "[...] relevance rather than rigor as the qualitative criterion" (p. 69). To follow the advice of Guba and Patton, a constructivist paradigm was selected to guide this study. This paradigm was thought to be the most appropriate world view to explore the participants' intervention experience.

Although evaluators (or researcher/facilitators) are part of a subjective creation of evaluation data, Stake (1994) suggests that qualitative case studies are strengthened when the main researcher is directly present and in contact with the activities, reflecting and revising the program as the process proceeds. The 'knower and the known' should not be separate during the process of social science research (Guba, 1990). Researchers in past PLS studies have effectively facilitated interventions (Cox & Orlick, 1996; Gilbert & Orlick, 2002; Hester & Orlick, 2006; Koudys & Orlick, 2002; St. Denis & Orlick, 1996). Alder and Alder (1998) note that "[...] natural setting, context of occurrence, and interviews with subjects [...] researchers' observations of their settings and subjects can be considered hard evidence" (p. 89).

Consequently the researcher chose to deliver the intervention to the students. The teachers were present in the intervention sessions when it was possible.

Some assumptions of constructivism maintain that the ability to generalize is limited due to contextual factors, and that reality is subjective, as different people observe situations in their own unique way (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Further, a person being studied has the potential to have his or her own representations (Sparkes, 2002). How an individual learns and what he or she learns is relative to the individual's perspective and beliefs (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). When attempting to understand the reality of a group, such as the class in this study, it was imperative to remember, as researcher/facilitator, my own mental constructions had the potential to influence the findings along with the varying mental constructions of the group. It was therefore important to reconstruct previously held constructions of the program and find an overall group perception of the program in this study (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Specifically this research aimed to explore whether the program was enjoyed, applied and effective in the daily lives of teens.

The research data was collected through participant interviews and researcher notes that were supplemented by the logbooks. Combining these methods allowed the research to be more rigorous while still conducting the study in a relevant manner. This type of mixed methods was effectively utilized by past PLS researchers (Hester & Orlick, 2006; Taylor & Orlick, 2004).

Another important factor to consider when conducting program assessments is the context of the group or case being studied (Alder & Alder, 1998; Greene, 1994). With this in mind, the researcher observed and noted the specific case being studied and relayed pertinent information that helped to contextualize the study such as circumstances that could influence the delivery, enjoyment, application or effectiveness of the program.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 31 students and two teachers in two existing grade ten health and Physical Education classes, in an Ottawa region private school. The students in this group included 19 boys and 12 girls ranging in age from 15-16 years.

The participant selection took place by meeting with the physical education department of the school. Once approval was gained from the physical education department, the program was approved by the Head Master of the school and two classes were selected to be part of the study. It was important that the school and teachers selected were committed to the project to carry it through to completion.

Context

The context in which the intervention took place was a private school located in a financially affluent area of a capital city. Most of the students were from the Ottawa area, however a number of students came from Europe to attend this school and lived in the residence at the school. The academic expectations are different from a public school, as students have to apply and perform an entrance exam to be considered for this school. Schooling costs, between sixteen and thirty thousand dollars in tuition per year, may also add to students' achievement expectations. Most of the students in the school participated in extracurricular activities such as sport and music. In addition, some students competed on sport teams, danced, or played instruments outside of school. Overall the students' lives were quite busy with school work, sport, dance or music, and in some circumstances part-time jobs. The PLS program intervention was viewed as complementary to the health curriculum allowing the teachers to fulfill curriculum requirements during the students' PLS experience.

The Intervention

During the intervention program, the participants took part in group sessions. Both the researcher and the thesis supervisor (also creator of the PLS program) played a role in determining the main skills and appropriate activities to be used throughout the intervention. The specific skill sets selected for this intervention included focusing and refocusing skills, positive perspectives, and relaxation. Relaxation activities were implemented to help students enter in to a state where they were better able to focus, listen, and learn (Orlick, 1998). A number of the intervention activities combined more than one of these skills and all of the skills require the skill of focus. For example, in order to maintain a positive perspective, one must focus on the positives or see things from a more positive perspective.

The researcher conducted the intervention in the regular classroom, gymnasium and outside the school on school grounds or playing fields. The PLS program for teenagers was to be introduced to the class in 30 minute sessions, two times per week, over a 8-10-week period of time. Normally the suggested length of an intervention, done for evaluation purposes, is 12 weeks. However, past PLS research with children (Gilbert & Orlick, 2002; Hester and Orlick, 2006) has shown daily life enhancement in 5-9 week periods.

Although 12 week interventions are considered optimal, this amount of time can pose a challenge to a classroom volunteering for an intervention study. As such, the researcher tried to get as much time as possible with the class as the intervention proceeded, while remaining flexible to the realities of emerging situations and various extraneous demands upon the students and teachers. This PLS program intervention included 10 sessions over a 16 week period with each session lasting between 15-30 minutes in length.

During the first 7 sessions of the intervention program, the two classes (one boys and one girls) were conducted separately and the last 3 sessions were carried out with the boys and girls

classes together. We decided to combine the two classes in the last three sessions to create an opportunity for the boys and girls to learn from one another. One of the teachers suggested it would be good for them to hear each other facing similar challenges and insecurities.

As was the case with previous PLS research by Taylor & Orlick (2004) modifications were made to the program to suit each group of students. More specifically, Table 1, 2, 3, and 4 outline the content of each intervention for the girls, the boys, and combined boys and girls sessions. There were minor content differences between the two groups. These differences included doing a different number of activities in one session, listening to a different music or script, using the PLS audio CD's (Orlick, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c) for one group and reading a PLS script or telling a PLS story for the other group, and using a logbook for one group and not for the other. These differences occurred because from the beginning we decided to focus on each groups' needs as apposed to following a pre-set set plan. For example, the boys did not fill out the Positive Thinking logbook because their discussion continued longer than the girls and it was decided that it was better to let the boys continue their discussion. Learning about each group allowed the researcher to accommodate each group in the best way possible.

There was a long break in the program halfway through due to a March break and the scheduling of the program was difficult after the break due to special board-wide tests taking place at the time. During each PLS session the participants were usually taught one positive living skill activity, which centered around an audio-CD exercise/concept followed by a discussion about the activity. Occasionally there was time for more than one PLS activity.

Table 1

GIRLS PROGRAM: Overview of intervention (Weeks 1-4)

Week	1	2	3	4
Date	Jan 31 st	Feb 8 th	Feb 15 th	Feb 21 st
Where	Classroom	Small gym with yoga mats	Classroom	Small gym
Who	Teacher Chantale 11 girls Researcher	Teacher Chantale 11 girls Researcher	11 girls Researcher	11 girls Researcher
Length of session	25 minutes	25 minutes	25 minutes	30 minutes
Activity	Introduction-get to know each other Relax to the music (Relaxation and Joyful living CD: Track #10)	Relax to the music (Shepherd Moon CD: Smaointe) Logbook exercise: Relaxation to music sheet	Video Interview of 2006 Olympic Gold Medalist. -Best Performance Focus Video Content a) Ski to win rather than skiing to NOT make mistakes b) Focus on the present moment c) Focus on things you CAN control d) Enjoy the moment e) Little things in preparation make a difference	Muscle Relaxation Script (Guided by researcher) Focus on the dot Follow your breathing (Feeling Great book, p. 76) Logbook exercise: Focus on the dot logbook sheet
Notes	-Sharing about themselves was easier for girls than boys -lots of laughter in this session -Explained that relaxation activity has directions before the music that would ask them to focus on relaxing and letting other thoughts go. -suggested they could bring in music for us to use -felt a good connection was made with group	-Girls group did not have time to do muscle relaxation activity, discussion took up more time. -Teacher Chantale took part in the session today -Teacher Chantale mentioned that a few of the girls were lying in a different position (knees bent, eyes open).	-As a group we discussed what they learned from the video and examples of when they had experienced being completely focused on the moment -Girls into discussion, but less into discussion than boys	-Girls asked me if they could do muscle relaxation. CD player was not working I went from toes to head tensing and relaxing muscles. -The group seemed to be more relaxed after muscle relaxation activity -It is challenging to find time to follow-up on previous sessions
To do	Try relaxation to music in daily life this week		Try to look for lessons learned in each day and write them down this week	Try focus on breathing and/or one thing in daily life this week

Table 2

GIRLS PROGRAM: Overview of program continued (Weeks-7)

Week	5	6	7
Date	Feb 28 th	Mar 6 th	April 11 th
Where	Classroom	Small gym	Small gym
Who	11 girls Researcher	12 girls Researcher	10 girls Researcher
Length of session	25 minutes	25 minutes	25 minutes
Activities	<i>Relationship Discussion</i> -Discussed Ideal relationship, qualities that students see as part of an ideal relationship -Guided by relationship questions (Orlick, 1998, p. 15-16) <i>Active Listening</i> -Read Focused listening paragraph (Orlick, 1998, p. 36) -Students told story to partner and tried to fully focus on listening <i>Umbalakiki/ (Tree it skill)</i> -Used complete script: presented/spoken by researcher <i>Logbook exercise: Umbalakiki-tree it sheet</i>	Umbalakiki application discussion <i>Positive Thinking (PLS Relaxation and Joyful living CD track #3)</i> <i>Logbook exercise: Positive thinking sheet</i> Think of a Positive reminder for daily life	<i>Changing Channels (PLS activity: Feeling Great p. 57)</i> <i>Logbook exercise:</i> -Definition of focus and changing channels. -How they can apply changing channels in daily life <i>Relaxing to the music (CD Out of Africa: track #12 End Title)</i>
Notes	-Spoke of real life example of big mountain free skier who uses the tree concept to let go of mistakes/distractions when skiing. -Students shared where they could use skill in daily life		-For relaxing to the music I asked the students to take this time to try and stay connected to relaxing by listening to the music or focusing on their breathing, whatever works for them. The group responding well to this exercise and seemed very into it.
To do	-Try to fully focus on listening when talking with people -Try 'tree it' concept in daily life	-Try to use positive reminder in daily life this week -Try to look for lessons learned over march break	-Try Changing channels in daily life this week

Table 3

BOYS PROGRAM: Overview of intervention (weeks 1-4)

Overview of Program Intervention Sessions-Boys: Weeks 1-4				
Week	1	2	3	4
Date	January 31 st	February 8 th	February 15 th	February 21 st
Where	Medium size gym	Small Gym with yoga mats	Classroom	Small gym
Who	19 boys Researcher	Teacher Brad 18 boys Researcher	13 boys Researcher	16 boys Researcher
Length of session	25 minutes	30 minutes	25 minutes	20 minutes
Activities	<i>Introduction</i> -get to know each other <i>Relax to the music</i> (Relaxation and Joyful living CD: Track #10)	<i>Relax to the music</i> (Shepherd Moon CD: Smaointe) <i>Muscle Relaxation</i> (Relaxation and Joyful living CD: Track #2)	Video Interview of 2006 Olympic Gold Medalist. -Best Performance Focus <i>Video Content</i> a) Ski to win rather than skiing to NOT make mistakes b) Focus on the present moment c) Focus on things you CAN control d) Enjoy the moment e) Little things in preparation make a difference	<i>Focus on the dot.</i> <i>Follow your breathing</i> (Orlick, 2001, p. 76) <i>Logbook exercise:</i> Focus on the dot logbook sheet
Notes	-Explained that relaxation activity has directions before the music that would ask them to focus on relaxing and letting other thoughts go. -The group seemed interested in continuing and for the full intervention. -Encouraged group to share relaxation music with me that we could use in class	-students seemed really into relaxation, more than last week -Muscle relaxation worked well, some people found it hard to relax muscles -one student shared how he relaxes to the group by thinking about a time he felt really relaxed and then trying to get his body to feel that way when he wants it to	-As a group we discussed what they learned from the video and examples of when they had experienced being completely focused on the moment -Boys really into discussion, more into discussion than girls -Could have been because more of the boys were participating in competitive sport.	-Started session by discussing how their week had been and if anyone had any other examples of moments when they felt really connected and focused in the moment. -We did not pull out the yoga mats this time, but everyone seemed quite comfortable on the floor. -The group stopped badminton to do this session and I sensed they really wanted play badminton, whereas last week they were more ready to do the session as they were expected to do a nutrition assignment afterwards.
To Do	-Try relaxation to the music in daily life this week	-Try relaxation to music in daily life this week -Try progressive muscle relaxation in daily life this week	-Try to pay attention to lessons learned this week	-Try to focus on breathing and/or one thing in daily life this week

Table 4

BOYS PROGRAM: Overview of intervention (weeks 5-7)

Overview of Program Intervention Sessions-Boys: Weeks 5-7			
Week	5	6	7
Date	Feb 28 th	Mar 6 th	Apr 6 th
Where	Classroom	Small gym	Classroom
Who	17 boys Researcher	17 boys Researcher	14 boys Researcher
Length of session	20 minutes	25 minutes	25 minutes
Activity	<i>Relationship Discussion</i> -Discussed Ideal relationship, qualities that students see as part of an ideal relationship -Guided by relationship questions (Orlick, 1998, p. 15-16) <i>Active Listening</i> -Read Focused listening paragraph (Orlick, 1998, p. 36) -Students told story to partner and tried to fully focus on listening <i>Umbalakiki/</i> (Tree it skill) -Used complete script: presented/spoken by researcher	<i>Umbalakiki application discussion</i> <i>Logbook exercise:</i> Umbalakiki-tree it sheet <i>Positive Thinking</i> (PLS Relaxation and Joyful living CD track #3) Think of and write down a positive reminder for daily life	<i>Relaxing to the music</i> (CD Inaudible Melodies: Jack Johnson) <i>Changing Channels</i> (PLS CD Changing Channels Track # 3) <i>Logbook exercise:</i> -Definition of focus and changing channels. -How they can apply changing channels in daily life
Notes	-There was not very much time in class when we started this logbook entry so most of the boys were rushing to get it done. There were still some pretty meaningful responses	-Did not have time to fill out the logbook sheets. Felt it was more important to think of a positive reminder for their daily life.	-Students enjoyed relaxing to music at beginning of class. -CD player was not working well today, changing channels recording was interrupted several times -Students defined what focus was for them and filled out responses to how they could use changing channels in daily life <i>-Mental Training Wheels:</i> class discussed how they can use training wheels to help them in the process of application (e.g. training wheel could be talking to people to help shift channels)
To Do	-Try fully focused listening when talking with people -Try tree it concept in daily life	-Try to use positive reminder in daily life these week (positive thinking) -Try to look for lessons learned this week	-Try to use changing channels in daily life this week

Table 5

GIRLS and BOYS Combined: Overview of intervention sessions (weeks 8-10)

Overview of Program Intervention Sessions-Girls & Boys combined: Weeks 8-9			
Week	8	9	10
Date	April 19 th	April 26 th	May 5 th
Length of session	15 min	35 minutes (15 minutes: talking/logbooks 20 minutes: Climbing)	25 minutes
Where	Outside on grassy field	Medium gym	Big gym
Who	Teacher Chantale 14 boys 9 girls	Teacher Chantale Teacher Brad 14 boys 11 girls	17 boys 11 girls
Activity	<i>Simple joys discussion</i> -Content directly from PLS CD Relaxation and joyful living: Track # 5 The path to simple joys <i>Logbook exercise:</i> -Defined simple joys and highlights -Listed the simple joys they can experience each day, week, and month -Reflected on how they could experience more simple joys -Listed highlights they experience in past week -Reflected on how to remember more highlights and why they want to live more highlights	<i>Rock Climbing activity:</i> -As a group we discussed challenges that might arise during climbing and what skills they could use to overcome these challenges -Group was asked to find a challenge and pick a skill to help them overcome challenge -Students, teacher, and researcher climbed together <i>Logbook exercise:</i> Rock/Wall climbing sheet	<i>Simple joys discussion</i> continued -Student and researcher discussed and shared how simple joys can impact the students daily lives
Notes	-I watched the class run their blocks (2 km) and then we began our session -The group seemed to be more shy around each other today	-Planned to have students fill out logbook section before climbing, however with the tight time line I felt it was more efficient to just have an open group discussion.	-Group was tired of sitting would have been good to do some more active exercises -A few students asked specific questions about challenges in daily live, discussed as group
To do	-Try to look for simple joys and highlights in daily life this week	-Try to use program skills to overcome other challenges in daily life this week	-Try to look for simple joys and highlight in daily life this week

The PLS activities introduced basic concepts related to focus, positive perspectives, and relaxation. After each exercise the researcher facilitated a short class discussion about the activities, the mental skill used and how the skills could be applied in their real world challenges and experiences. The students were informed that elite athletes and other top performers use these skills to improve their performance and lives. The students were encouraged to practice and apply the skills they were learning in their daily lives.

The intervention sessions focused on teaching participants how to focus. The major elements of focus addressed in the sessions were focusing in the present moment, focusing on one thing at a time, and changing thoughts and feelings by changing focus, teaching the participants to maintain their optimal focus through distractions (e.g. refocusing on the present moment, refocusing on a specific thing (i.e. music), and practicing breathing to refocus) The major elements of positive perspectives' addressed were finding highlights, embracing the simple joys in all parts of life, and keeping life situations in perspective. The relaxation component revolved around helping participants enter into a relaxed state where they were better able to relax, focus, listen, and learn. The main strategies used to teach relaxation during the sessions were deep relaxed breathing, tuning into relaxing music, and guided progressive relaxation of muscles.

For certain intervention sessions, in addition to the audio CD exercises or sometimes in place of them, other activities were used such as focus on the dot, focus on the music and other activities and games found in the book *Feeling Great* (Orlick, 2001) (See appendix A for activities used in the intervention). Group discussions were also an integral part of all sessions (Gilbert & Orlick, 2002). The discussions centered on what the students were presently doing in their lives (and what could be better) when faced with challenges related to the session topics

including focus, positive perspective, distraction control and relaxation. Specifically the discussions addressed what mental strategies were currently working well for the students, what their peers were doing, what challenges the students were facing, and how they felt they could apply the skills they were learning in their daily lives. Logbook activities were used during certain intervention sessions, for example after trying to relax to assess the students' perspective and response to the activity. In addition logbooks acted as a reflection exercises that addressed future application of the skill and current strategies used when dealing with stress in their daily lives.

Data Collection

The four elements of this study included enjoyment, application, effectiveness, and facilitation. The data collection methods for these elements are outlined in the Table 6 below.

Table 6 Data Sources that Contribute to Each of the Four Research Elements	
Research Elements	Data Sources
Enjoyment	Participant interviews Researcher notes Logbook Entries Exercise Enjoyment Scales Informal conversations with participants
Application	Participant interviews Researcher notes Logbook Entries Informal conversations with participants
Effectiveness	Participant interviews Researcher notes Logbook Entries Exercise Effectiveness Scales Informal conversations with participants
Facilitation/Delivery of Program	Participant interviews Researcher notes Informal conversations with participants

Enjoyment

The methods used to collect data on enjoyment of the program were participant interviews, researcher notes, logbook entries, the activity enjoyment scales, and informal conversations with participants. The student interviews asked students whether they enjoyed the program and further explored why or why not. The teacher interviews asked questions about the teachers' perception of the students' enjoyment of the program. Researcher notes related to enjoyment were extracted from the observations and notes taken during the intervention sessions. The logbook sheets contained an assessment scale of enjoyment and an assessment scale of engagement or focused connection scale for the PLS activities. Lastly, there were informal participant conversations with the teachers to gain their perspective on student enjoyment throughout the intervention.

Application

The methods used to collect program application data consisted of participant interviews, researcher notes, and logbook entries. Participant interviews for the students asked whether the students were using or planned to use the program in daily life. Participant interviews conducted with the teachers focused on whether or not the teachers observed the students applying the program in their daily lives and expected them to do so in the future. Researcher notes were taken during intervention sessions pertaining to the application of the program in daily life. Related to application, some of the logbook sheets asked how students could apply the activities in their daily lives. Informal participant conversations involved e-mails and face-to-face discussion with teachers related the teachers' perception of program content and delivery, as well as student enjoyment of program skills, application of program skills, and the effectiveness of the program for the students.

Effectiveness

The methods used to collect data regarding program effectiveness consisted of participant interviews, researcher notes, logbooks, activity effectiveness scales, and informal participant conversations. Student participant interviews asked whether the students found the program helpful in their daily lives. Teacher participant interviews asked whether the teachers perceived any effective change in the class dynamics or behaviour throughout the intervention and whether they perceived that the students found the program effective. The logbook sheets encouraged the students to reflect on 1) the strategies they were using to overcome challenges and 2) how effective these strategies were, through writing and activity effectiveness scales. In addition to the participant interviews and logbooks, face-to face or e-mail conversations with the teachers allowed the researcher to remain up to date on the teacher's view of the program's effectiveness.

Delivery of the program

The data revolving around delivery of the program was collected through participant interviews, researcher notes, and informal participant conversations. Student participant interviews asked whether the students had any comments about or suggestions about the program or for improving the program, and these questions often led to asking students if and how they would have conducted the intervention differently. The teacher participant interviews asked for comments and suggestions about improving the program. In addition, the teachers were asked what they thought they would use in the future from their PLS program experience within their teaching. The researcher kept notes on what went on and what went well in the sessions, as well as any problems or concerns of the participants, participants' reaction to the activities, and any other defining information about the session.

Logbooks

The aim of the logbook was to generate meaningful participant reflection, evaluation, action, and discussion. The logbook portion of the study was designed to create understanding of the process of participant enjoyment, application, and program effectiveness throughout the intervention. The logbooks also provided students with the opportunity to evaluate and further explore the intervention activities after they first tried them in class, and as they attempted to implement them over time in their daily lives. The logbooks functioned as both a learning tool for the students and an assessment tool that aided the researcher notes. The second section of the logbooks contained reflection questions on how the students were dealing with stressful situations, what they attempted in terms of skills or strategies, how well it worked or did not work and how they could apply the PLS program skills in the future.

The logbooks were introduced as part of the intervention, and the students were asked to fill them out after most sessions. The students' answers to these guided questions, and their reflections on lessons learned throughout the intervention were viewed as adding value:

Logbooks helped assess:

- i. How the students were moving through the learning and application process
- ii. What students were already doing in their daily lives
- iii. Whether students' ways of thinking (perspective) and mental skills (relaxation, focus and distraction control) were influenced by the PLS program intervention.

The logbooks were collected after each session to learn about the students' experience with the program and sometimes to provide feedback to the students (See appendix B for logbook sheets).

Formal interviews

Formal interviews were conducted with twenty-seven out of thirty-one students at the end of the study to gain further information about the program and whether or not they felt it had had

an influence on their overall daily lives (see Appendix C for interview guides). Out of the 31 students twenty-seven participated in individual interviews, 16 were boys and 11 were girls. Several attempts were made to interview the other 4 students however in the end they were not available for interviewing. Both of the teachers were interviewed after the conclusion of the intervention to gain insight into how the intervention was perceived through the teachers' eyes the teacher was interviewed after the intervention.

Data Analysis

To assess the overall impact of the program, the post-intervention interviews, log books and research notes were analyzed deductively relating to one of four elements of information used to assess the program. The purpose of this study was to introduce Orlick's PLS program for teens to young adolescents (in a classroom context) and to investigate whether the students enjoyed, applied, and found these skills effective in their daily lives. A secondary purpose of this study was to learn from the interactions with the students and teachers and explore the best ways to deliver the program.

The first three elements were based on previous research on the PLS program which included a) whether the participant enjoyed or did not enjoy the program; b) whether the participant applied the skills in relevant situations or not; and c) whether or not the program skills were effective in helping the participant in their daily lives (see Table 6). The fourth element was facilitation and was defined by information and lessons learned about content and delivery of the program. All data collected was coded into these four elements and each element was further analyzed inductively to determine any emergent themes present in the data collected.

The logbook entries were viewed after each session and discussed in the researcher notes to ensure adequate details were collected from the participants throughout the intervention. The

researcher notes were used to provide relevant information pertaining to the participants' enjoyment of the program, application of the skills, and/or the effectiveness of the skills used. This form of data collection was found to be useful in past PLS studies (Hester & Orlick, 2006). Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the enjoyment and effectiveness scales located in the logbook.

In summary, enjoyment, application, effectiveness and facilitation were assessed through participant interviews (student and teacher), researcher notes and logbook entries. Originally, the researchers had hoped to conduct a twelve week follow-up with the students and the teachers. The purpose of this follow-up was to see whether the program was still being used, if it was still enjoyable, applicable and effective, and how the program was influencing their lives in and out of the classroom. Unfortunately the timing of the study did not allow for a complete follow-up with the students. However, the researcher was in contact with both teachers approximately 20 weeks after the study.

Steps to Enhance Trustworthiness

“Who the researchers are makes a difference at all levels of the research, and the signature they put on their work comes out of the stories they live and tell” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998, p. 171). Several procedures were followed to maximize the trustworthiness of this study. First, the qualitative data collected through logbooks, interviews (student and teacher) and researcher notes provided more than one way of assessing the variables, which allowed the researcher to make more reliable judgments when analyzing the qualitative data. Second, the detailed descriptions of the sample, method, and results helped provide the information required to replicate procedures and assessment of the elements.

The researcher recognized the potential impact she may have had on the study and the significance of the researcher-participants relationship when introducing an intervention and conducting qualitative research. The researcher conducted the intervention sessions and some of the interviews (along with 4 other researchers experienced in the interviewing process). The researcher was interested in exploring and understanding the process of the program delivery in the classroom and by being present in the process, the researcher hoped to gain a better understanding of this process (Stake, 1994).

The intervention facilitator was well trained to implement the PLS intervention. She had attended a PLS program training session, studied and delivered the program to teenage figure skaters and youth in a group setting, implemented PLS strategies in her work with children, and was guided by her supervisor who created the program. A pilot study was also conducted prior to the study with a group of youth ranging in age from 13-20 years of age at a volunteer based youth group meeting. The pilot study was a scaled down version of the research intervention process over a 4 week period and allowed the researcher to refine content and delivery of sessions (Janesick, 1994).

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The overall results of the study indicated that students applied and enjoyed the PLS program activities, and found the PLS program effective in the contexts in which they applied them. Lessons were learned for the most effective delivery practices of the teen PLS program. The overall findings were organized and displayed into four elements; enjoyment, application, effectiveness, and delivery of the program. Emergent themes are presented for each of these four elements. Observations from the logbooks through the use of likert scales were also applied to the enjoyment and effectiveness aspects of the program.

In an attempt to contextualize the intervention, the first section of the results presents the researcher's perspective of the delivery of the program. The second section explores the students' perspective of enjoyment, application, and effectiveness from student post-intervention interviews and supported by researcher notes and logbook entries. The third section focuses on the teachers' perspective of the intervention experience and suggestions for future programs. The fourth section voices the students' perception of program's delivery along with suggestions for future programs.

Researcher's Perspective: How the Program Unfolded

Throughout the intervention process I (Stefanie) recorded lessons learned about how I interacted as researcher/facilitator and implemented the program. Specifically I recorded what I felt worked well and not so well, and my reflections and suggestions for future programs.

Every student interviewed in this study spoke about the activities of the PLS program. The delivery of the program comments related to activities are presented under the headings of CD recordings, "treeing it", experiential learning, and student participation.

CD Recordings

In the pilot study some of the students found the voice on the CD recordings “funny”. By funny I think the students meant that the voice was different or slow compared to what they were used to hearing in normal conversation. This perspective of the voice was observed in the pilot study as well as in sessions with the young figure skaters I had worked with. During this study I did not want to influence the students’ perspective about the voice in the recordings, so during the sessions with the CD recordings I just let the students listen.

During this session [...] I said that the instructions were all part of the activity and to take out of it what they could. This worked well. They laughed a bit, but they were able to get into it after the music started. Laughing also helps us relax, so it's almost a positive that the voice creates this experience for many.

(Researcher notes-girls, Jan 31st)

I personally found the audio CD activities helpful for my own preparation, to present the different positive living skills. The audio activities concisely outline, explain and give the participant an opportunity to try out the skill. Nevertheless I found sharing the ideas in person was better received by the students in this study.

Talking about ideas and concepts can work better with certain groups. Listening to the CD tracks is useful in more than just the content, as it acts as a focusing exercise at the same time. At times the students found the recordings less personal than talking in person. Although the group understood the ideas conveyed in the CD recordings some students got caught up on how the track sounded and did not get as much out of the activity as they could. Today, with the girls, explaining the concept of changing channels worked very well and allowed relevant links to occur in the dialogue. Even though I was the one talking about “changing

channels” there were opportunities for the group to share. (Researcher notes-Girls, April 11th)

“Tree it”

At times during the intervention there were questions related to concepts that needed clarifying. For example questions about when to apply the tree it concept came up in the discussions. Some students felt that if they used this skill too much it would be less effective when they needed it, while others felt that some issues were too important to let go. This excerpt from my researcher notes speaks to this concern.

I felt it was important to address these concerns as a group. Therefore I started the session off by having Lucie and Judy share how they felt ‘treeing it’ could be used. Lucie shared how for her treeing it was like turning over a new leaf. She explained that treeing it was like getting a fresh start at something and how she felt it helps her to leave the past in the past. Judy shared how she would use ‘treeing it’ because it allows her to continue doing what she is doing in the moment. Lisa also shared a powerful point about treeing it in her logbook, but was not comfortable sharing it with the group. She said she would use “treeing it” to let go of things out of her control. I expressed Lisa’s idea to the class with her permission. I think this went really well. The group seemed to appreciate the follow-up on their questions and the examples of skill application from peers seemed helpful.

(Researcher notes-girls, March 6th)

The students mentioned that hearing about other people’s struggles and effective application of PLS skills was helpful. For example Kristin explains how hearing about people’s challenges motivated her to keep trying.

You start to kind of lose faith in it (the effectiveness of the skill). Sometimes I say to myself “Well this (e.g. treeing it) does not work”, as hard as I try. But once other people say “Yeah I feel that way too”, as a group we all collectively talk about how we can use it (treeing it) effectively, and I hear other peoples’ opinions it helps me to believe maybe it (‘treeing it’) does work if I keep trying.

Experiential Learning

On one particular day the class had a rock climbing session booked the same day I was to conduct the PLS session. There were two choices; either reschedule the session for another time or work with the classes’ planned activity. My advisor and I decided it was a great opportunity for the students to try out skills within a sport context. Being flexible and working with the classes’ schedule was of great benefit as the students then had more time to try out skills than they normally did. During regular sessions, it was challenging for me as a researcher to discuss concepts thoroughly, answer questions and still have adequate time for students to try out skills. Normally the sessions only lasted for 15-25 minutes, but the rock climbing session ended up lasted for the whole period (50 minutes).

In an intervention in a school you need to be very flexible and look for opportunities even when it seems your plan has been altered. We originally wanted to meet with the two groups to discuss more PLS themes and tools, however once we found out that the groups were rock climbing, we decided to use this change in the plan to practice some of the skills in an experiential way. (Researcher notes-boys and girls, April 26th)

This rock climbing session went very well. It only took 5 minutes to chat at the beginning to discuss using the climbing session as an opportunity to try out some focusing and refocusing skills. After that, the students, teachers, and I climbed for the rest of the session, and students

filled out a logbook sheet before leaving for the day. Although this format worked very well I would suggest a discussion in small groups about what they used and how it went at the end of the experiential learning activity. Jane gives an example of how she used positive thinking and focus during the rock climbing session.

When we were doing the rock climbing in gym class, Stefanie came and talked to us before and told us about taking our time [...] You can get pretty frustrated if you are not doing the thing right or you are not climbing as fast as you wanted, but that is just an example. Definitely frustration was a huge part of it (climbing) and just remembering you have to slow down [...] I was focused on climbing to the top as fast as I could and if I did not get there as fast as I could, I got quite frustrated with myself [...] you have to keep telling yourself you have to calm down, because you are not helping yourself by [...] you are taking the fun out of everything, so there is really no point in being there if you are not going to have fun.

Out of the 31 students, twenty-six were present for this rock climbing session. All 26 students experienced a challenge during the session and tried to do something related to the PLS program to overcome their challenge. For example, Steve overcame his fear of heights by thinking positively and thinking he could do it (Researcher notes, April 26th-boys).

Of the Twenty-six students who were present 20 students effectively overcome their challenges by through taking a deep breath, concentrating, focusing on the task in front of them, relaxing, and shifting focus from fear or sore finger to just climbing (Researcher notes, April 26th-boys and girls).

Table 7.

Combined Group Effectiveness of PLS skills during Rock Climbing Session

1 (Did not work at all)	-
2	—
3	***
4	*****
5 (Totally worked)	*****

Note: each * represents one person

Participation

Participation was another area that influenced how the PLS sessions unfolded. The size of the groups and the people within them made a noticeable difference in the extent to which students participated in discussions. In my previous entry I suggested small discussion groups. The reasoning behind this suggestion came from the observation that girls tended to be less vocal around the boys and afraid to share opinions with peers. Although students appreciate hearing about how other people work through challenges, they were less inclined to make helpful suggestions for peers to try. It was not always easy getting other students to make suggestions for their peers. It seems that teenage students are somewhat afraid of this type of sharing. Learning from peers is such a valuable experience for participants. In order to better facilitate this type of learning I reflected on sharing the value of working together as a group during sessions.

Remember to let the group and each person live their own learning process. Try not to tell them what is right and wrong. Instead use stories and examples to share how these type of activities or skills have worked for others. Stay tuned in to the group and make sure when you are going up to say something to a student you are doing it for the good of that person, not because you want them to think the way you think. They need to figure things out for themselves, however do not

be afraid to recognize the positive parts of a person's process. Sharing this encouragement can be very helpful at opening a person up further to living in a more positive way. (Researcher notes-girls, March 6th)

During the discussions sharing a personal moment with students was helpful in developing a deeper understanding of the impact the program was having or not having. In a one-on-one discussion with a student I learned how they were more engaged in the sessions than I had originally thought:

There was an interesting part of this session. There is a girl named Andrea, who is a dancer. She had not been actively participating in the sessions nor had she shown interest or a desire to share with the group. During today's session I asked the group to write down a reminder to help them stay positive (or reconnect with being positive) during their March break from school. In an earlier session Andrea's wrote down what she did to stay connected, she wrote "I just Dance" on her logbook sheet. As the students were writing their positive reminders during today's session, I shared with Andrea that what she had wrote was very powerful to me. That's what being connected is all about just letting go of everything else and just dancing. After I shared how powerful the words "I just dance" were with Andrea she showed me her positive reminder for life, it was the word "DANCE". (Researcher notes-girls, March 6th)

At first it appeared that Andrea was not interested in the sessions at all, but I learned as the program progressed that my perception was wrong. Through the interviews, I learned that some girls were afraid to share too much because they do not want to stand out. Andrea was one girl who was afraid to say too much.

Yeah, I understand what Dance does for me and I can talk to some people about it, but when I voice it outwards towards people that wouldn't understand, it is difficult because it is almost at a different level of comprehension. So it's not that I get mocked for it, but people just don't understand. And it kind of makes me feel a little bit like I am being on top and I don't like feeling that way. I try to keep quiet. (Andrea)

When it was suggested that people could learn from her, Andrea expressed her concern about looking “stuck up”.

Yeah I know that some people would learn from me, but I also know that other people would see me as stuck up and more snobby so, like having a higher level of knowledge. Just because I do know myself better and I have been dancing for 13 years now, it's not like a fear, it's like I try to limit myself so I can fit the whole group, so I found that I can say something on a lower level, about when I do dance and stuff like that but at a higher level it is just more difficult to say anything. (Andrea)

In a moment of reflection after a session, I wrote about how to help students feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences.

I feel it would be good to motivate the students by expressing how sharing is helpful for the group as a whole. They can learn so much from each other, it does not matter what is said. They can change their mind about things as they go on. We are all in an evolution of learning, so there is no need to feel embarrassed about what we say or don't say. (Researcher notes-girls, Feb 21st)

As a group, we did not specifically discuss this beneficial aspect of sharing within the sessions. I would suggest clearly defining the benefits of sharing in future programs early on in the sessions.

Great Expectations and Patience

Another area of observation was the expectations students should be able to effectively apply the skills right away.

I sensed that people in the group have really big expectations of themselves and that they feel they should be able to learn these skills and apply them all the time or else they will not even try. These skills take practice and in the end there is still a life force that is sometimes greater than ourselves (chance). The students and people in general need to be patient [and] know that all we can do is try our best [...] (Researcher note-boys, Apr 6th)

Remaining patient when asking the group questions was an important lesson learned. In my researcher notes I explain how waiting for students to share and discuss with one another was beneficial:

Trying to word or phrase questions in a way that lets the group take their own lessons from the discussion can be difficult, but is very beneficial. Today the group was talking with each other, sharing ideas with each other. I found the group was very receptive to hearing what their peers had to say, and the group had some really great examples to share. I asked questions like, ``do you have any examples in your own daily life where you have been able to stay in the present, or get back in the game after a set back?`` When no one was sharing, I waited a

bit and let someone fill in the silence with their ideas, rather than jumping right away. (Researcher notes-boys, Feb 15th)

As a result of being patient in the sessions the students taught themselves:

A few students expressed that this idea of shifting channels is not that easy, that it's much easier for little kids because they have less responsibility. I let this part of the conversation go [...] other people expressed that they thought it would be easier as you get older because you would be more mature and less influenced by what other people think. As a facilitator I might have been able to help out with the confusion on this idea [...] but I felt it was more important for them to be heard and to understand that their ideas are good and that they are free to express them.

It was evident that the students understood mental skills, like physical skills, take practice. One student even came up with a clever way of looking at the process of applying mental training skills.

One person came up with the idea that learning mental skills is like learning how to ride a bike. It's easy and you think you can do it when someone is holding the back of your bike, and you can even do it when they are not holding the back if you think they are they're holding it. One person said, "Yeah it's a confidence thing". Another person said you can start with training wheels and then bend up the training wheels to make it a bit less safe until you are ready to try without training wheels.

As a group we talked about ways to effectively change moods or help shift channels.

One person said that talking to other people that are going through similar challenges is helpful because they can share a different perspective with you. The idea that changing moods or channels was a difficult thing to do was brought up by several students. So we talked about this challenge more. I expressed that life is complicated and we may not always be able to change our channels but we might as well try. Just because we cannot do it all the time does not mean we suck. I think this was a very important point to bring up. (Researcher notes, April 6th-boys)

Rational of Activities

An additional lesson learned was taking the time to explain the reasoning behind activities. This group seemed to be interested in understanding the rational behind the exercises:

Going over how to relax or discussing this idea (the reason for doing it) before asking the group to relax during music might be more helpful for some of the group. I had originally thought it would be better to just let them feel it out on their own, and then get into possible ways of trying to relax their bodies after. I think explaining the concepts up front in detail first, works best and then allow them to explore their own individual ways to relax after would work best. (Researcher notes-boys, Feb 8th)

Learning this lesson during the intervention allowed me to apply it in a focusing exercise. In order to give the students a clear understanding of the purpose of the activity, I explained that we were going to practice being in the present moment using a point of reference or dot. I then gave the students a chance to explore the concept through discussion by asking if anyone had

heard of the idea of Zen. Lucie shared that it was about oneness, and Sydnie shared that being in the moment was about being so connected that everything else fades. Before the group practiced the focus on the dot exercise I read this excerpt from *In pursuit of excellence* to ensure the purpose of the activity was clear.

Entering the Zen zone means becoming one with and inseparable from the essence of what you are doing during each moment you are actually doing it. It is being all there, totally present, absorbing yourself in, connecting yourself to, and becoming one with your body, your task, nature, the tree you are looking at, the child you are playing with, the person you are talking with. When you are totally engaged in the process of doing, in a sense you become what you are doing and suspend all judgments about yourself, others, or your performance. (Orlick, 1998, pp. 155-56)

When I used the term Zen, students were very interested in the topic. I think they found the concept of Zen to be 'cool'. Their focus seemed to be intensified when we discussed this topic. Overall, this passage was a good way to introduce the focus on the dot activity.

Chantale, the girls' teacher, was present again during the session. She participated in the activities and the discussions. She mentioned to me after the class that a few of the girls were lying in a different position (knees bent, eyes open). We discussed sharing how lying down with their palms up in anatomical position with eyes closed helps with relaxation, and that some people find focusing on their breathing helpful when trying to relax. I explained to Chantale that the most important thing was for each individual to feel comfortable, that some people find that they can focus better with their eyes open or feel more

comfortable with their legs bent. Next time I could suggest reconnecting to a specific spot during the relaxation-focus time. (Researcher notes-girls, February 8th)

During the next intervention I addressed these more specific positions to the students. Some students saw the value of focusing and relaxing in these positions and we tried out the Focus on the dot activity.

Follow-up in Sessions

Follow-up with the students by the researcher and the teachers positively impacted the students. Teacher Brad commented that the boys were not participating in the discussions as much as he felt they could and mentioned he would talk with the boys about the benefit of sharing their thoughts (Researcher notes, February 28th-boys). I also noticed that the boys were participating less than the girls in some sessions (Researcher notes, February 21st-boys).

After reviewing the boys' logbook sheets that the students filled out today, I noticed that a fair number of the students did not seem to put as much effort into their responses. The next time it may be helpful to reiterate it will be helpful to them now and later on. (Researcher notes, February 21st-boys)

The boys seemed to positively respond to teacher Brad's comments and began speaking more during discussions.

Although I planned to follow-up on previous sessions with both the boys and girls groups, I found it challenging to fit this discussion into the sessions. Here is an example where I planned to follow-up with the girls:

I asked the girls to find something (tree it, pole it, board it, or park it, put in the garbage) that works for them this week. They seemed fairly receptive to this idea.

I will follow up with this idea next week. I could have a logbook sheet that relates to this idea and see how it is working for them. Last week I had asked them to keep track of any lessons they learn throughout the week and did not follow-up with this idea. I think it would be good to follow up with it and perhaps reintroduce it before their two week break [...] It is hard to find time to discuss previous sessions. (Researcher notes-girls, February, 21st)

Below is another example that shows how I planned to follow-up on session material with the class when it was combined.

Next week I am going to get the groups to join together. So the girls and boys can learn from each other. I feel it will be important to reiterate that there are lots of different skills to choose from and that they have the choice of what one they will use dependent on what works for them (Researcher notes, Feb 28th)

Experience What You are Doing

Living what you are presenting or talking about with the group was appreciated by most of the students.

Take advantage of fully experiencing what you are teaching or discussing. I feel that by the two groups being outside while we were discussing simple joys, this allowed the group to feel the sun on their face and any other simple joys they may have been experiencing due to being outside. (Researcher notes-combined, April 19th)

If we would have had more time it would have been great to let the group get up and go on a highlight hunt.

Take Time to Listen

Even with the changes in plans throughout the intervention sessions, taking time to listen to what the students were sharing or questioning remained a priority. Sessions always ended up being more advantageous when I, as a facilitator, was tuned into what was going on. Even if the discussion was not necessarily on topic there were meaningful lessons learned as a group that came out of these “off topic” moments.

The session today was reduced from 30 minutes to 20 minutes. At first I was bit concerned about getting everything done and then it was a matter of priorities. The relationship questions and discussion became the first priority and the Umbalakiki was second, and on top of both these priorities was staying in tune with the class and not getting caught up in getting things done. I find the sessions are the most meaningful and helpful when we are taking our time and really listening to one another. (Researcher notes-boys, Feb 28th)

This intervention provided an opportunity to explore what could work best when delivering the PLS program with teens. It also gave students a chance to learn about and explore positive ways of dealing with daily life stresses or experiences. In my observations, the students appeared to have enjoyed, applied and found the program effective in some manner or another.

Students' Perspective: Enjoyment, Application and Effectiveness

The following section exclusively presents the students' perspective of the program, specifically whether they enjoyed, applied, or found the program effective in their daily lives.

Figure 1 (p. 63) demonstrates the three elements of enjoyment, application and effectiveness and their concurrent emergent themes.

Enjoyment

Each participant interviewed in this study commented on enjoying some part of the PLS program. If a student said they liked the program the open ended question “what did you like about it” was asked. The themes that emerged for the element of enjoyment included: a)

Learning to focus; b) learning to be positive and to appreciate life more; c) relaxing and learning to take time to relax, and; d) participating in discussions and personal reflection.

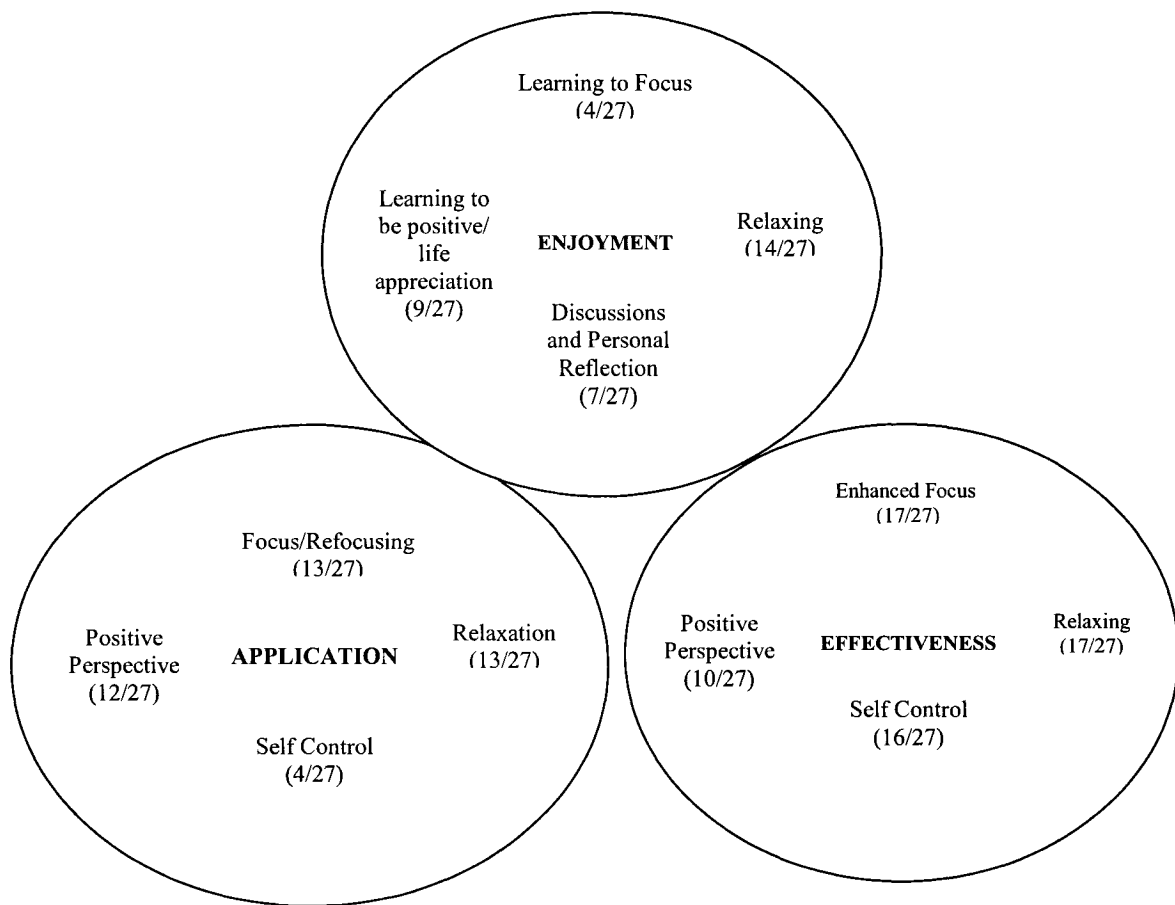
There may have been more areas that students enjoyed about the program that did not come to mind during the interviews. All 27 students interviewed said they enjoyed some aspect of the program. Six of the 27 students stated that they enjoyed the program without going into detail on the specific reason they found the program enjoyable.

Enjoyment-Relaxation

Relaxation was the most often mentioned theme to emerge from the students comments on enjoyment. The elements of relaxation that students enjoyed most were having a break in their day (e.g. during the PLS sessions), letting go of everything else that was going on, and learning that implementing relaxation into their daily lives was important and beneficial to not only their health but also their ability to work and perform. Fourteen (14/27) students stated that they enjoyed learning how to relax and/or taking time to relax. Students’ comments below reflect how they found relaxation made the program enjoyable.

At the beginning we did resting and that was, a break in our day, that helped a lot, yeah and also, it was a fun experience, because she (the researcher) showed a different point of view (a more mental aspect). (Kevin)

Figure 1: Elements of Enjoyment, Application and Effectiveness



When Kevin was asked what he specifically liked about the resting he said “that you cleared your mind, it is more like, your day is so full of things, it is very busy with school and stuff, and then [after the relaxation] it was just very clear [...]”.

[...] some of the relaxing exercises were really good. Like listening to music and it came at a pretty good time because a couple of periods after that I had all these crazy presentations to do and so it was nice to just sit there and relax and not have to think about it for even ten minutes. (Kristin)

Well overall yeah [I enjoyed the program]. I liked it when we were relaxing and listening to music and concentrating on things, because it did not have a lot of physical [activity]. Well none of them had a lot of physical activity, but I liked the ones when we were listening to music the most, that is just because that relaxes me a lot more. It helped me cope with the rest of the day. (Lucie)

Julie commented: “When she [the researcher] turned on the music and she made us lie down and relax, so you can forget about all you had to do, and yeah it was nice”.

The students also indicated that the program was enjoyable because it gave them a break in the day: “It was really really, good to have a break [...] because it was really relaxing and it was really good to have a break from the physical stuff that we did” (Anthony).

I enjoyed the program, it was a good experience you know. Like we play sports and we get into like mental stage of it, playing, but we don't really experience it otherwise. So it was a really good experience, like saying [we] need to relax at some point. Or to understand like to take breaks afterwards you know stretching and relaxing and learning to control yourself, yeah it was good. I liked it, and it really increased I guess your understanding of what you are going through. (Steve)

Concisely put, Jason said: “It was great, I liked it a lot, it just helped me to relax”.

Enjoyment-Positive Perspective

Positive perspective was the second most often mentioned theme by the students under the element of enjoyment. Of the twenty-one students, 9/27 identified learning to be more positive and/or developing a greater appreciation for life as most enjoyable. The students enjoyed learning to hold a positive perspective, enjoying becoming more aware of positive parts of their

daily life, learning to appreciate the simple things in life, and seeing how paying attention to these highlights and simple joys made them feel better. The following quotes highlight how learning to be more positive was an enjoyable element of the program for some students.

Lisa stated: “I think it was good [...] the simple joys section was a good part of the program, it is something that you should try, so you get a greater appreciation for the smaller things in life” and Janice said: “Yeah [I enjoyed it] it was good to just learn new ways to appreciate life [...] the part about the simple joys, that was good to learn to look at what you do and what you enjoy”.

Another one I liked was [...] if something is bothering you, like once it's done, just put it aside and not carry it over for the rest of the day, and just sometimes when everything seems like its going really bad, just like at the end of the day, think about all the good things that happened, so that the day is not like a complete waste, and the one at the end [of the program] about the simple joys and stuff, they were just like the little things that can make it better. (Kristin)

Yeah I really did [enjoy the program], it was a lot of fun and it was a good, I learned a lot of things, which I don't think I would have ever come across otherwise. Well [for example] that Umbalakiki thing [...] basically hearing it and seeing other people do it, it's like a novel type of thing. It's kind of actually cool and I also kind of liked the part about the highlights because first of all it was really nice to be outside and also [...] it's a really bad time of year and so being able to think about highlights and being able to really look back on the day and think even one thing that went well, that's really nice. (Veronica)

Yep, [I liked the program] and I also liked the highlight thing we talked about, it just makes you more aware of certain highlights you have or that other people don't have the chance to get, just to keep you happy [...] (Ray)

The relaxing was really good, also just learning to think of highlights.... yeah highlights, remember the good things. That was really really cool we don't do that enough we always think of the negative after a game. You know. Right there yeah remembering the highlights. It is good. (Steve)

Yeah they (the sessions) were good, pretty constructive like one of the sessions I had a rugby game right after and I used some of the techniques [clearing the mind, deep breathing and staying positive] right after. (Brian)

Yep [I enjoyed the program], sometimes when we were listening to music and relaxing [...] the activities about positivity helps [...] to think about what were doing, [...] when we are doing sports. She (the researcher) was talking always thinking positively [...] The most important thing I learned I would say is thinking positively especially when you are playing sports, and you tend to get frustrated if you are losing badly. When things aren't going well, just think positively, it is just a game. Yeah I tried that. (Peter)

Enjoyment-Discussion and Reflection

Discussion and reflection inspired the students in many ways. The elements of discussion and reflection that the students enjoyed most were voicing their concerns or struggles, learning from other students, becoming aware of what was going on within themselves, and learning ways to deal with or fix problems. Students stated that they enjoyed talking about topics that they don't normally talk about, learning skills that can actually be applied to daily life, and how PLS sessions and skills helped them cope with the rest of their day.

Specifically 7/27 students mentioned that the discussions and reflection were enjoyable aspects of the PLS program. Candice said: "Just being able to talk about stuff and realize what was going on, actually taking time to analyze your feelings and analyze emotions in ways to help you deal with it".

I really liked talking about your problems. It was almost like therapy in a way; it was really helpful. You wouldn't direct your frustration or anger out on a certain person or anything like that, but you would be able to talk about it and get it out in the open and that helped. It did not matter that you were around a bunch of people, and after at the end when she [researcher] played the music, that really helped you feel more comfortable. (Jane)

The program was fun just sitting down first all it was a little break, you know all the gym and everything and all the crazy stuff. So it was good to just sit down and talk about stuff that was going on and ways to fix it [...] (Kristin)

"Yeah I enjoyed the discussions and everyone exchanging ideas and things like that [...] just interacting with other people and participating" (Lisa).

“Yeah I did, it was fun, it was good, it was great, we just talked a lot about things that we don’t normally talk about” (Ray).

“I liked the open discussion thing [...] you had to think about stuff you [the researcher] said, and reflect on it [...]” (James)

“We just talked a lot about things that we don’t normally talk about” (Jeremy).

Enjoyment-Focus

Focus was the first emergent theme under the element of enjoyment. Four of 27 students mentioned that they enjoyed the program for the reason of learning to focus, refocus or improving focus. Students enjoyed learning to intentionally choose their focus, and enjoying learning to zone into the present moment.

When Jeremy was asked if he enjoyed the program he said:

Yeah I did. It was fun. It was good. It was great. We just talked a lot about things that we don’t normally talk about [...] [Specifically I enjoyed] thinking back on how to deal with certain situations, like game situations in sport [...] for example for me when I am playing soccer and the other team scores a goal, and the whole mentality after. Coming back, and focusing on the game and not focusing on the fact that you are losing [...] We were actually talking about things that I could actually apply to my everyday life, while playing sports, so that [was] the best part of the program. (Jeremy)

Yep [I enjoyed the program], I liked when we were talking about what makes us focus better, zone in, like when you think about it there is a lot of stuff that I actually do unintentionally, but now I do intentionally to make me focus. Like

using music, or something, or just, or sometimes just silence, just silence makes me focus in on something. (Ray)

I like how it [the program] got me to focus on a certain things and how it allowed me to just focus on just that one thing and forget about everything else. Like if stuff was going well in my day or something that was good and I wanted to focus on that. (Jennifer)

I [enjoyed it when] she (the researcher) put a dot on the wall, and we had to focus on it for a few minutes [...] as you get into it you would not think of anything else, you would just focus on that one [thing]. (Julie)

The logbooks were another means of capturing the students' perspective about the program. The next section presents the enjoyment results for data collected through logbook entries. Table 8 presents enjoyment of PLS activities and table 9 presents the connection to PLS activities. (See appendix D for example student logbook sheets).

Table 8.
Enjoyment of PLS Activities

	Relaxing to the Music (19 boys, 11 girls)	Focus on the dot (17 boys, 11 girls)	Positive Thinking (11 girls) Boys did not complete this logbook sheet due to lack of time
1 (Hated it)	—	*1	
2	—	****4	
3	*****7	*****12	*****9
4	***** 17	*****8	**2
5 (Loved it)	*****6	*1	*1

Note: Each star (*) represents one person

Table 9
Connection to PLS Activities

	Relaxing to the Music (18 boys, 11 girls)	Focus on the dot (17 boys, 11 girls)	Positive Thinking (11 girls) Boys did not complete this logbook sheet due to lack of time
1 (Not into it at all)	-	-	*1
2	** 2	*****7	**2
3	***** 12	*****11	*****6
4	***** 14	*****8	***3
5 (Totally into it)	**2	*1	-

Note: Each star (*) represents one person

In the logbook entries the students also wrote down how they felt during the exercises. During the relaxing to the music activity the majority of the girls (8/11) wrote they felt calm, relaxed, or very relaxed. The majority of the boys (13/19) said they felt relaxed or calm during Relax to the music. During the Focus on the Dot activity the majority of girls (9/11) felt moderately focused with some distraction. The majority of the boys (12/17) for this activity wrote down they were not very connected or focused. During the positive thinking activity the majority of the girls (7/12) wrote down they felt calm or relaxed. The boys did not fill out the Positive Thinking logbook due to a lack of time.

Application

Each participant interviewed in this study commented planning to apply the program skills in the future. Twenty-one of 27 students stated they were presently applying the program in their daily lives. The remaining 6 students planned to apply the program skills in the future. Students mentioned applying the program skills in these four areas a) Focusing b) relaxation; c) positive perspective; and d) self-control. Percentages below are in relation to the 21 students who applied the PLS skills during the intervention.

Application-Focus

Specific to the skill of focus 13/27 students stated applying PLS skills to focus and/or refocus. Specifically they used the skills to be in the moment, refocus and/or clear the mind during the intervention. The ‘tree it’ concept was used in a variety of individual ways. They used this concept to let go of distractions that were not helpful in the moment. The students also used skills outside the intervention, for example, by using relaxing music to focus in on school work or focusing on one thing to clear their mind and get in the zone during sport.

I refocus by focusing on my simple joys [...] For instance if I have a fight or something. I just focus on something I want to do, like improve my times in swimming. When I go to practice I just focus hard on [what I want to do] and it helps me to forget about them (person she had a fight with). When I have to come back to the situation I am more relaxed [...] I refocus, like I have a different view of the situation because I have been away from it. (Laura)

Laura commented on another relevant application of the program skills to focus:

I used the program skills to get focused before an event (swim competition), she (the researcher) taught us to focus, to look at something (focus on the dot activity) for a while and just focus on it and so I tried doing that one and it worked [...] I was just looking at the big board where they have the times and just focusing on the little red things, for about 10 minutes and when I got up to the blocks I was really calm.

The following statements demonstrate how other students applied PLS skills to focus:

*To refocus I just take a break, do something to get my mind off it (the stressor).
Listen to music [...] go somewhere else, go for a walk or something, just get my*

mind off it [...] I use refocusing when I go to the gym. I go to the gym a lot, get a workout in and stuff, and if I cannot do a certain weight or something I won't let it get to me. I just keep pushing until I can achieve that weight, I can set goals for myself [...] In a certain amount of time I want to be able [to do a certain number of] repetitions. This much as opposed to what I am doing now [...] (In order to not get down on myself) I just think it to myself, and put my mind to just go for it [...] I do not necessarily [have specific thoughts or words], it is general [...] if I want to refocus, I just get everything off my mind and set a goal for myself. And it is ok if I don't meet it. If I can't do this now, it's ok. I can push for it later. (Ian)

“I had a rugby game right after [...one PLS session] and I used some of the techniques discussed right after like clearing your mind to focus” (Brian).

The big thing is how like she (the researcher) tried to make us imagine with the music, tried to relate [to the music], that was pretty new [...] I use it in my life right now [...] when I listen to music, music gets you into a mood [relaxed mood], like images go through your head. What she basically did was she emphasized the fact that most people have all that information in the back of their mind, they know it, but they don't use it, but now that it has been talked about and that it is out there they can fine tune it. (Kevin)

Lisa stated that she applied the skill of ‘tree it’ to refocus when she was playing the piano. She explained that continuing to think about a mistake in the past, prevented her from focusing on what she was currently trying to play. She further explained that she was able to let go of the mistake and play the rest of her musical piece.

At a piano recital, like if you make a mistake you just want to go back and do it over and make it better, and you do not want to think about the mistake for the rest of the piece because then you can't focus on what you are playing. (Lisa)

The next two students also used the 'tree it' to focus or refocus:

Yeah sometimes when I am playing hockey or something and I make a mistake, for the next few shifts I am thinking about it. And so I just try and tap my stick on the boards or something like that and I try and forget it. (Anthony)

Well if I am playing anything, a sport with my friends or anything...I miss something, or I accidentally passed the wrong guy the ball [...] make a mistake or something, I just try to fix it, ignore it and refocus on the game. (Dean)

Application-Relaxation

Specific to relaxation, students applied various skills such as listening to the music (to fall asleep or to stay calm during school work), breathing to clear their mind, taking a break, going for a walk or playing sports, or reading a book. Thirteen of 27 students who applied the program activities said they used it to relax and calm down in their daily lives. Several (7) students stated they used music to help calm themselves down during their day.

We basically learned techniques to manage stress and she (the researcher) helped us appreciate simple joys and highlights in life and how to relax[...] when we were listening to music [PLS track # 10, Shepherd Moons: Smaointe, Out of Africa: End Title] and relaxed it was helpful, because especially if it was a stressful day[...] they [the exercises] helped me realize that it actually does work,

so I do it sometimes [...] I swim a lot, so I do it after a meet or something, or after a hard practice to relax. I just, put music in and listen until I fall asleep. (Laura)

Yeah the focusing one was good when we did the breathing and clearing everything out of your head [...] I use it when I am doing work, I put, music on, like ok, I start listening to it and let go of everything else distracting that is going on around me. (Candice)

I was using, breathing [...] deep breathing and also I was listening to calming music. Like not that hard stuff, more like the softer tone type of music, that kind of stuff, like U2 that kind of stuff. And then also [I applied] thinking about nice days and that kind of stuff. (Brian)

When you are stressed and you have a lot of work and just sit down for a second or listen to music and just clear your head [...] sometimes I just do it when I don't try. I will be listening to music while I am doing work at the computer and I will just lie back in the chair and try to sort of like half sleeping, but I am actually not sleeping. And then I just kind of snap back. (Anthony)

Liam commented: "Sometimes when I feel very angry or something I listen to light music and it helps me relax".

Three students stated using the program activities to take a break during their day. One student said that it was helpful to go outside and do something physical when she was having trouble concentrating.

Yeah I found in one of our discussions, I heard someone say when you feel really stressed go for a run and do something physical. I don't do that, I usually like to get everything done and then do what I want, but there comes a time when you are just too stressed to concentrate on things. I found when you go outside, like for 40 minutes or something, playing soccer or basketball, then you are tired, then you can just focus a bit more. (Lucie)

Julie mentioned that she takes a break by lying on her bed or reading a book

Yeah, yeah yeah yeah, I have been using the relaxing and the visualizing because I have been in trials for the eastern Ontario team [...] I have been doing the relaxing and visualizing, and I actually made the team, so it has been pretty good [...] I am Catholic so before the game, I would take time and that relaxes me, and gets myself centered. I say a prayer and then I keep my eyes closed and then I visualize. I go through the different play combos, for example we have a 36 or 40 running plays and we give numbers to each of them because they go to different holes in the line. So I visualize every single one, and then I visualize the tactic plays, just to be fully into it. When I go on the field I really get myself centered and then I peak. It is like a slow process[....] I am applying it perfectly.. (Steve)

Application-Positive Perspective

Forty-three percent of the students, who said they applied program activities, mentioned thinking more positively, embracing simple joys, sharing highlights, and thinking about good memories in order to feel better during the program.

I used the positive thinking, when playing basketball [...] yeah well our basketball team didn't do too well this year and it helped to think positively. Like having fun

with your team members, even if you are losing you can still have fun, it helped.

(Peter)

Peter gave another example of positive thinking.

I have trouble relaxing sometimes before a presentation because I tend to get so nervous when I speak. But trying to do it (relax, think positively), it does still help, it calms you down [...] I would just like I guess sit down and just try to think to myself, like I try to [say] 'like everything is going to be fine' and that I just have to remember what I am supposed to say and like it is just a presentation, I mean it (the presentation) is important but it is not too important.

Andrea made a comment suggesting she feels she is the 'boss' of herself when she says that a bad mark is not her.

I ask myself what are the other things that are happy, then the things of your day can be happy [...] say you get a bad mark on a test [...] it (the bad mark) is not me, it is not the end of the world, you still have another chance to recover and [feel good about the day].

Andrea further explained that when life is more stressful she knows her simple joys are always present for her to enjoy.

Well I find simple joys every time I listen to music, any type of music that I can see that movement, so it is kind of nice and it (the joy) stays there and, it is always there for me. So I find that, it's like the simple joys like the highlights, it is continually bringing out [into the moment], so I get it (joys) constantly. So my simple joys and highlights are ever present [...] yeah, and sometimes when I do forget, like when I am experiencing stress, then I know myself well enough to go

away from the problem and to go listen to music and to relax, and to sometimes even go to the studio late at night [...] yeah because I know, my simple joys are everywhere.

At the dinner table [...] well Stefanie (researcher) told us about, just asked us about the simple joys in our lives and what makes us happy. And when I am at the dinner table with the family and you start talking about that, I mentioned it to my Mom and Dad, and we just started talking about what really makes us happy. It was just interesting to see what everyone came up with, my sister was like, “oh I like ice cream or I like summer time,” and for me I was like “I love rugby and I love, I love being with my friends”. It just puts you in a happier mood and makes you think in a positive way and it really helped that way. (Jane)

Candice said:

When I am feeling more down I do stuff like think of highlights, but when I am just normal I don't. Yeah when I need it (thinking of highlights) I do [...] like when I am having a bad day I think about something I did positive like, like a good play, making a complex play or something, and then I get back to that mentality.

Candice also said:

Oh well, I have a problem with passion sometimes, and the coach... she recognized that I had played for team Ontario and she was like you can do this... be confident in yourself, so I just said that over and over.

Ray commented:

I remember that one time we talked about how we learned or something, and you have to learn how to trust yourself when, if you are learning something new [...] like in rugby, when you learn something new, sometimes even if you don't feel comfortable or you think it won't work, just go with the flow and try to trust that you have done everything to prepare for it. And it worked.

Ray also stated that he applied keeping things in perspective by not always thinking of school, but also living other parts of his life fully.

Sometimes, you have to get your mind off things. Between school and summative exams you have to. You get home and you are overwhelmed with work. And then you have to get your mind off it if you want to go play a sport or even if you want to go workout. You know that it is just not all about school, you have other stuff in life. (Ray)

Mark commented that when bad life situations occur he tries to make himself feel better by thinking about happy things and good memories.

Application-Self control

Four of the 27 students planned to apply PLS program skills to choose to control emotions for themselves or with other people. This skill was also used in relationships situations such as controlling emotions with friends and family and being more able to focus on listening to and understanding others.

Friends [...] I find with friends, of course girls get very frustrated with each other, get very catty and annoying. So it is just girls, it is almost like a game with girls. It's like you play the game right then it is good, but if you don't know how to play the game, it is not good. And so you have to be very careful not to get

stressed out and worked up about little things. Being a girl if you get in a fight with a friend you have to remember don't let it get to you. And even though you are extremely frustrated with that friend right now the more you get frustrated the more she is going to get frustrated, so you have to calm down and just remember that it will work itself out, so you can really apply those (skills) to friends as well.

(Jane)

If you get mad, basically, just control your emotions. We talked about that a lot; how to release your anger and not get mad at other people who, you shouldn't be mad at. There is no reason to be mad at them. [I learned] how to release that anger [...] how to like come home and calm yourself down [...] well like with your family or if you get mad at your brother or sister how to stop that from escalating. To try to, have a common ground [...] For example I have a brother that I get in fights with all the time. Not like real fights, just we argue all the time, sometimes even when I know I am wrong [...] even though I know I have lost the argument I will argue anyway. So I just have to learn to accept that I am wrong or at least try to not make it escalate into a huge argument, because it is not worth it. (Mark)

Yeah I didn't do them (the program skills) consciously, but I think I kind of did them unconsciously. I think of other people more, try to understand others more [...] if someone is speaking to me and I would have something to say, I would

keep it to myself a bit more until I actually really understood what the other person was saying. (Jacob)

It was determined that all the students planned to use the program skills in the future as 21/27 students were already applying PLS skills in daily life and the remaining 6/27 planned to apply the skills in daily life. The areas most often mentioned for future application included focusing on the moment-staying connected to whatever they are doing, breathing, shifting focus through ‘treeing it’, the use of music, visualization, and simple joys. Both the interviews and the logbooks showed that majority of the students planned on using focusing skills such as the “tree it” concept (Umbalakiki) to let go of distractions in the future. The students said they would apply focusing skills in situations that include: Helping with school, because they could more things; they would apply focusing skills to sports (e.g. focusing on the ball when stopping a goal), or when I have a test and need to prepare; to try to really take in what someone is telling them.

Students’ comments on future application of program skills were organized into four emergent themes that included: 1) Focus, 2) positive perspective, 3) relaxation, and 4) self-control. The following section gives examples of how the students planned to use the program in the future.

Future Application-Focus

Fourteen of the 27 students mentioned their plan to use the program skill of focus/refocus in the future. Students planned to use focus or refocus to be more in the moment, to be more in the zone, to refocus during distractions, and to clear the mind. Ian said:

The program skill I used in everyday life was being able to focus myself, not just freaking out; being distressed and frustrated. Keeping my mind on what I need to do and not getting side tracked [...] just don't let your mind wander. That is it for me. I mean if you are in it (whatever you are doing), stay into it. It is hard if you are thinking about so many different things at once. If you are doing one certain task don't start thinking about "what do I have to do then, and what do I have to do after", keep your mind where you are, stay mentally with it.

Six students said they would use the "tree/pole it" concept in the future to let go of thoughts when they are not useful. Ian specifically mentioned his plan to use the "tree it" concept in the future.

I think the main thing I would use it for is in sport. As a first resource I would definitely use the leave it behind [tree it concept]. If you screw up, leave it behind. Especially in sport, if I missed a basket in basketball, before it used to really get to me. If I was playing sport, and I would be like "oh why did I do this, it could have been so close". Now I will just leave it behind, keep playing and try it again. Try to fix it [...] there is no use in worrying about it. Just get my head back into the game and keep playing. (Ian)

I would probably use just the mental thing with sports, the 'pole it' (or tree it). I think that forgetting about stuff that has happened or the mistakes you have made is probably the most useful skill. Before when I would play sports I would always be thinking. My mind wouldn't be [focused] right now on the game instead my mind would be other places. (Anthony)

When Jacob was asked whether he would use any of the program skills in the future he said, “well definitely in sports and [...] school work, I think I will use it because if I had done poorly on a test I could just let it go [learn from it] and do better on the next one” (Jacob).

We have exams coming up in a couple of weeks, so I will use the skills for sure. Sit down focus on the studying, try and find out, organize things, and just calm down and have some background music playing so you can focus on what you are doing. That would be a good way to study for exams. (Jeremy)

Yeah a couple of them maybe like just the focusing on what you are about to do, mostly uh that is like the only thing I would use for the future [...] I [would use it during] all of the above, like school focusing on work, when you need to focus on, like just before exams and stuff [...by focus] I mean just eliminate the other things from my mind, so if I need to think about something I am totally thinking about that. (Derek).

Researcher notes and logbooks supported the interview findings. Fourteen of the 19 boys who filled out the logbook said they would use the concept of ‘treeing it’ (Umbalakiki concept) in the future. The reasons they gave for planning to use the ‘tree it’ concept included: Making them feel happy; letting go is the only way to move on, relieving stress, and finding it effective (Researcher notes, Feb-28-06-boys,).

Six girls said they would use the skill of ‘treeing it’ in the future, for the following reasons: because it creates a fresh start and you let go of the past, it allows you to let go of things

out of your control, because it allows you to do what you are doing in that moment in time (Researcher notes, Feb 28-06-girls).

Future Application-Relaxation

Nine of the 27 students mentioned using program skills to relax in the future through scheduling breaks into the day, using music or breathing to relax and calm down, dealing with stress as it arises (rather than letting it linger on), and not being in such a hurry. The following students' comments reflect plans to use the program skills to relax.

I am going to carry on using the program skills into university football, and also just university is going to be a tough time, you need time to relax and you need to set yourself a schedule, so I am going to put aside a time, to [go] over these program skills because they are essential you need them. Or else you will just get stressed and ahhhh, you know get stressed and you won't be able to continue. The kind of skills that we learned that I plan to use in the future will include find some time in the day, like take care of yourself, before you go to bed, really relax, and then you will fall asleep better, obviously you will have a better sleep [...] I will try to do that, it helps out the next day, you feel refreshed and you feel good.

(Steve)

“Yeah, at least take a few minutes to calm down and relax and not worry about anything, listen to music or do whatever it is that keeps you calm” (Jeremy).

I definitely think I will use the program skills, because [...] I know that as I go through high school and as I go through university things are going to get more stressful, but I am going to have to stay active and I know things like this music to relax, and taking time to relax really do calm me down and help me relax, so I am

definitely going to use this in the future because it is going to get more stressful as life goes on. (Andrea)

Jane also emphasized that she will use relaxation in real life situations in the future:

I loved it when we talked about stress, I really liked that, from how much I talk about it you can almost assume that I have a lot of stress. Like I get stressed out so easily, so when we talk about it, it really, it just helps so much. Yeah so I can apply a lot [of the PLS skills] in real life situations, everybody gets stressed out. It is just how you deal with it...so that really helped [...] I do [think I will use the skills in the future] basically the same ones that I learned everyday here [...] but you do your own thing, relax, enjoy life, don't be in such a hurry.

Future Application: Positive Perspectives

When students were asked what skills they would use in the future 5/27 students shared that they planned to use concepts such as positive thinking, and paying attention to simple joys and highlights in the future.

I will definitely use the (relaxation and positive thinking). Like I had never done anything on relaxation or, I have never heard of positive thinking so, so I will use that stuff in the future and I think that will help. (Peter)

Janice said: “[I applied] thinking positively and trying to make the best out of situations” and Laura said “Yes I will use...all the relaxing and focusing and trying to focus on simple joys and highlights” (Laura).

You should not think about ... “oh this is going to be so bad”, like, you think you are going to fail. If you think positively and visualize like yourself (positively) “ok I have studied, I know what do and I can see myself doing well and passing” that

helps. Because if you have a negative attitude then obviously [...] you are not going to do very well, even if you know a lot. If you think, "I am going to fail", you are not necessary going to fail, but you are not going to do as well as you should. If you just like visualize things going well and really believe that they are going to work and like you really believe, the confidence is like a force that shields you [...] if you think positively it is going to go well, but if you don't, obviously it won't go well. (Kristin)

Well basically, positive thinking [...] It's just in general how to go about living your life, and not be pessimistic all the time and have fun...yeah be positive about things and think positive and if you get mad just calm yourself down. You don't have to always talk to someone that you have a problem with like your coach or whatever. Yeah I think (the positive thinking) will help me. (Mark)

Future Application-Self-control

Controlling or choosing emotions was another skill students planned to apply in the future. Three of the 27 students mentioned planning to control emotions in situations with friends, family and in daily life transitions.

If I was mad at something that happened in the class, I just remember to leave it in the class to not get mad at my friends because I am already in a bad mood... like to learn that things should not carry over, even if you are having a really bad day. I was doing really bad on a test, but I didn't let it ruin my entire day. Good things still, happen, that (one) thing is not going to change my whole life. I am not going to fail everything just because of that one thing. So it's good just relaxing

just remembering that not everything is terrible even when it seems like it is.

(Kristin)

I think I will actually use a lot of them [program skills], because I think it is more about self-control. And I think self-control is a really important part for life, so I think I will use a lot of relationship kind of things. I think it will help me to have better relationships with people. (Jacob)

The program skills are more of a relationship with yourself more than anything else, but I think if you were in an argument with someone (the skills) would help because you can evaluate your anger better and see if you are really mad at (the person) or what you are really mad at. Instead of just being angry you can try and work it out [...] (The program) gave me a better chance to get to know myself [...] because of all the little sheets (logbook) we wrote about [ourselves] and how we react to pressure. I never really thought of that (how to deal with pressure) before. I learned about myself. (Veronica)

Effectiveness

Effectiveness was defined as comments mentioning how skills helped the students in their daily lives. Applying the PLS program was effective in some area of life for 25/27 of the students. The four emergent themes of effectiveness include: a) Focus, b) relaxation, c) self-control, and d) positive perspectives. Of the 25 students 15 were boys and 10 were girls.

Enhanced-Focus

The program effectively enhanced focus for 17/27 students. These students commented on improved focus such as focusing on the present moment or being in the zone, refocusing, and clearing the mind. Some specific examples of enhanced focus follow:

Everyday (during PLS sessions), she (researcher) talked about concentration, how to really concentrate on something [...] when things get a bit hectic [...] if you have something to do, concentrate on it [...] I felt that was a brilliant idea. Before you work [...] play a song that clears your mind, and go to work and be in the zone in a way, be your work, just rip through it, that is actually the best type of work you can do. In sports it is a bit easier because it is fun doing an activity [...] Yesterday I had a paper due. I started the essay. I ripped through it and finished it in time, so actually that (focusing on one thing) helped because when you concentrate on something you just do it the right way. (Kevin)

“To get focused before an event, (the researcher) taught us to focus, to look at something for a while and just focus on it. So I tried doing that one and it worked” (Laura). This student spoke about competing at a swim meet. Before her turn to compete, Laura stared at the clock in the pool area, she was able to let go of distractions, and as a result she was able to focus on what she wanted to do during her swim (Researcher notes, May 5th-combined).

Students who had tried focusing skills before found their focus was improved through the program: “Actually [I have done] some of the focusing [before], but I feel I have expanded it through the program” (Derek). “[...] I am really focused intentionally... and now after the program it is even better. There can always be improvements. I learned how to focus even more, you know” (Steve).

I thought it (the PLS program) was pretty good, I mean we learned a few things, like concentration and relaxing and how to keep ourselves mentally focused doing sport or even other things if I am working on any task. That helped me learn some things about concentration; to take your mind off something if you are too confused about it, I thought it was helpful. (Ian)

Jeremy stated that focusing was an important skill that he learned to apply: “Staying focused, making sure you give it your 100 %, give it your full everything, you’ve got to focus on what you are doing and do your best at it”.

Ten students found the program particularly effective to let go of negative thoughts or situations more easily, to not carry over negative experiences into other experiences and/or to clear their mind to focus on the present moment.

Someone mentioned something about patience in one of the exercises and I think that is an element of a relationship [that I learned about]. Just being able to listen to what they are going through. Like communication is something important, and sometimes treeing it, because sometimes people do get mad for the dumbest things, you have to tree some issues, get over it and move on. Like you are young, you don’t want to be spending your whole day frustrated about something when in the end it is just something that does not matter in the long run. I found that was useful. (Lucie)

I had a rugby game right after [...one PLS session] and I used [...] clearing your mind, like after something, take a deep breath and kind of look at what you should

be doing and not getting down on yourself staying positive. I found that worked well. (Brian)

Although at first the idea of ‘treeing it’ (putting away the negatives), seemed stupid to Kristin, in the end she stated that treeing certain things worked for her:

When (the researcher) was telling the story (Umbalakiki) about those kids [...] playing that game, they were thinking about all the bad things and then once the game was over they just left it there and they didn’t carry it over. It seems kinda stupid, but when you try and apply it in real life, it actually does something, and it’s not as stupid as it sounds. (Kristin)

The whole ignoring your mistakes thing was probably the most important part (of the program) that I would apply. Dwelling on mistakes, focus on the negative aspect of what you did and then focus on the more positive side of that, so you don’t make it again. (Dean)

At times I found it helpful, when you are playing sports, and you screw up, not to regret that (screwing up) and keep thinking about it, [instead] move on and leave it behind. Just stay in the game and stay focused. (Ian)

“When I am losing like in a sport I try to do it (tree it) [...] when I am [...] thinking of the mistake too much. I would just let it go and start again, [on to] the next play” (Liam).

Effectiveness-Relaxation

Specifically with respect to relaxation 17/27 students commented that the relaxation skills were effective in their daily lives. The students learned the importance of relaxation and in

particular learned to: take time to relax and reflect on the good and bad of the day, take relaxation breaks during school work to refresh the mind, take time out to relax, and make time to relax throughout the day.

If anybody I know wanted a way to relax and calm down, this (PLS program) would definitely help them [...] It is good, to be able to sit down and be calm, take your time and [...] calm down. And reflect on what you have done, good things, bad things. Even if you are in a bad mood, this can cheer you up and [the bad mood] can be gone. (Jeremy)

I find when you study sometimes, you push yourself, you keep pushing yourself you can't find the answer, and you get frustrated. The thing is when you study, you could take time for yourself [...] and I find when you have that break period, you go back and you just feel better. You refresh your mind. You are not just ramming all these things into it, and so I just find that is a good technique. (Lucie)

When you (the researcher) did this program, I found that it just almost brought me back to the acknowledgement of having to like understand what I am doing and take time and just relax [...] yeah and it really worked, (the relaxation) really worked for me. (Andrea)

I have had a huge problem with stress, I just go go go go go and I don't stop and I don't take my time. So when we would do the program activities for stress or

anything like that...It definitely made me think about slowing down and just relaxing especially when you get into a situation that you need to calm down. Like if you are playing a sport, or something. (Jane)

To relax my mind...sometimes I would use light music, or sometimes if I feel very angry or something, I listen to music and think about [something other than why I am angry], [this] helps me relax. (Liam)

What I got (from the program) was that I need to relax more. I was always too stressed, so stressed about organizing my day. I had sports after school, and a lot of homework and I needed to play sports. And I just figured out how to relax for a few minutes in between everything that I did, and it just worked out...I learned to relax more. When I have lots of homework and I wasn't concentrating I would just sit down for a few minutes and listen to music, close my eyes. Yeah, that is actually [...] what I got out of it. (Scott)

Effectiveness: Self-control

Students learned to effectively practice self-control and as a result were over reacting less to situations than before the PLS intervention. Hearing classmates discuss how they deal with challenging life situations helped students to refine their own perspective on life. Learning about themselves allowed for a better perception of why they react the way they do with others. Sixteen or the 27 students mentioned how the PLS program positively influenced their self-control.

Just like learning how to stay relaxed and stay focused and not over react, it can work with anything. Like at work or school or with your friends and your family, just not over reacting. To just take a second and think about things, how to stay calm [...] if I was mad at something that happened in the class, I just remember to leave it in the class to not get mad at my friends because I am already in a bad mood [...] Like to learn that things should not carry over, like even if you are having a really bad day, like I was doing really bad on a test, but I don't let it ruin my entire day, and good things still happen, like the test is not going to change my whole life. I am not going to fail everything just because of that one thing, so it's good just relaxing just remembering that not everything is terrible even when it seems like it is. (Kristin)

Yeah for sure [the program was helpful with relationships], because usually when you are in a fight with somebody, like my Dad, you get angry really quickly, but if you just let it go for a couple days, and calm down before you start making any rash decisions about it or saying anything you will regret. If you calm down first and think about what you are going to say. And then actually talk to the person about it later it is a lot better than getting mad right away and then regretting what you did. (Jeremy)

Derek said: “Learning to focus, to control your mind, it was a very mental thing, learning your boundaries, learning about yourself in a way. Like through the exercises you learn a lot about yourself”

The influence of the program on relationships with others was also mentioned. When asked whether the program influenced her relationships Andrea said that she noticed being calmer and more relaxed and that feeling this way helped her to deal with problems and the people in her life:

I have actually been noticing a difference more recently that I have been a lot calmer with my friends and people that I know. And so it is almost easier to deal with, the problems that come up with friends and stuff like that. And when I do have problems with my friends, when I am stressed, more recently I have been noticing that I am much more calm and relaxed. It has been easier to deal with problems that I get. Especially as a teenager, yeah teenage drama [...] it definitely helps [...] I can help my friends and my friends can help me because I am not always over crossing different issues, I am not bringing stress from the [other] situations into situations with my friends because [...] I just let stuff go better, because I am more relaxed and not so stressed. (Andrea)

Effectiveness-Positive perspective

Applying a positive perspective was effective for 10/27 students. The students found program skills effective in having a positive perspective in such things as: Focusing on what they can do, paying attention to simple joys and highlights which made them feel better and enjoy life more, and focusing on the good things. The first student states how both focus and being positive effectively helped him in his daily life:

The play had stopped because we had a (penalty) [...] so we were getting set for that and I was just thinking to myself what I had done right [...] and that worked for me [...] it was like a restart, it was better (than a restart). It was like, I was

not looking at all the negative things that had happened [...] that is when it kind of clicked in for me, the whole fact that you should constantly try to stay positive and focus. A really good one (PLS activity) [to apply] is like 3 hours before a game or the night before you can just relax, listen to music and sit back and let your whole [being] re-energize. It's not that same thing as going out and riding a blast, or training. It's different, I thought that was good. (Brian)

Well we just recently had our drama play, and I was really nervous [...]. We were the first group to go, but we weren't really ready [...] we had our script done, but physically and mentally we just weren't there. So I felt we wouldn't do a very good job, but after talking to people we kind of realized what the fact was... just be positive. It is a drama summative. But it is not the end of the world or anything. And I think [...] that [putting the play in perspective] helped a lot because the day of (the presentation), you are frantic, because you are like oh "I want to get through this class", [...] What I learned after the exercise [in the PLS program] you have to think positively about things. You are either going to do it or you don't. Just let go and practice really quickly and get ready. When you are in the moment, you need to just forget everything else. You just have to be positive, because if you are positive you are ready. Even when you are not ready you will do a whole lot better [being positive] than when you are all tense and you are like 'oh I am going to fail'. (Lucie)

"I did not really have a way [to focus on the good things]. I did not know how to do it, I did not really think about simple joys before, I did not even really know about simple joys" (Laura).

The highlights, the different highlights help you [...] you look back on the highlights that you have, and that could happen in the future. It makes you go on and makes you look forward to up coming things. You are not just watching life go past you. You are sort of you are looking forward to them, like yeah, "I am doing this with my cousin today, we have a family event today, or a show is on today or we have a team event today" so you look forward to it. And then it makes life more interesting. You are not just watching everything go by. (Ray)

Right now I am playing rugby with the school and sometimes when you are out on the field you get so worked up, because you are like "oh you gotta go, we gotta go". But really when you think about it, it is a slow moving sport, any kind of sport is a slow moving (sport) as long as you just take your time. So that really helped. Also with tests, calm down, just read what is in front of you, take a deep breath and try to relax. I think it just sort of cued in my head when I walked in there (to the classroom for a test), I just realized "ok I need to calm down and I need to focus" and it actually did get me focused [...] I don't know if it helped me with my test mark, but it definitely helped me focus (Jane)

Delivery of the Program: Teachers and Students' Perspectives

The teachers' and students' perspective of the intervention program was presented in two sections. The first section focuses on the teachers' perspective of students' enjoyment and application of the program, as well as the effectiveness of the program activities. The teachers also commented on delivery of the program and how the program influenced and will continue to influence their own teaching.

Teachers Feedback on the Program

Teachers Brad and Chantale were both encouraged to take part in the sessions with the students. The teachers attended less sessions than originally planned. The girls' teacher Chantale attended 5 sessions and the boys' teacher Brad attended 2 sessions. When Chantale and Brad attended the sessions, they participated in the sessions. When they were not present, either they were away from school at another event (e.g. football game), or they used the time to prepare for other classes. As a result the teachers' feedback is not as thorough as the researcher had initially intended, never the less, the feedback was still very informative and helpful.

Enjoyment

Early on in the intervention teacher Chantale, commented that the students enjoyed having someone different in the classroom: "[They] enjoyed having someone different talking to them, [and] trying something new. I think in general they are really enjoying it" (email conversation).

Teacher Chantale and Brad were also interviewed after the intervention via e-mail and phone. Chantale commented on the most and least enjoyable parts of the program for the students.

I think what they liked the most, was the talking circles (discussions). I think they liked the interviews the least. I think they enjoyed the Relax to the music because they found it was a good break in the day. And they enjoyed the rock climbing class where we tried to use some of the skills while doing something active.

Chantale suggested calling the final post program interviews a feedback session rather than an interview so it would appear to be less intimidating for the students.

Teacher Brad felt that the students enjoyed the program and valued the skills being taught. He also expressed that the classes when students missed physical education class time was the least enjoyable part of the program.

I think the students saw the merit in the skills being taught. The discussions were quite good. I think Stefanie did a good job at keeping the students focused on (the) task. But the students seemed a little peeved that they were (sometimes) missing Phys. Ed. related activities to discuss these [PLS] topics (Interview).

Application

When Chantale was asked how applicable she felt the program was early on in the sessions, she stated: “They will surely be able to relax with music in the future. It is good for them to be able to talk about stuff we don’t talk about in class, like ‘things we don’t know about you’ (students shared a fact about themselves that others in the class did not know about, i.e. experience when they were young)” (e-mail conversation).

Brad thought the ‘tree it’ concept was an easier skill for the students to do on their own: “It’s hard to say what skills/concepts were easier for them to use, but the concept of not worrying about the things that you do not have control over, seemed to be an easy one for them to get” (Interview). Chantale agreed that the tree it concept was easier and she discussed how the relaxation was the most difficult skill for the students to do on their own:

Tree it is easy to use on your own. It's a bit harder to do a relaxation by yourself with the same efficiency than when it is guided by a person or CD recording. You can do follow your breathing on your own, but generally [the] relaxation exercises are easier when guided by a person and/or with music (Interview).

Effectiveness

Both teachers commented on the effectiveness of the program. Chantale said: “All of it [the program so far] is effective for something. [The] second music (Enya track with live directions) is probably the most effective for relaxation” (email conversation). Chantale felt the students benefited from the program as a whole “by giving them tools to deal with stress and to prepare the competitive athletes for competition” (interview).

Brad said:

The program helped the class think about things that I'm sure they never have. It also gave them easy to use strategies to overcome some of the many obstacles that teenagers run into in life, academics and obviously sports.

Future Program Use: Teachers' Perspective

With respect to using the PLS skills (after the intervention ended) Chantale stated that she used visualization (positive images) with her class and planned to use experiential learning by teaching activities in class with mental skills in mind.

I did encourage them to use it [the program skills] and we used visualisation in class once after the session was done. If I were going to use something from the program I would use the experiential learning, have kids teach each other, don't tell them right off the bat what the skill is. Get them to figure it out as you go along. I would use gym activities to allow students to try out using skills such as following your breathing, focusing on the moment, and treeing it during gym activities (e.g. badminton or games where people are distracting each other) in other words an experiential way of teaching skills is what I would use. I would also use some of the talks about destressors in health class along with the

relationship stuff (e.g. active listening) in our unit on interpersonal relations, mainly how the program skills can be used in everyday life.

Brad explained that he planned to use the program in his future teaching and coaching.

I think that in one way or another, all of the examples outlined [in the PLS program] will be used in either my teaching or coaching. The tricky part is reviewing the concepts/skills every now and again to refresh your memory.

Whether the teachers used program skills in their own daily lives was also an area of interest for the researcher. Teacher Brad had been introduced to positive living/mental training skills before by Dr. Orlick in University classes and teacher Chantale had been introduced to some concepts through participation in competitive sport and meditation. Both teachers used the skills in their own daily lives. Chantale said: “Sure, I was using some of it [PLS skills] before the PLS program intervention (e.g. treeing it)” (interview). Brad stated that he used the skills and the more he used them the easier they got.

Absolutely! As a married man of a few years, if you don't use any of these skills you're in trouble!!! Once, again, all of those examples are used and the more you use them intentionally, the easier it gets to use these [PLS] skills in everyday situations.

Early on in the intervention, Chantale felt that the best means to make the groups feel comfortable and excited about the material was to talk about real life experiences: “They love when we talk about us or real life experiences, to connect it to how they will be able to use it/benefit from it” (e-mail conversation). Both Chantale and Brad had discussions with the other Phys Ed. teachers in the school during the intervention. Chantale stated: “We discussed what we

liked, what we would do differently. Some Phys Ed. teachers seemed interested and then [we all] got busy”. Chantale’s comments on what worked well and suggestions for refinement include:

Keeping the boys and girls separated for discussions as the girls tend to talk less when guys [are] around. Use the CD recordings less and incorporate other ways to present concepts. For example use fencing or other new active activities to apply skills in during the sessions. Really focus in on experiential learning, talk before trying it out in class and then chat again after.

Brad stated that he talked about the program and how easy the skills were to use.

The other Phys. Ed. teachers were aware of the program, either from speaking with Stef or myself or Chantale. Concepts/skills/ideas that Stef covered were most of the things that we discussed or passed on. Most of the time I was saying how easy these things were to use, but how often we [teachers] forget to use them.

Brad shared some suggestions for improvement.

I found the program was a little lengthy and a little spread out (due to our school's timetable). Perhaps a more intense approach where more discussions and activities can be done. Unfortunately for the students, Phys Ed. is one of those courses that almost everyone really enjoys and they need that release in their day, therefore it really takes a special class to give up their active class for a “sit down” one. Although many of our sessions with Stefanie were during health class time, but then we didn’t have time to cover many things on the health curriculum, as you can see always a few logistical issues to deal with. All in all many useful things came out of our time with Stefanie. I as well as the students

appreciated the type of person that Stefanie is and the way she delivered the program-well done.

Although the teachers experienced less of the intervention as originally planned, their perspective, opinions and suggestions were appreciated and of great value. In addition to the teachers' perspective, the students' perspectives and suggestions are presented in the subsequent section.

Student Feedback on the Program

Since the PLS program is designed for the benefit of students, gaining the students' perception of not only enjoyment, application and effectiveness of the program, but of facilitation was essential. This section expands from the researcher (facilitator) and teachers' perspective with an intension of creating a clearer understanding of how the intervention unfolded. The students' perception of facilitation emerged into five themes: CD recordings, more action less talk, real life examples, location and longer sessions.

Program Activities

CD recordings. The students had mixed opinions of the PLS CD recordings. Some students liked them, some found them odd, and some were not able to focus on listening to the CD.

The tapes [PLS CD activities] that we did really helped out. You really got centered. You learned how to do that [get centered]. You learned how to relax. I remember them, I learned with them [the activities]. The tapes, they said relax your leg, chest plate...and you could really feel that, and when you get in to real life and doing it, then you have experienced it, and you know how to do it. Doing it really helped out. (Steve)

I thought they [the CD recordings] were really good [...] for me the voice kind of trying to tell you what to do and so I kind of liked that, and also I thought they were good choices of music so I liked that. (Brian)

“I thought some of them [CD recordings] were kind of odd, like it may have helped some people focus. The voice, it may have helped some people focus, but for me it just sort of distracted me” (Jennifer).

[...] I found it a little weird, but what it was saying was good to listen to. It could have been delivered differently. I think it would be better not on a CD recording because then it would be more personal and just listening to a person telling you [...] would be better. (Janice)

“I think I was only there for that one, most of the sessions were just talking with Stef, which was a lot better” (Veronica).

Oh yeah the [CD] exercises I did not think they helped me that much, just the breathing in breathing out, I think they are just more directed towards younger kids, I mean they still apply to me, I just don't think, they are still relaxing how, just your whole day you are studying and doing everything all day and just taking a half an hour to listen to music, I think just the guys voice, I would rather listen to music it would have been better, the guy's voice kind of distracted me a bit. (Mark)

Personally I liked it [the CD activities], maybe others who didn't wouldn't be as focused during the tapes, I don't know if [...] it is because of the really calm voice, but I really liked that. So maybe I was a bit different but, it (CD activities) are really relaxing if they [the other students] take it seriously [...] (Steve)

I thought it (the program) was fun, I thought that sometimes with the tapes [CDs] that were played, I am not sure of their purpose, they were kind of odd, I just didn't see 100% benefit to them [...] I mean I did not really get too involved or anything. I found while I was doing that [listening to the CD recordings] my mind would wander, I could not really stay focused on what I was doing [...] I think a bit more explanation would be good, about what you should do, maybe a bit more guidance or something. (Ian)

In regards to the program skills in general Dean said: “Yes they (other teens) could use the skills [...] They (the PLS activities) are useful, but everybody gets something different from them”.

Participation. Students also commented on participation during the program. *Some people don't take it (PLS sessions) seriously. Didn't take it as seriously, but I thought it was really good. The way you guys set it all up, it was well planned and I like it, I enjoyed it, I can't tell you anything I disliked, Stef (the researcher) was really good at it, she was really focused and understanding when other people would talk, when she was talking, She would not zone them out, she would wait for them to settle down with us, and she would go back into her speech really calmly and patiently, she did a really neat job. (Kristin)*

Four girls and one boy commented on how the program would have been better if more of the group participated during the sessions:

I thought it [the program] was really good. I thought the only distracting thing was well not many guys would talk, a lot of them would be [...] I guess shy would

be a good word, and so that kind of made everyone else in the group shy and that made everyone else not want to really participate. It would really help if everyone said something [...] I think everyone should be at least able to say something [...] I think when the girls were separate from the guys we talked more...but when we were interacting with the guys we did not say as much. (Jane)

Sometimes there was not as much discussion as there should be because people were a little afraid to say something [...] Sometimes not everyone, me included, wanted to participate as much, depending on what was going on [in life]. More people need to participate, but other than that it was pretty good, Stef coming in was fun [...] It was good that she was having fun with us and talking with us. It was like she was in the class being, not like one of the kids, but she was engaging. (Lisa)

I think sometimes it was little bit boring at times, when it was just discussion, and only some people would participate but the others wouldn't. I don't know why thought it [the lack of participation] just sort of happened. (Jacob)

I found, personally for me, because I had done it (learned about life skills) before it (the PLS program) was a good reminder, I know that other people did not take it as seriously as others [...] I think if you put a stress or an emphasis on the fact that it really does do good, that might help the program, and people might take it more seriously. What I find really works for me is seeing things from the other

spectrum, other side of the spectrum because during the program it was always pushing all the positive things, like wow people have done this, but I find when you see the other side, the negative side of people who don't take time [...] it is almost like a little warning (of what will happen if you don't look after stress). Sometimes it's about heart tugging of circumstances that really make you open up more, I find that would really help. (Andrea)

Student Program Delivery Suggestions

The students had a few key suggestions for improving the delivery and effectiveness of the program: More active activities, real life examples, consistent location, and longer and more consecutive sessions. Some of their specific comments are presented below.

More active-activities. Six students suggested doing more-active activities during the sessions. For example Derek said: “Do more active things, like obviously you need to talk, but [...] you have to actually do these things to understand them” and Jennifer said: “Yeah like maybe a little more movement”.

Yes, more like more activities [...] I personally learned a lot more from the activities [more] than the discussions, yeah [...] just lying on the ground relaxing worked the best for me [...] it just felt good, it was great, yeah the music worked really well. (Scott)

I enjoyed it [the program]. I definitely learned a lot from. If anything maybe more hands on things, maybe instead of listening to a tape, maybe stretches or something, or a video or presentation, yeah but overall it was really interesting [...] (Ray)

Real life examples. Students also commented on the helpfulness of real life examples: “Maybe try and provide more examples that we could actually use and stuff that she is actually teaching us” (Anthony). “I think it would be better if the program could be related to real life more. I think there could be more examples, that could make them [the students] think it could actually work” (Jacob).

[When] she was talking about, the stories, she was giving examples of where it has worked [for other people] so it was a good way to keep it in [context]. Like if you know it actually works you are more inclined to do something to actually pay attention and try it and to participate, so that was good. (Kristin)

Location. Some students felt that discussions were less distracting in the smaller enclosed gym. Although consistency in the location of the intervention was voiced change in location was enjoyed by some students. For example some students felt it was appropriate to be outside talking about simple joys so they could experience nature’s simple joys during the sessions. Whereas others found being outside more of a distraction and found they wanted to get up and run around.

I understand the difference in the [...program] setting...that they (the teachers and researcher) were probably trying to fit stuff in, but if we would have put that into regular gym classes [hold sessions in one spot] maybe that would have worked a bit better [...] (Dean)

Do the program do it somewhere, where it is in the same spot, don’t change it all the time, I found that when we started out in the little gym, I was used to it, and then when you went to smaller classrooms I found it distracting [...] cause the

little gym is very plain and there is nothing really distracting about it. Whereas in the classroom there is always something, like homework on the table or like things on the board, or when you go outside sometimes the environment is too big for you to take in, like if it is a beautiful day you want to look at the trees or look at people running by. I think if you are going to do the program again, do it in the same place don't change it. (Lucie)

Longer-consecutive session. Timing of the sessions was another important factor to consider when delivering a program. Due to March break and School Board wide exams there was a three-week break half way through the intervention. Comments from the teachers, students and my own experience in the sessions suggest that the lack of continuity hindered the learning for the student. Some students found it difficult to remember what they had learned before the break and felt a consistent weekly schedule would be more effective. Having more time to do the program was suggested by six of the boys. The following two quotes reflect these comments:

I think it was quite well done. [...For improvement] maybe make it longer, maybe try them (the activities) out a bit more... like we did in one class... use them but it was quite short a lot of the time [...] it just seemed a bit short like maybe we could just listen to the CD more instead of pausing to talk about it. Maybe we could have a longer session and then talk about it. (Peter)

Sometimes she would do the session and then we would have March break and then we would have another week and then we would have like 3 weeks from the last time and it was hard to get us to remember [...] Also it is probably better to meet for a longer period of time [...] she (the researcher) would get there and she

would start talking for like 5 minutes and then maybe we would talk we'd discuss for 10 minutes and then fill something out and then we would leave [...] and it was hard to remember, it might be better to do like longer periods of time.

(Anthony)

Kevin felt the program was both relevant and useful. He voiced his sport coaches could implement some of the PLS skills into practice:

I think that coaches [...] instead of practicing everyday should have, maybe once a week have a mental practice that might work better [...] I think if we would have had more time with it [the PLS program] I think it would have helped [even more].

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to introduce Orlick's PLS program for teens to young adolescents (in a classroom context) and to investigate whether the students enjoyed, applied, and found these skills effective in their daily lives. A secondary purpose of this study was to learn from the interactions with the students and teachers and explore the best ways to deliver the program.

The overall results of this study indicate that the students who took part in the PLS program enjoyed the program skills, applied the program skills, found the program effective, and plan to apply the program skills in the future. The students benefited from learning focusing skills, positive perspectives, and relaxation skills presented in the PLS program. These findings support results from previous PLS research conducted with students between the ages of 4-12 years of age (Cox & Orlick, 1996; Gilbert & Orlick, 2002; Taylor & Orlick, 2004). Although only 4/27 students mentioned enjoying the skill of focus most, the other sources of enjoyment for the students such as positive perspectives and relaxation both encompass the skill of focus in their own way. Therefore even though students did not mention the exact word focus they still enjoyed focusing on relaxing and maintaining or focusing on positive perspectives.

Lessons learned from the program content and program facilitative delivery for future use was determined by the teachers' feedback, the students' comments, and the researcher's notes. The lessons learned were similar to those found in Taylor and Orlick's (2004) study with some additional lessons specific to this age group.

The remainder of this chapter discusses the facilitation and delivery of the PLS intervention and its relation to the enjoyment, application, and effectiveness of the program. The discussion of the teachers' and students' perspective that lead to suggestions for future program

delivery including: Where and when to deliver the program; how and what to deliver during the program; and participation differences in boys and girls.

When and Where to Deliver the Program

Both teachers felt the students' enjoyed and/or found merit in the program exercises. Honourer teachers also felt that some students were upset when time was taken out of Physical Education rather than Health class. The PLS program intervention sessions were mainly integrated into the Health Class time, however to support the teachers schedules and lesson plans some PLS sessions were conducted during Physical Education classes. Although there were a couple of students that commented how the program was a nice break from regular gym activities, the majority of the two classes really enjoyed gym time and would have preferred the program take place during another time in the day.

The decision to run part of the program during gym time was made, because it was the only option available to us. As the school semester progressed the teacher's found they needed more time in health class to cover the curriculum, therefore more of the PLS sessions took place during gym rather than health. Past PLS research was conducted in the classroom, at home or in the hospital, not during gym time (Cox & Orlick, 1996; Gilbert & Orlick, 2002; Hester & Orlick, 2006; Koudys & Orlick, 2002; Klingenberg & Orick, 2002; St. Denis & Orlick, 1996; Taylor & Orlick, 2004).

Most people find that being physically active is both a physical and mental release. Berger and Motl (2001) found that sport and physical activity have been linked to flow a state "in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else matters; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991, p. 4). Hess and Richards (1999) also emphasize that boys learn coping

strategies best while being physically active. Therefore it is understandable that taking students' time away from physical activity was not the ideal choice nor was it welcomed by all the students. It would be best to run future PLS programs outside of physical education time or to ensure that program exercises conducted during physical education classes would provide good mix of physically active, focusing and relaxation exercises.

Location

Past PLS research suggests that creating a positive environment for this program and providing the program at regular times helps to reinforce the positive concepts being taught (Orlick, 2002). In this study although a desire for consistent session location was voiced by some students, the enjoyment of varied location was mentioned by others. Some students found sessions were less distracting in the smaller enclosed gym area and more distracting when held in an outdoor area. Other students felt it was appropriate to be outside when talking about simple joys because they could experience nature's simple joys during the sessions. There does not appear to be a set formula for group session location, but a consistent, predictable time for the sessions would be of value. As Wright (2005) maintains emotion is intertwined into learning and the environment. Each group has its own mixture of emotions therefore the location, among other factors of the intervention, requires continually assessment and accommodation throughout the process.

Timing of the Sessions

During this study there was a three-week break half way through the intervention due to March break and School Board wide exams. Comments from the teachers, students and the researcher's experience in the sessions suggest that the lack of continuity hindered the continuity of learning for the students. Orlick (2002) suggests remaining consistent with a set time for the

program. Consequently it is not surprising that some students found it difficult to remember where they have ended before the break and felt that a consistent weekly schedule would be more effective. In addition, past PLS research suggested that the sessions take place several times per week over a period of 12 consecutive weeks (Taylor & Orlick, 2002). Although a similar schedule was originally planned for this study it was necessary to accommodate the students', the teachers', and school schedules.

How and What to Deliver During the Program

According to the teachers, the students' most enjoyable activities were the rock climbing session, open discussions, and relaxing to music. Once the students had learned some basics of the PLS skills, the rock climbing session gave them an opportunity to try out the program skills in a physically active-medium. They were able to see and experience the relevance of the skills in those moments. The teachers felt that refocusing or 'treeing it' was the skill students used the most and the one they would most likely continue to be applied in the future. Students said they enjoyed relaxation the most and applied focusing skills such being in the moment and 'treeing it' the most. The use of positive thinking was also acted upon by many students. Overall the specific skill that was commented on the most after the intervention was the 'tree it' concept. The teachers found this skill to be the easiest one to try on their own and the students reported application and effectiveness of this skill in numerous daily life situations.

According to the students they all enjoyed some parts of the program and/or its affect. This finding supports previous PLS program research in the classroom setting, which showed that almost all students ranging from kindergarten to grade 6 enjoyed and gained something of practical value from the PLS program (Cox & Orlick, 1996; Gilbert & Orlick, 2002; St. Denis & Orlick, 1996; Taylor & Orlick, 2004). In particular, the students in this study enjoyed learning to

focus, to live with a more positive perspective, relaxing, discussions, and the personal reflection it stimulated.

The PLS discussions were a program highlight for many students as it gave them an opportunity to talk about topics that they did not normally consider. The students stated that the discussions allowed them to learn from one another and refine their own ways of dealing with stressful situations. Discussion and reflection among teenagers have been reported as being thought to be more enjoyable for girls than for boys (Hess & Richards, 1999; Tannen, 1990). However, in this study discussion and reflection were at times equally enjoyed by the boys. For instance a couple of boys mentioned their enjoyment of discussions particularly when talking about topics that had either never been discussed, such as, focusing on the moment or embracing simple joys.

In this study the Relaxing to the Music was the most enjoyable audio CD activity and was one of the only PLS activities to be repeated in this intervention. Most students had experienced this form of relaxation (excluding the focusing component) before the intervention. Orlick (2002) found that relaxation activities with younger children needed to be played several times before students became fully engaged in them. The teenage students seemed to relate to this Relaxing to the Music activity faster, (perhaps because they had previous experience with relaxing to music), which supports past PLS research that found repetition of exercises to be beneficial (Orlick, 2002). More of the activities could have become more enjoyable and more effective if they had been repeated more times throughout the intervention.

Overall the PLS CD recordings that were used (4 total-3 with the girls and 3 with the boys) were not as well received as other delivery methods of the positive living skills in this study. The students found discussing the PLS concepts in a small group setting was more

enjoyable than listening to a CD recording. The students did enjoy relaxing and focusing to music, but found the instructions were better received when given in person. Past PLS research was conducted with children ranging from 5-12 years of age. These students found the PLS CD recordings enjoyable and effective. Some of the teachers in Taylor & Orlick's (2004) study read the scripts to their students instead of using the PLS recordings to start off, but then used the recordings once the students were 'into' the ideas.

The difference for this older age group could be due to a more anxious feelings about peer perceptions of them *when listening to an educational CD* (Steinberg, 2002-italics added). In past studies students became more engaged in the audio CD activities the more they listened to them. The initial feedback on the CD recordings changed as the students listened to the audio CD recordings a few more times (Orlick, 2002; Taylor & Orlick, 2004). Some students who took part in the past PLS interventions with younger children were at first reluctant to listen to the PLS recordings, but were later very engaged in the audio CD activities (Cox & Orlick, 1996). As mentioned above, students in the current teenage study listened to a PLS CD activity only once and therefore were not given the opportunity to work through their anxious feelings about peer perceptions of them while participating in activities. In the future it would be of value to challenge students to move past peer perceptions, to see if they can listen to and capture everything they can from the CD activities.

Talking versus Doing

The opportunity to talk and share was appreciated by many students. However at times some students perceived an imbalance between talking and doing. During the sessions, as a facilitator I struggled with how to follow-up each previous session, present information about new concepts, and provide time to try out the PLS skills in the 15-30 minute sessions. Within the

confines of these time constraints it was observed the program worked best when the information portion of the session was short and precise and more time was left for the students to try out the skills. The more active ways of trying out new skills such as relaxing to music and applying focusing skills and positive thinking skills in the rock climbing were the most engaging experiences for the group.

Groups Needs and Sharing Program Potential

As emphasized by Koudys and Orlick (2002) and Taylor and Orlick (2004) it is important to be flexible and make the best of whatever situation you are faced with. Mind what is most important and find a way to pass on the message of the program in a relevant and meaningful way for the group. When students are not engaged in a session or are not holding an 'intent to learn', they will benefit less from the experience (Davies & Osguthorpe, 2003; Orlick, 2001). By consistently reflecting on what they are learning and how they are learning students will gain much more from the experience (Davies & Osguthorpe, 2003). The goal is always to keep them engaged in meaningful ways and to give them good reasons to learn (Orlick, 2001). The results of this study support these ideas about learning.

There is no doubt that the students benefited from this experience. One of the strongest findings of this study was that all the students who were interviewed stated that they were applying the program skills presently and/or planned to apply the program in the future. The students were applying the program skills to enhance focus, positive perspectives, relaxation, and self-control.

Five students mentioned that the program material was completely new and provided concepts and skills that they had never heard of or tried before. For the other students some concepts had been introduced previously (e.g. relaxation to music), but other concepts or the

manner of using the concept were completely original (e.g. ‘treeing it’). For most of the students, the program stimulated personal reflection on what is important in their lives, and their ability to take more a decisive role in how they focus, how they feel, and how they live their daily lives. Practicing of the skills in the PLS sessions and in the students’ daily lives stimulated a positive impact for the majority of the students.

Almost half of the students applied skills related to *positive perspectives* during the program. They used specific PLS skills to think more positively and to find good things in their life even when facing an obstacle or setbacks (e.g. losing in a sport or getting a bad mark on a test). In a situation of learning something new, one student spoke of deciding to stay positive, to trust the situation, and to go with the flow. Students also discussed stepping away from work and school and choosing to live other areas of life (e.g. playing sports with friends, working out). In a previous study with exceptional teenagers, choosing to live various areas of life was a skill that these youth successfully applied to maintain life balance and meaning (Macdonald & Orlick, 2004).

When working to improve the personal skills of a group of adolescents, being attuned to the needs of the group is essential. An individual, group or team should not be told what they need before inquiring about their needs, what they have tried and what they think might work (Halliwell et al., 2003). One teacher, from a study on constructivist learning, speaks of this challenge. “I learned how difficult it is to let kids alone, construct their own meaning and understanding and not guide them to get to where you want them to be” (Kinnucan-Welsch & Jenlink, 1998, 418). It should also be noted that although focusing on their needs is necessary, some teen students might not know what their needs are or even what options are available (Cskizentmihalyi & Larson, 1984; Halliwell et al., 2003; Steinberg, 2002). Therefore it might be

of value to include initial questions asking students if they would like to improve their focusing skills or relaxation skills or skills for remaining positive, etc. As Davies and Osguthrope (2003) teachers should encourage students to become reflective and take an active role in their approach to learning. This study demonstrated a need to reconcile the fine line between meeting the needs of the group and adequately presenting the life-enhancing potential of positive living skills.

Participation: Girls versus Boys

During this intervention, opportunities arose to observe the boys and girls separately and combined. The researcher, teachers and students commented that two separate groups seemed to work best for all. The reason for this feeling can be partially explained by Tannen's (1990, 1991) research on gender differences in communication. Tannen (1991) posits that men and boys speak more in class because they are more comfortable public speaking whereas women and girls tend to be more comfortable speaking in smaller groups. Tannen (1991) also suggests that men tend to be more comfortable in a debate situation than women tend to be.

During the present study, when an opportunity to talk in large groups was given, there was less participation on the part of both the boys and the girls. Several girls expressed that they tended to talk more when they were not around the boys. "I think when the girls were separate from the guys we talked more [...] but when we were interacting with the guys we did not say as much" (Jane). Tannen (1990) states that girls are usually the ones that have issues with speaking up in larger groups, but the boys in this study also spoke less in the larger group. In the future breaking the group into smaller groups within the big group might better facilitate discussion for both the boys and the girls.

Another interesting tendency is for women to feign from appearing better than other people. They feel the rapport built through sharing similarities is more beneficial than sharing

stories to one-up other girls (Tannen, 1990). Tannen's speculated need for the rapport is supported by students' comments about the discussions. For example, Andrea stated that she did not want to share her experience of being focused and connected when she trains because she felt she would come off as better than the other girls. She felt that the consequence of sharing and looking 'stuck up' was outweighed by her need to belong. Conversely, boys are more focused on preserving independence and status.

Most men talk is primarily a means to preserve independence and negotiate and maintain status in a hierarchical social holding centre stage through verbal performance such as story telling, joking, or imparting information. From childhood, men learn to use talking as a way to get and keep attention. (Tannen, 1990, p. 77)

During the PLS sessions in separate groups (of boys and girls) there did seem to be a few boys who were talking and holding the attention of the group more than the other boys. Conversely, when the boys and girls were grouped together the boys as a whole talked less than the girls. The other factor that may have led to less participation in discussions was the size of the group. At times there were 28 students in the sessions when the boys and girls were grouped together. This number of students made it more difficult for everyone to have an opportunity to talk.

Previous research by Hess and Richards (1999) emphasized the importance of modifying coping skills training programs for boys and girls. For girls, support groups worked best. However, for boys, emphasizing physical activity and humour when discussing stressful issues, worked best (Hess & Richards, 1999). In comparison, the girls in this study definitely participated more in their separate (just girls) group discussions more than the boys. One female student in particular voiced that the sessions were like "therapy" and were a place where students

could share problems, work together, and find ways of dealing with these problems. Group discussions are often seen as helpful because “knowing that others have or have had similar experiences can be comforting” (Smith, 2004).

Six boys commented that more-active activities would make the program better, supporting Hess and Richards (1999) findings. However several other boys expressed enjoying the opportunity the program provided to discuss new topics, i.e. talk about “stuff” they do not normally discuss, and to reflect on new ideas. Consequently even though the majority of boys did not actively participate in discussions as much as the girls, the above comments show that some boys were engaged in this part of the sessions.

Another way to engage both the boys and girls is to use the term Zen when discussing focus. Using this word to describe the concept of focusing on and experiencing the present moment seemed to excite and engage the students. The focus on the dot was an exercise we used to practice being in the moment and was a less engaging activity for most of the students. We would suggested remaining flexible with the delivery of this activity and perhaps trying such delivery methods as watching a candle flame, choosing your own spot to focus on (like taking a picture), focusing on a stretching muscle (i.e. during yoga positions), or focusing on a friend. There is no need to stay locked into any of the PLS activities. The activities include the main mental training concepts and therefore any kind of modification to better fit a group is encouraged.

Previous PLS research demonstrated that positive perspectives such as highlights and simple joys were enhanced in the daily lives of children (Gilbert & Orlick, 2002; St. Denis & Orlick, 1996). In the present teen study students also applied the strategy of finding simple joys and highlights in their day to maintain or regain a positive focus or to just feel better.

One of the aims of this study was to discover whether the program was effective, whether the students learned the program skills and how the skills worked for them in their daily lives. The majority of the students commented that focusing or refocusing, such as “treeing it” was the most effective part of the program for them. Orlick defines a focused connection as being totally absorbed in the present moment; feeling so connected that all distractions fall away (Orlick, 2000). Researchers have recognized that clear focus enables people to take an active role in one’s life, rather than being a ‘passive recipient’ (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984). One student in this study encapsulates how focus helped him to take an active role in life.

When I think about it there is a lot of stuff that I actually do unintentionally, but now [after the PLS program] I do intentionally to make me focus. Like using music, or something, or just, or sometimes just silence, just silence makes me focus in on something [...] The different highlights help you get through [...] so you look forward to (life), and then it makes life more interesting, you are not just watching everything go by. (Ray)

Past research found that the PLS program was effective in enhancing focus, positive life perspectives and relaxation in young children (Cox & Orlick, 1996; Gilbert & Orlick, 2002). The present study found the same results for teens as well as enhancing their self-control. One student stated that because she was less stressed, she was carrying less bad moods from one situation to another. Other students stated that being able to let go of unhelpful thoughts allowed them to be more present with their friends and their life. These constructive changes allowed for more positive and effective interactions with friends and family.

Past research centered on young children, between 4 and 12 (Cox & Orlick, 1996; Gilbert & Orlick, 2002; Hester & Orlick, 2006; Koudys & Orlick, 2002; Klingenberg & Orlick, 2002; St.

Denis & Orlick, 1996; Taylor & Orlick, 2004). At this younger stage in life the PLS skills are often brand new for most of the group. Conversely, with the older students (15-16 years of age) in this study, the PLS concepts and skills at times became more of a framework for students to explore how they can individually enhance their daily lives. Similar to past PLS research by Gilbert and Orlick (2002) the majority of students started to effectively apply coping strategies when dealing with stressful situations. The foundation of the program still remains an introduction to, and nurturing of focus, positive perspectives and relaxation.

Strengths and Limitations

There were two main strengths connected to this study. First, the current study is the first PLS intervention conducted with adolescents. Second, this study provided an opportunity to explore the student's perspective of not only enjoyment, application and effectiveness of the program, but also the program delivery and best practices. The delivery of the program is a very important aspect to explore. Even if the skills are relevant, if the participants are not focused in the sessions, they will not gain from the program as much as if they were fully engaged in the process.

There were also a few limitations in this study. First, the inconsistent timing of the sessions due to school schedules did not create the ideal learning situation for the group. A more frequent and consistent intervention program would likely bring forth even greater life enhancement change for teens.

An additional limitation was the lower than expected amount of teacher feedback during the sessions. In the future, it would be helpful to have the teacher keep a logbook of participation reflections throughout the intervention concentrating on the enjoyment, application, and enjoyment aspects of the program as well as how the program influences the classroom.

Teachers' input has been shown to be beneficial in the understanding overall process of the *PLS* program, especially when the teacher is present for the PLS sessions (Taylor & Orlick, 2004).

Thirdly, a complete follow-up, to gain the students' perspective of the program once they have gone on with their regular routine, was not conducted. Students' perceptions of the program's long term affects after the intervention is completed would create a clearer understanding of the program's lasting effects. There will be an effort to conduct a follow-up with the students at some point after this thesis is completed.

Future Research Recommendations

Future research could investigate a refined teen PLS program integrating key suggestions made by the students, teachers, and researchers in this study. Future research could investigate a refined teen PLS program integrating key suggestions made by the students, teachers, and researchers in this study. Future studies should provide a more complete PLS experience (40 minute sessions, 2-3 times per week for 10-15 weeks). Researchers could attempt an intervention where more time is dedicated to applying PLS skills in physical activity, sport, other performance pursuits n school or outside of school or through teaching and practicing the PLS skills program within a gym class curriculum. Primarily due to time constraints the program delivered was far from ideal.

After the program teacher Brad stated that many useful things came out of the PLS program. He recommended that a 'more intense approach where more discussions and activities can be done' would be helpful in the future. In previous studies with elementary school children PLS facilitators found it effective to repeat audio CD activities, exercises, and discussions numerous times.

Normally (In previous studies with elementary school children) PLS facilitators like to repeat audio CD exercises, activities, exercises, and discussions numerous times. Originally we had planned to repeat exercises and discussions throughout the intervention. In reality the time constraints limited us to playing a CD activity or talking through a CD exercise once. Previous PLS interventions were 5-16 consecutive weeks in duration and included weekly or biweekly sessions. For example Koudys & Orlick's (2002) intervention was 16 weeks in duration with biweekly meetings, a total of 32 sessions and approximately 16 hours of actual session time. Whereas this teen study included 10 sessions (16 weeks) with 4.5 to 5 hours of actual session time. In spite of these time constraints the adolescents still seemed to benefit from this study's PLS intervention.

It is expected that the results would have been more profound and wide reaching with multiple exposure to activities, a wider range of audio CD activities, and additional relevant discussion on application in the teen world. The teachers, some students and the researchers all felt a more comprehensive approach with more discussions and activities would be helpful for future interventions.

Another issue to consider when conducting future research in this field is the phrasing of interview questions. First, having students define program skills would ensure clarity in the terms being used. Second, asking students how much they enjoyed each individual skill and/activity would lead to a more accurate understanding of the skills most enjoyed.

In most intervention studies there are a few people who do not 'buy in' to concepts being presented. Exploring the reasons for this lack of interest would be valuable, as many important lessons could be learned from these people's opinions.

The last recommendation is in regards to use of the logbooks. Although some students mentioned that they did not find the logbook entries the most enjoyable part of the program, there were several students who really valued the logbooks because the logbooks allowed them to learn a lot about themselves. One reason the logbooks were less liked by some students was due to some sessions taking place during gym time. This is often the one class where students are normally free from writing. While respecting that it is very important to deliver an enjoyable intervention, all parts of the program may not be enjoyable. Some PLS skills may be difficult when first tried and thus for some students not so enjoyable. The way in which a student perceives a challenge can play a huge role in whether they enjoy learning or practicing new skills. Thus we suggest challenging students to find a way to appreciate the challenge or see it as an opportunity for personal growth that can lead to future enjoyment. We suggest effective logbook use is enhanced by short but consistent reflection and recording of key applications, key relevant reminders, and highlights during a 4-5 minute period.

Ideal Intervention

After experiencing this intervention and gaining from the students' and teachers' feedback it appears that the ideal time frame for a teenage intervention is 10-15 consecutive weeks, with 35-40 minute sessions 2-3 times per week. When conducting these sessions, remain flexible by working with the teacher and students to find relevant and enjoyable ways to deliver the PLS program, but keep in mind that learning new skills is not always enjoyable at first. It would be useful to observe the classroom in action and even take part in the regular class activities before the intervention. This would allow the PLS facilitator to feel out how the class already functions and from there determine how to best fit the program into the class.

In addition, talking with the students and teacher about different delivery options before implementing the program may also be beneficial.

Personal Reflection

Overall this PLS intervention was a meaningful and lesson filled experience for the students, teachers and the researcher. Stepping into a class of teenagers with the intent of sharing some important life skills was most definitely an honour for the researcher. Challenges that arose provided her with the opportunity to explore what worked well, what did not work so well, and new ways of delivering the program in the best way possible for this age group.

For some students this was their first introduction to the concepts of focus, positive perspective and relaxation through the PLS program. For others the program acted as a reminder of these skills. The PLS program provided an avenue to reflect on what works and what does not work and to learn from other people. This opportunity allowed the students to refine existing strategies and introduce new and hopefully more effective strategies into their lives.

Nurturing the Spirit of the Program

The spirit of the Positive Living Skills program has already touched the lives of young people in and out of the school setting. This study suggests the PLS program has the potential to impact adolescents. Focusing is thought to be the essential ingredient in excellence and is a central skill of the PLS program. One student eloquently explains what he learned about focus: “Focusing is when you detach yourself from everything else and you concentrate on the one thing you need to do. You are connected. You are one [with what you are doing]” (Researcher notes-girls, Apr 11th). Not just watching, but instead ‘being’ in your life. As Osho’s wrote: “Happiness happens when you fit with your life so harmoniously that whatever you are doing is your joy” (1990, viii). The students voiced the spirit of the PLS program by stating that it is

about taking time for your life and seeing that most of the time simple joys are all around us. We just need to *choose* to be more *aware* and in the *moment*. Practicing positive ways of dealing with the world around us can be cultivated early on in life and nurtured throughout life. It is hoped that this study has contributed, in some small way, to moving in this direction.

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Appendix A

Audio-CD Activities directly from the PLS Teen Audio CD Program

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Length (min.)</i>	<i>Description</i>
Relaxing to the music	(7:35)	Relax to music, let go of tension in body and distracting thoughts
Muscle Relaxation	(5:01)	Relaxing different body parts by focusing on them
Changing Channels	(6:28)	Learning to change feelings by changing thoughts
Positive Thinking	(10:21)	Focus on looking for positive and opportunities in life

PLS Activities Used

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Length (min.)</i>	<i>Description</i>
Relaxing/focusing on the music	(5:00)	Relax to music, let go of tension in body and distracting thoughts (Music Enya: Samonite and Jack Johnson: Inaudible melodies)
Muscle Relaxation	(5:00)	Talking through PLS relaxation script Relaxing different body parts by focusing on them
Focus on the dot/breathing	(5:00)	Pay attention to one spot and use deep breathing to relax and bring yourself back to present moment
Changing Channels	(5:00)	Discussion on learning to change how you feel by changing your thoughts
Umbalakiki	(5:00)	Talked through Umbalakiki story 'treeing' worries and story of skier who poles his mistakes as he skiing down a mountain
Simple joys log book exercise	(5:00)	Talked through highlight story on CD Look for and write down simple joys and highlights and ways to experience more (took place outside)
Overcoming challenges-Rock climbing	(5:00-talking) (30:00-active)	Discussed focusing through distractions Turning obstacles into challenges and attempting to use PLS skills to overcome these challenges while climbing
Video presentation	(10:00)	Olympic Skier and how she used mental training in her skiing. Key Points: a) Ski to win rather than skiing to NOT make mistakes b) Focus on the present moment c) Focus on things you CAN control d) Enjoy the moment e) Little things in preparation make a difference
Active Listening-Focusing exercise	(5:00)	Share a story with partner and focus on really hearing them, practice letting go of your own thoughts and just here partner

Appendix B

Logbook Sheets

Activity: Relaxing to the music

I. ACTIVITY ENJOYMENT RATING SCALE AND COMMENTS

Hated it 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 Loved it

Not into it 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 Into it

How did you feel during the activity?

How connected or focused did you feel during the activity?

Where and when could you use this skill?

II. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Did you have a time when you were stressed this week?

2. If yes briefly describe the situation.

3. How did you feel during that time?

4. Did you try anything to feel less stressed?

5. If yes briefly explain.

6. Did it work? (effectiveness)

Not at all 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 Worked completely

7. Did you try relaxing to the music? Why did you try or why didn't you try?

Activity: Relaxing to the music**I. ACTIVITY ENJOYMENT RATING SCALE AND COMMENTS**

Hated it 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 Loved it

Not into it 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 Into it

How did you feel during the activity?

How connected or focused did you feel during the activity?

Where and when could you use this skill?

II. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Did you have a time when you were stressed this week?

2. If yes briefly describe the situation.

3. How did you feel during that time?

4. Did you try anything to feel less stressed?

5. If yes briefly explain.

6. Did it work? (effectiveness)

Not at all 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 Worked
completely

Did you try relaxing to the music? Why did you try or why didn't you try?

Activity: Connected to the moment-Focus on One thing**I. ACTIVITY ENJOYMENT RATING SCALE AND COMMENTS**

Hated it 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 Loved it

Not in to it 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 Into it

How connected or focused did you feel during the activity?

If you had moments where you were really focused, how did you do it?

Did you get distracted (lose your focus or connection to the moment)? If so, where did your focus go?

How did you get your focus back on track?

How can you apply this skill?

II. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Describe a time when you were totally focused or really connected to something this week.
2. How did you feel when this was happening?
3. How did you get yourself to focus that completely?
4. On a scale of 1-5 how well did the method you used to get connected or focused work for you?

Not at all 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 *Worked completely*

Activity: Positive Thinking

I. ACTIVITY ENJOYMENT RATING SCALE AND COMMENTS

Hated it 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 Loved it
 Not in to it 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 Into it

How did you feel during the activity?

How connected or focused did you feel during the activity?

Where and when could you use this skill?

II. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Was there a time this week when you were talking to yourself in negative ways?
2. How did you feel when this was happening?
3. Did you try to get yourself to be positive with yourself? If yes how?
4. Did it work?

Not at all 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 *Worked completely*

Activity: Umbalakiki-Tree it

1. Did you have a time when you were worried or felt anxious this week?

2. If yes briefly describe the situation.

3. How did you feel when you were worried or anxious?

4. How did you get yourself to feel less worried or anxious?

5. Did it work?
 - i. Not at all completely 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 Worked

6. If you did not try treeing it (boarding it, poling it, ect.), what did you try?

7. How did it go?
 - i. Not at all completely 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 Worked

8. Do you think you will continue to use or try using treeing it in the future? Why?

Rock/Wall Climbing

BEFORE CLIMBING

You are just about to rock/wall climb. During this experience what type of challenges might you face?

From the skills (treeing it, changing channels, positive thinking-self talk, focusing in the moment, looking for simple joys) you have learned so far in the PLS program, which skill(s) might you find helpful to overcome this/these challenge(s)?

AFTER CLIMBING

What challenge(s) did you face as you climbed?

Were you able to overcome this/these challenge(s)?

If yes, how did you do it? If no, what do you think you could try next time?

If yes, how well did it work?

Did not work at all 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 Totally worked

Logbook Exercise: Simple joys and Highlights

1. What is a simple joy?
2. List some simple joys that you can experience every:
Month:
Week:
Day:
3. What can you do to experience more simple joys?
4. What is a highlight?
5. What highlights can you remember from the past week?
6. How can you remember more highlights?
7. Why would you want to live more highlights and remember highlights?

Appendix C

Interview Guides

Teacher Post-Intervention Participant Interview Guide

1. **What were your thoughts or general impressions about the PLS program** (the sessions your students had with Stefanie)?
2. Can you tell me a little about what the students did in the program? **What were the most important things you think the students learned in this program?**
3. **Do you think the students in your class enjoyed the PLS program?** If yes, what did they liked the most? Were there things that you think they did not enjoy (or did not relate to)?
4. **Did you observe or hear any of the students talk about using any of the things they learned in the PLS program, outside of the class sessions** (for example, at home, in sport, in school, in performances, music, dance, in stressful situations o or relationships)? If yes, When? Where? With who? **[Get some specific details].**
5. **Did you use any of the program activities or concepts with students** outside the PLS class sessions? If yes explore, When? Where? With who? **Or did you encourage students to use any of the PLS activities outside the PLS class sessions?** **[Get some specific details].**
6. **What concepts or skills do you think were easier for the students to use on their own?** What ones were harder for them to use alone? Why?
7. Now that this program is finished. **Do you think you will use the program with your students in the future?** If yes, explore. What parts? How? When?
8. **Do you think the program helped your class as a whole?** How? With what?

9. **Do you think the program helped you in your daily life and/or teaching?** How? With what? [**Get specific details**].
10. **Do you think you will use** the program concepts or skills in your teaching (i.e. letting go of distractions before entering class, planning time to relax, using breathing to calm down) performance? What parts? When? [**Get specific details**].
11. Are you using any of the PLS skills (that were taught in the program) in your own life? For example, listening in relationships, stress control or finding simple joys. If yes, explore for examples and details.
12. Did you talk to others about the program? For example, other teachers, colleagues, other students or athlete/performers, family members or friends? If yes, explore what was said or shared.
13. **Do you have any suggestions for improving the program?** For future sessions with other students? If yes, explore for details. **Was there anything you didn't like about the program?**

Thank you for sharing you time and your insights.

Student Post-Intervention Participant Interview Guide

1. **Did you enjoy the PLS program** (the sessions you had with Stefanie)? If yes, what did you like? If no, explore why not.
2. Can you tell me a little about what you did in the program? What were the **most important things you learned?**
3. **Did you use any of the things you learned outside of those class sessions** (for example at home, in school, in performances, music, dance or sport)? If yes, When? Where? With who? **[Get some specific details].**
4. **Do you think what you learned** with Stefanie (the concepts or activities) **helped you in any way?** If yes, How? With what?
5. Now that this program is finished **Do you think you will use anything you learned in this program in the future** (for example, to stay focused or connected or positive)? If yes, when do think you use them?

Possible Follow-up questions on future Application of skills.

6. Will you use the skills to make your day better in any way? If yes, which ones? When would you use them?
7. Will you use the skills to help with your relationships? If yes, which ones? When would you use them?
8. **Do you have any suggestions for improving the program?** For future sessions with other students? **Was there anything you didn't like about the program?**

Thank you for sharing you time and your insights.

Appendix D

*Sample of Student Logbooks***Activity: Relaxing to the music****I. ACTIVITY ENJOYMENT RATING SCALE AND COMMENTS****Judy**

Hated it 1.....2.....3.....**4**.....5 Loved it

Not into it 1.....2.....**3**.....4.....5 Into it

How did you feel during the activity?

Calm

How connected or focused did you feel during the activity?

At first I was really focused and a few minutes in I lost the focus

Where and when could you use this skill?

I could use this skill at home after a long and stressful day of school and after all sports like basketball and volleyball

II. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Did you have a time when you were stressed this week?

Yes

2. If yes briefly describe the situation.

A lot of assignments and tests due at the same time

3. How did you feel during that time?

I panic, I get tense

4. Did you try anything to feel less stressed?

Yes

5. If yes briefly explain.

I took a break and just did nothing

6. Did it work? (effectiveness)

Not at all 1.....2.....**3**.....4.....5 Worked completely

7. Did you try relaxing to the music? Why did you try or why didn't you try?

Yes, because it relaxes me and gets my mind off everything else

Activity: Relaxing to the music**I. ACTIVITY ENJOYMENT RATING SCALE AND COMMENTS****Jeremy**

Hated it 1.....2.....3.....**4**.....5 Loved it

Not into it 1.....2.....**3**.....4.....5 Into it

How did you feel during the activity?

Very relaxed and into it

How connected or focused did you feel during the activity?

I was very focused and blocking my thoughts and just listening to the music

Where and when could you use this skill?

During periods of tension, such as exam weeks

II. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Did you have a time when you were stressed this week?

Yes

2. If yes briefly describe the situation.

A lot of work

3. How did you feel during that time?

Annoyed, stressed

4. Did you try anything to feel less stressed?

Yes

5. If yes briefly explain.

Relax, sleep

6. Did it work? (effectiveness)

Not at all 1.....2.....**3**.....4.....5 Worked completely

7. Did you try relaxing to the music? Why did you try or why didn't you try?

Yes and it helped a lot

Activity: Connected to the moment-Focus on one thing/dot**I. ACTIVITY ENJOYMENT RATING SCALE AND COMMENTS**

Steve

Hated it 1.....2.....3.....**4**.....5 Loved it

Not in to it 1.....2.....3.....**4**.....5 Into it

How connected or focused did you feel during the activity?

Very

If you had moments where you were really focused, how did you do it?

Focused and stared hard

Did you get distracted (lose your focus or connection to the moment)? If so, where did your focus go?

Thought about my girlfriend and friends

How did you get your focus back on track?

Continued to stare and focus harder made my mind go blank**II. REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

- Describe a time when you were totally focused or really connected to something this week.
Basketball really focused on my shoots (shots) and flow through, it worked
- How did you feel when this was happening?
Very confident, that also help in basketball because once you lose the you (you) lose your shot
- How did you get yourself to focus that completely?
Do my best and block everything out
- On a scale of 1-5 how well did the method you used to get connected or focused work for you?

Not at all 1.....2.....3.....4.....**5** *Worked completely*

Activity: Connected to the moment-Focus on one thing/dot**I. ACTIVITY ENJOYMENT RATING SCALE AND COMMENTS**

Lucie

Hated it 1.....2.....3.....4.....**5** Loved it

Not in to it 1.....2.....3.....4.....**5** Into it

How connected or focused did you feel during the activity?

Depends on "connected" because I felt more zoned out than anything. So I guess I was really connected; everything else just disappeared.

If you had moments where you were really focused, how did you do it?

I'm not sure, I was just focusing really hard on the dot and then everything kind of disappeared; everything just left my mind.

Did you get distracted (lose your focus or connection to the moment)? If so, where did your focus go?

At first I did, but then I become more focused

How did you get your focus back on track?

Not really sure, just kept staring at the dot

How can you apply this skill?

School, because then you can learn everything

II. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Describe a time when you were totally focused or really connected to something this week.
During play. Everything was automatic, no more worrying
2. How did you feel when this was happening?
I didn't really feel anything. I just felt not myself, more like the characters
3. How did you get yourself to focus that completely?
Just concentration by listening to certain music to get into character
4. On a scale of 1-5 how well did the method you used to get connected or focused work for you?

Not at all 1.....2.....3.....**4**.....5 *Worked completely*

*Activity: Positive Thinking***Kristin****I. ACTIVITY ENJOYMENT RATING SCALE AND COMMENTS**

Hated it 1.....2.....**3**.....4.....5 Loved it

Not in to it 1.....2.....**3**.....4.....5 Into it

How did you feel during the activity?

Relaxed, calm

How connected or focused did you feel during the activity?

So, so, his voice was really blah and distracted me.

Where and when could you use this skill?

*When trying to de-stress yourself, when you fell bad about yourself and things that are happening***II. REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. Was there a time this week when you were talking to yourself in negative ways?

Yes

2. How did you feel when this was happening?

Like nothing was going right and everything was falling apart

3. Did you try to get yourself to be positive with yourself? If yes how?

Yes, playing music, thinking positive, thinking about good times

4. Did it work?

Not at all 1.....2.....**3**.....4.....5 *Worked completely*

*Activity: Positive Thinking***Judy****I. ACTIVITY ENJOYMENT RATING SCALE AND COMMENTS**

Hated it 1.....2.....**3**.....4.....5 Loved it

Not in to it 1.....2.....**3**.....4.....5 Into it

How did you feel during the activity?

I felt relaxed

How connected or focused did you feel during the activity?

I was pretty focused for the most part, but at times I drifted away

Where and when could you use this skill?

*I could use this skill in a difficult situation where I don't think I am going to make it through***II. REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. Was there a time this week when you were talking to yourself in negative ways?

Yes

2. How did you feel when this was happening?

Annoyed and frustrated

3. Did you try to get yourself to be positive with yourself? If yes how?

Yes, I said that I can do it!

4. Did it work?

Not at all 1.....**2**.....3.....4.....5 *Worked completely*

Activity: Umbalakiki-Tree it

Anthony

1. Did you have a time when you were worried or felt anxious this week?
Yes

2. If yes briefly describe the situation.
Overloaded with work, did not know what to do because missed a few days of classes

3. How did you feel when you were worried or anxious?
Nervous, not relaxed

4. How did you get yourself to feel less worried or anxious?
Played hockey, listened to music

5. Did it work?
 - i. Not at all 1.....2.....3.....**4**.....5 Worked completely

6. If you did not try treeing it (boarding it, poling it, ect.), what did you try?
See # 4

7. How did it go?
 - i. Not at all 1.....2.....3.....**4**.....5 Worked completely

8. Do you think you will continue to use or try using treeing it in the future? Why?
Yeah, I thought it was a good idea.

Activity: Umbalakiki-Tree it**Lisa**

1. Did you have a time when you were worried or felt anxious this week?

Yes

2. If yes briefly describe the situation.

Lots of projects are due

3. How did you feel when you were worried or anxious?

Stressed

4. How did you get yourself to feel less worried or anxious?

Focus on something else for awhile

5. Did it work?

i. Not at all 1.....2.....**3**.....4.....5 Worked completely

6. If you did not try treeing it (boarding it, poling it, ect.), what did you try?

7. How did it go?

i. Not at all 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 Worked completely

8. Do you think you will continue to use or try using treeing it in the future? Why?

Yes, let go of things out of my control

Rock/Wall Climbing

Jane

BEFORE CLIMBING

You are just about to rock/wall climb. During this experience what type of challenges might you face?

From the skills (treeing it, changing channels, positive thinking-self talk, focusing in the moment, looking for simple joys) you have learned so far in the PLS program, which skill(s) might you find helpful to overcome this/these challenge(s)?

AFTER CLIMBING

What challenge(s) did you face as you climbed?

Fear, mental frustration

Were you able to overcome this/these challenge(s)?

Yes

If yes, how did you do it? If no, what do you think you could try next time?

I asked for help, took a deep breath

If yes, how well did it work?

Did not work at all 1.....2.....3.....4.....**5** Totally worked

Rock/Wall Climbing

No name

BEFORE CLIMBING

You are just about to rock/wall climb. During this experience what type of challenges might you face?

From the skills (treeing it, changing channels, positive thinking-self talk, focusing in the moment, looking for simple joys) you have learned so far in the PLS program, which skill(s) might you find helpful to overcome this/these challenge(s)?

AFTER CLIMBING

What challenge(s) did you face as you climbed?

Fear of falling, communication with friend

Were you able to overcome this/these challenge(s)?

Yes

If yes, how did you do it? If no, what do you think you could try next time?

I concentrated and believed in it working

If yes, how well did it work?

Did not work at all 1.....2.....3.....**4**.....5 Totally worked

Logbook Exercise: Simple joys and Highlights

Laura

1. What is a simple joy?
Something that makes you happy
2. List some simple joys that you can experience every:
Month: *Going to Florida*
Week: *Drawing on the weekend*
Day: *Swimming*
3. What can you do to experience more simple joys?
Relax and not think about stressful things so much, so I can notice the little things around me
4. What is a highlight?
Something that you always look forward to
5. What highlights can you remember from the past week?
Getting back my art sketchbook from marking
6. How can you remember more highlights?
Live in the present
7. Why would you want to live more highlights and remember highlights?
So you will have a happy life

Logbook Exercise: Simple joys and Highlights

Jacob

1. What is a simple joy?
Playing basketball with people I like
2. List some simple joys that you can experience every:
Month: *Watch a movie*
Week: *Eat good food*
Day: *Playing basketball, talk to people*
3. What can you do to experience more simple joys?
Look for more free time, work more efficiently so there is more time
4. What is a highlight?
A positive memory
5. What highlights can you remember from the past week?
Playing basketball, soccer
6. How can you remember more highlights?
Think [about them] more
7. Why would you want to live more highlights and remember highlights?
Because life gets better