

A NARRATIVE ENQUIRY INTO THE PHYSICAL LITERACY JOURNEYS OF FURTHER EDUCATION YOUNG AMBASSADORS

By

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ABSTRACT

The benefits of physical literacy are widely acknowledged, with advocates recognising the importance of its development throughout the life course. Whilst the link between physical activity, health and physical literacy is well researched, there is a noticeable lack of young people's voices in the literature. This research aims to explore the physical literacy journeys of further education young ambassadors at a 6th form college in Southwest Wales, offering holistic and valuable insights into young people's unique experiences. Qualitative semi-structured interviews provide voices and perceptions, helping to contribute to a better understanding in this context. The narrative data obtained from the interviews underwent thematic analysis, facilitating the identification of emergent key themes. As a result of the coding framework, the researcher categorised themes as, 'desire for significance,' 'personal reward,' 'significant others,' 'imagining future self,' and 'environment'. The ambassadors' desire for significance emphasises the importance of early execution of fundamental movement skills for success and sustained participation. Yet re-defining success criteria will be beneficial in fostering feelings of pride and success in all individuals. The ambassadors clearly relished personal benefits from physical activity. Thus, physical education should prioritise autonomy and choice, focussing on personal reward and enjoyment when planning these opportunities. Various significant others played crucial roles in the ambassadors' lives, with teachers and family responsible for activity levels and peer groups acknowledged as strong determinants in activity choice and frequency. Promoting adult activity therefore provides relatable role models for young people to aspire to. The ambassadors' keen sense of improving prospects highlights the need for universities to facilitate personal development and establish systems for mentoring students. Additionally, diverse student physical activity programs enhance the appeal of the institution. The scope of environmental influences ambassadors encountered gives prominence to the need for local authority providers to create safe and accessible opportunities. Furthermore, increasing knowledge of engagement in outdoor pursuits available locally is necessary to increase physical literacy.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| Abbreviation | Full Form |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A1 | Further Education Young Ambassador 1 |
| A2 | Further Education Young Ambassador 2 |
| A3 | Further Education Young Ambassador 3 |
| A4 | Further Education Young Ambassador 4 |
| A5 | Further Education Young Ambassador 5 |
| FEYAs | Further Education Young Ambassadors |
| FMS | Fundamental Movement Skills |
| NPT | Neath Port Talbot |
| NPTC Group | Neath Port Talbot College Group |
| PA | Physical Activity |
| PE | Physical Education |
| PL | Physical Literacy |
| YA | Young Ambassador |

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1. Themes and Categories Relating to the Physical Literacy Journeys of the FEYAs.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The following chapter will place the intended research into context. Physical activity (PA) and its health benefits are highlighted with a focus on adolescents. The link between PA and physical literacy (PL) is explored, emphasizing the lack of young people's voices as a valuable resource in the current literature. The research aim is indicated before contextualising the demographic setting utilised in obtaining the narrative voices of young people involved in this research.

The multiple benefits of a physically active lifestyle are well established (Warburton and Bredin, 2017, Rhodes *et al.* 2017), with reduction in obesity, enhances in cognitive performance, and improvements in aspects of mental health, all being reported in active adolescents (Howie and Pate, 2012, Esteban-Cornejo *et al.* 2015, Kracht and Sisson, 2018, Biddle *et al.* 2019). Yet despite this, in developed nations the minimum guidelines for PA are not met by an estimated 80% of youth worldwide (Sallis *et al.* 2016). Many lifestyle changes, such as a decrease in active transport and increases in technological devices, contribute to this inactivity (Gray *et al.* 2014). With increases in reports of poor mental health and prevalence of preventable diseases such as diabetes (Lee *et al.* 2012, Mavrovouniotis, 2012), it could be reasoned that we are currently in a time of significant threat to our lifestyle activity (Schools and Physical Activity Task and Finish Group, 2013, Cooper and Morton, 2018), meaning physical inactivity is not only a health crisis but consequently places strain on national health systems (Krueger *et al.* 2014, Cairney *et al.* 2019). Research shows that active adolescents tend to develop the motivation, confidence and competence needed to become active and are consequently more likely to become active, healthy adults; conversely, insufficient youth activity may lead to sedentary lifestyles and health problems in adulthood (Telama *et al.* 2005, Kjonniksen, Torsheim, and Wold, 2008). Without targeted exploration and increases in holistic understanding, this sedentary trend in adolescents may continue to produce inactive and unhealthy citizens. Accordingly, increasing PA levels, and therefore health, is a mediation necessary to secure future health and economic prognosis of a nation. The concept of

PL, which includes motor competence and motivation, is considered the pre-requisite to allow individuals to access a multitude of structured movement patterns necessary throughout life (Seefeldt 1980, Clark and Metcalfe, 2002) and could therefore be the opening to achieving lifelong participation in PA (Bayli *et al.* 2013, Stevens-smith, 2016, Cairney *et al.* 2019).

Whitehead's (2019) concept of PL places emphasis on individuals living active and healthy lifestyles unique to them. The phenomenological underpinning of the concept suggests it is our lived experiences and feelings of embodiment that make the concept relevant throughout the lifecourse. Fostering a physically literate life involves participation in activity influenced by a diverse and complex range of personal, social, and environmental factors (Sallis *et al.* 2000, Trost *et al.* 2003). Debate in the way in which PL is applied, nurtured, or enhanced, varies between nations and as such there are many competing PL strategies adopted globally (Edwards *et al.* 2017, Keegan, Barnett, and Dudley, 2017). Whilst future research needs to explore the successful integration of initiatives that improve the translation between PL theory and practice (Young *et al.* 2021, Carl *et al.* 2023), the voice of active young people regarding their own unique lived PL journeys is lacking. Little is known about the adolescents currently meeting the PA guidelines and continuing to engage in movement for their health and wellbeing from a PL perspective. For this reason, the aim of the following research is to explore through interviews, the PL journeys of 5 further education young ambassadors (FEYAs) at a 6th Form College in Neath Port Talbot (NPT), Wales. Given that the voice of young people is under-represented in research, the objective is to gain rich narrative life stories of the FEYAs, exploring how they perceive their PL journeys and interacted with the opportunities, environments, and significant others, afforded to them.

NPT, the 8th most populous local authority in Wales, has 43% of its land covered by forestry, and much of the flat land is coastal. The local education authority operates 62 primary, 11 secondary, and 3 special schools with further Education provided by two 6th form institutions and the college NPTC Group. This diverse region and background

provide an unparalleled backdrop for the young people living within it. Numerous institutions will appear in the interviews, but as Taplin (2013) points out, these journeys are unique, ruling out direct comparisons. Instead, exploring this process should be a celebration of the participants PL progress (Whitehead, 2010, 2013, Jean de Dieu and Zhou, 2021) and a means to enhance reflection in this field (Green *et al.* 2018). The research outline is presented below.

Chapter 1 introduced the research context, highlighting the connection between PA and health, as well as the need for young people's voices in research. The research objective was to obtain narratives from active young people in the frame of reference of a Southwest Wales demographic. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on PA, health, and PL, with a focus on adolescents. It outlines PL in Wales, introduces the concept of FEYAs, and discusses the use of life stories as tools to enhance PL concept knowledge and understanding. Chapter 3 justifies the chosen qualitative methodology, locating it within a phenomenological paradigm and considers the ontological and epistemological issues of the broader research design. Chapter 4 presents interview findings and discusses key themes from the thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), considering the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, supplementing with Active Well Being reports. Chapter 5 concludes the research findings, identifying the research limitations and strengths, and suggests future research recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter sets out to review the literature examining the concept of PL. The chosen definition of PL applied across this research is indicated, before establishing the connection between health, activity and PL. Various components that make up the concept are explored including motor competence, perceived competence, and confidence. Environmental and situational influences that impact upon PL are discussed, with a focus on adolescents. The concept of PL is considered within the context of Wales before describing the FEYA scheme, providing insight into the objective of the research.

The idea of PL as a journey will then be explored, with an emphasis on obtaining narrative voices of the young people as justification for the research.

PL whilst not a new term, has recently gained much interest globally, due in part to Whitehead's contemporary emphasis and focus upon it (Cairney *et al.* 2019). Whitehead defines PL as "*the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding to value and take responsibility for engaging in physical activities for life*" (Whitehead, 2019, p. 8). When combined with increasing global interest in the health and happiness of citizens, it has made for propulsion of the concept of PL (Whitehead and Murdoch, 2006). PL is a multifaceted holistic concept, exploring engagement in PA for life through four domains comprising of motivation and confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding (Sport for life, 2015). It is therefore generally accepted that PL as a concept emphasises development of the whole person cognitively, socially and emotionally, not just physically (Whitehead and Murdoch, 2006, Whitehead, 2010, Taplin, 2013, Edwards *et al.* 2017). The concept of PL aims to emphasise the importance that the individual should value and take responsibility for engaging in PA for life (Whitehead, 2019). As a result, it is "*underpinning many physical education programs, coaching strategies, health initiatives, and policymakers' decisions*" (Green *et al.* 2018, p. 272). Even so, the lack of a definitive definition combined with the continually expanding concept (Standel, 2016) often results in misinterpretation by practitioners (Edwards *et al.* 2019). Unsurprisingly, there is much confusion on how best to measure, promote and encourage PL (Stodden *et al.* 2008).

Despite the different interpretation between countries (Edwards *et al.* 2017), PL is established within policies as a means of improving health and has even been adopted by the WHO (2018) as a factor in creating an active society (Cairney *et al.* 2019). Whilst PL has become increasingly popular as both a concept and research term, the contest around how PL can be defined, applied, measured or assessed in both research and practice (Shearer *et al.* 2018, Jean de Dieu and Zhou, 2021), makes it difficult to determine a precise way in which to encourage individuals to be more physically literate.

Consequently, many organisations have produced their own documentation in support of PL, usually derived from that outlined by the IPLA (2017) and thus place emphasis on different elements of the concept to best suit their needs (Edwards *et al.* 2017, Keegan, Barnett and Dudley, 2017). It is agreed that PL as a concept is monist in nature referring to one's own journey and not an end state to be achieved (Whitehead, 2010, Taplin, 2012, 2013) and so the development of one's PL is ongoing and ever changing. The concept of PL captures the desire to improve quality of life through meaningful experiences with PA (Shearer *et al.* 2018). Fundamental movement skills (FMS) are identified as the key basic movements associated with PA (Clark *et al.* 2016) and as such should be practiced in developmentally appropriate ways (Brian *et al.* 2020) to allow for progression and to break through the proposed proficiency barrier (Seefeldt, 1980). Therefore, FMS are often considered necessary to succeed in a variety of activities and as such form the foundation for an active life (Williams *et al.* 2012, Gallahue *et al.* 2021).

On this premise, Clark and Metcalf (2002) propose the 'Mountain of motor Development'. This metaphor highlights the importance of FMS in becoming skilful and thus able to reach the top of each activity mountain through accomplished motor development. Successful execution of FMS provides the skills necessary to succeed in a variety of tasks and environments allowing more opportunities for an individual to persist and engage in activity throughout the lifecourse. Likewise, Stodden *et al.* (2008) agree motor competence is key to determining successful continued engagement in PA which led them to develop their conceptual model extending previous work in the field of motor development and presenting the concept of a positive spiral of engagement. They believe through practice and refinement of FMS; an individual will have a variety of activities and experiences made available to them. It is reasonable to assume that developing basic motor patterns will allow an individual to participate in health enhancing activities throughout various stages of their life, which helps to augment aspects of self-efficacy and perceived competence (Brian *et al.* 2020). Yet PL is unique to each individual and execution of FMS skills alone is not enough to ensure someone continues to be active throughout life (Taplin, 2012). An individual needs to first believe they can continuously

adapt to meet their PL needs (Higgs, 2010) and thus high levels of self-belief and confidence are also required to help contribute to PL (Lubans, Foster and Biddle, 2008).

Research recognises the importance of individuals ability to evaluate their own capability as opposed to their actual objective competence levels, emphasising the need to build self-esteem and self-confidence to promote PL (Trost *et al.* 2003, Alipour-Anbarani *et al.* 2022). An individual's perceived motor competence is deemed necessary for continued participation in PA and sports, specifically in adolescents (Lubans *et al.* 2010, Biddle *et al.* 2011, De Meester *et al.* 2016). Increases in perceived competence will, in turn, improve motivation levels if considering Self-Determination Theory (Harter and Connell, 1984, Deci and Ryan, 2000) and increases in both perceived competence and perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) may go some way to helping determine effective PA adherence strategies (Annesi, 2012, Rodgers *et al.* 2014). Appealingly, competence, confidence and motivation are some of the facets used to determine a physically literate person. Whilst the importance of early execution of FMS combined with the confidence and belief of an individual to engage in various situations is both logical and well documented, (Clark and Metcalf 2002, Stodden *et al.* 2008, Barnett *et al.* 2009, 2016) it must also be recognised that other individual and environmental constraints will impact upon the development of PL.

A review by Trost *et al.* (2003) suggested that access to facilities, satisfaction with facilities, neighbourhood safety, access to exercise equipment at home, and frequently observing others exercise may be important factors in developing PL as adults. Equally Stodden *et al.* (2008) identify differences in such factors as immediate environment, presence of structured physical education (PE), socioeconomic status, parental influences, and climate, account for the differing levels of motor competence we see amongst children. Consequently, we must ensure individuals are not only willing but are well supported and have the opportunities available, to be active (Rosenkranz *et al.* 2021).

Opportunities to attend an organised sports club may provide a desire to adapt skills learnt, fostering aspirations to continue with participation into adulthood (Telama, 2005). Although the localised nature of Tammelin, *et al.* (2003), study makes generalisability limited, results underline the importance of early exposure to a variety of PA and sports. They found that participation in sports at least once a week in adolescent females and twice a week in males, was associated with high levels of PA in later life, which is consistent with other longitudinal studies (Telama *et al.* 1996, Vanreusel *et al.* 1996, Telama *et al.* 1997, Yang *et al.* 1999). Sports clubs could therefore help to provide this exposure. Moreover, when looking specifically at adolescents aged 16-18 years, Alipour-Anbarani *et al.*'s (2022) interview results showed that most adolescents obtained their PA information from specialists' coaches or school PE teachers, highlighting the importance of both clubs and schools in contributing to overall PL. Therefore, schools provide another environment opportunity deemed significant in promoting PA habits (Lavizzo-Mourey *et al.* 2012).

Teachers not only have increased knowledge of PA but are often credited as having a strong influence on the behaviours (Rosenkranz *et al.* 2021) and motivation (Vallerand & Losier, 1999, Reeve, 2009) of their students. It is recognised that teachers have a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of school-based PA interventions (Rosenkranz *et al.* 2021). Considering students spend a third of their day in school, it is unsurprising that schools create a supportive environment for promoting PA, and the necessary opportunities for its development (Biddle, Mutrie, and Gorley, 2015). Since lack of opportunity to be active at school is often cited as a barrier to PA (Hills, Dengal and Lubans, 2015, Satija *et al.* 2018), strategies to maintain play and active time in school are imperative, Whilst schools provide ideal opportunities and environments for movement, it could be argued that PE is the most likely source of increasing PL (Kirk, 2013, Kirk, 2018).

The importance of PE in schools as a means of increasing PA is agreed worldwide (Ntoumanis, 2001) due to the important role PE has in the development of PL (Talbot, 2007, Whitehead 2010, Hardman, 2011) yet despite this, PE is often cancelled more so

than other curriculum subjects (Edwards *et al.* 2019). Sallis and McKenzie (1991) express the importance of positive PE experiences in influencing children to adopt PA. Autonomy can increase motivation, so PE environments should offer students a choice of various activities, including sports and physical exercises, to maximize their potential for motivation and lifelong PL (Goudas, Biddle, and Fox, 1994, Prusak *et al.* 2004). In conjunction with this, increases in PA levels can be met by providing adequate and personalised health information and knowledge to both students and their parents (Miklasen and Lagestad, 2020, Kesic *et al.* 2021). Naturally, parental influence is considered an important factor in determining families PL, with parents often credited as enablers of activity (Biddle *et al.* 2015, Satija *et al.* 2018).

Meta-analysis and reviews have found parental PA behaviour to have a small but significant positive relation for both child and adolescent PA (Sallis *et al.* 2000, Pugliese and Tinsley, 2007). Specifically, they have found parent support and help through instrumental behaviours such as transport, finance or equipment as consistently associated with child and adolescent PA. Such instrumental behaviour could include enrolment at a sports club which, as mentioned previously, helps to contribute to enduring PA levels. The broader support provided by parents is necessary to facilitate children's PA as well as the encouragement given and setting an active example, with active parents being typically more supportive of their child's PA. Edwardson and Gorley's (2010) systemic review of 96 studies revealed that children under 11 years require direct parental involvement in PA to encourage them to be more active. Notably, they found that fathers' PA levels predicted adolescents' overall PA. Parental encouragement was also associated with the frequency of PA amongst teenagers, highlighting that parents continue to be relied upon for instrumental support and instigating of being active. Indeed, a 34-study review conducted by Gustafson and Rhodes (2006) considers the differences in parental encouragement and support to be the mediator in child-parent PA, as opposed to modelling parental activity. The whole family unit can also be integral to PL levels as reported in the Kracht and Sisson (2018) review. It found that siblings encouraged more engagement in moderate to vigorous activity, with a potential dose response with

increased number of siblings in the household. It appears children with siblings tend to have healthier PA patterns as they have peers to interact and compete with, reinforcing the significance of family units in promoting and supporting PL.

Early childhood is when health PA behaviours should be established, and so interventions need to be targeted here (Telama, 2009, Jones *et al.* 2013). The enhancement of PA in children and adolescents is important therefore when promoting public health (Telama, 2009). Since PL encompasses both physical and social domains in its concept, the relationship between health, PA and mental health benefits are well documented (Biddle *et al.* 2015). For adolescents, improvements in their mental health were found because of PA interventions but further investigation needs to be completed on children (Rodriguez-allyon, 2019). Young people's voices in research often express positive lived experiences including improving self-confidence, enjoyment, relaxation, and sense of achievement, after engagement in PA (Satija *et al.* 2018, Alipour-Anbarani *et al.* 2022). Socialisation factors like having fun, increasing friendship networks, and feeling good enough amongst peers, all act as enablers to increase PA; conversely the opposite may also reduce engagement (Satja *et al.* 2018, Miklasen and Lagestad, 2020). Social support in the form of supportive others may therefore have an important role to play in the adoption of a physically active lifestyle (Trost *et al.* 2003). Naturally, being told you were good at something by a significant other with expertness, like that of a role model, helps drive our motivation to participate (Snyder and Lopez, 2002).

In sport and PA, role models often come in the form of elite or professional athletes. Longitudinal studies in Australia (Eather *et al.* 2020) have shown large proportions of young Australians aspire to become sportspersons and this is not surprising when research has shown that populations reported feelings of pride or happiness due to their athlete's success (Hallmann *et al.* 2013). It is suggested, through self-categorisation, that a nation can share in the successes of its athletes (Denham, 2010) which in turn increases the health and happiness of a population (Hallmann *et al.* 2013). This is a powerful feeling, to be able to induce togetherness, national pride, and happiness, which could be the

influence in a person wanting to pursue a career in sport. To this point, those heavily involved in PA and aspiring to be elite athletes should be supported and encouraged not only for their own PL journeys but also to raise mood and inspire a nation to raise their individual PL too. It could be argued national governments' support and funding of elite athletes and programs can serve as a policy tool for social integration (Hallmann *et al.* 2013), aiding in the development of a sense of self (Whitehead, 2005) and serving as a source of inspiration. Whitehead's monist approach suggests we create our being existentially through lived experiences, like that of sharing in national success, as we interact with the world; These experiences are understood from the standpoint of the individual who is on a unique journey informed by their previous interactions, therefore aligning with phenomenology. This approach differs from the Cartesian, dualistic nature of educationalists and approaches to movement in the UK, where the priority for PA is low (Whitehead, 2007).

In Wales in particular, The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) truly emphasises the notion of PL being a journey throughout life and believe this is achieved in part, through empowering the individual. The Act identified that the journey to a healthier Wales, involves informing individuals of the importance of PL as a means of allowing everyone to reach their potential, emphasising opportunities as vital considerations of the concept (Keegan, Barnett and Dudley, 2017). Through government mandated support, changes to school sport, PE, organised sport, and play settings, have been implemented to get everyone "hooked on sport" (Sport Wales, 2015b, p. 3). The Sport Wales (2014) PL definition "*Physical skills + confidence + motivation + lots of opportunities = physical literacy*", accentuates empowering the individual and opportunities as vital considerations (Keegan, Barnett and Dudley, 2017). One such opportunity devised comes in the form of the national Young Ambassador (YA) Program which is run in partnership between Sport Wales, Youth Sports Trust and the sport development team in each Local Authority.

The YA programme, which currently boasts 4000 active members, has been nurtured by Sport Wales in response to the need for more young people to be active and participate in sport, contributing to their overall PL journey (Sport Wales, 2021). FEYAs are based in Welsh Colleges and aim to create and deliver opportunities for their peers and adults to be physically active through sport (Sport Wales, 2021). As part of their own PL journeys, FEYAs will gain access to courses, experiences and information that will enable them to become more experienced in the field as they are responsible for teaching, encouraging, and inspiring others to become physically active and engaged. The cultivation of the FEYA role fits nicely with the notion of nurturing a person's PL journey as Whitehead (2013) emphasises the significance of the school years in the grounding of a person's PL journey. As identified previously, it is suggested formative experiences like that of PE, are proposed to significantly impact on participation in later years (Whitehead, 1990, Talbot, 2001, Bailey, 2006). This suggestion that previous experiences and opportunities will have significant repercussions in the later years exemplifies FEYAs roles as highly important and influential.

Much attention and focus are often placed on developing PL in children but FEYAs have a key role to play in the early adult years, as they are responsible for encouraging PL journeys for other young adults as well as nurturing their own journeys in the next phase of their development. Research to date focusses heavily on school age children and the objective measures of PL, namely physical competence, due to the complexity of measuring the other components that make up the concept (Longmuir and Tremblay, 2016). It is likely that FEYAs are the best examples of physically literate individuals at their age and their early interest in developing opportunities for others to enhance their own PL is an interesting concept to explore. Obtaining further information will provide individuals with appreciation of their own ever changing PL journeys as well as understanding how they develop over time, which can help clarify policymakers' awareness (Tremblay and Lloyd, 2010). Using conventional methods of measurement to explore these life journeys would be inappropriate and instead a reflection of FEYAs PL progress will be more suitable (Green *et al.* 2018). Arguably, the young adults' own

narratives are the best way to gain insight into the position PL and movement has had in their lives (Macphail, Collier, and O'Sullivan, 2009). Charting progress in relation to PL provides an opportunity to enhance our understanding of the totality of the PL journey throughout development (Longmuir and Tremblay, 2016). Taplin (2013, p.61) advocates the use of life history to better understand one's PL journey, "*By recording, retelling and mapping the story, we are able to track the individual's journey, enabling sense to be made of the past, in order for progress to be made in the future*". PL is more than merely FMS (Jean de Dieu and Zhou, 2021) and so there is a unique opportunity presented to explore the individual narrative journeys of the FEYAs; This will provide a more holistic insight into the individuals PL journey across ages, developmental stages, and environments, which is much more in keeping with the concept itself (Longmuir and Tremblay, 2016, Green *et al.* 2018). Further exploration of the FEYAs own journeys will give an indication of the experiences they have had in these important years, which is particularly interesting when both the participant age group, and FEYA role, is under researched. If we can gain an insight into what has led these young adults to embark on this role, then we have the potential to use this information to encourage and foster more applicants in this process, as we aim to develop and nurture the PL of others in the college environment. Qualitative interviews may help to produce important knowledge for those who help to promote health, quality of life, and PL (Miklasen and Lagestad, 2020) whilst also helping to make the PL journeys experienced more tangible (Green *et al.* 2018). Hence, if the idea of improving individual's PL is to truly be nurtured and applied, it is important to understand the PL journeys thus far of those volunteering to improve others. Consequently, establishing the PL journeys of FEYAs may provide insight into common themes and trends that have led them to apply, interview and achieve this new role. The purpose of this research therefore is to establish the unique PL journeys of the FEYAs at NPTC Group and given the complex nature of PL, it could be inferred that a variety of influences will be discovered.

This review of literature has explored the issues surrounding the concept of PL research. Whitehead's (2019) definition has been the focus of the review with the benefits of PA highlighted. Links between PA and PL have been made with an emphasis on adolescent specific research. Various environmental and social influences that impact PL and PA were highlighted, and the context of PL in Wales was described before clarifying the FEYA programme. Justification for the use of narrative voices as a resource helping to reflect understanding of the PL concept was made. The following chapter focuses on the methodology applied in this qualitative research design.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides justification for the qualitative approach adopted in exploring the research idea and locates it within a research paradigm. Consideration is given to the issues of ontology and epistemology, before highlighting the reasons for the applied data generation method. Next, an explanation of the research design is provided before identifying the ethical points considered for approval. After specifying the participants involved, finer data collection details are established. The chapter concludes with an outline of the framework used for data analysis.

Rationale

As this research is concerned with individuals' accounts of their PL journeys, a qualitative approach typically used in the social sciences, was necessary (Gray, 2004). Due to the research's predominantly descriptive and ideographic nature, it aligns with constructivism. To correctly locate this research, the theoretical perspective of interpretivism has been taken as interpretivist views allow us to explore feelings and understanding via interview questions (Cohen *et al.* 2013). By taking an inductive research approach, a phenomenological research methodology was applied to obtain "thick descriptions" of the

participant's own subjective experiences, perceptions, opinions, and understanding (Gray, 2004 p.28). This qualitative design supported the phenomenological research approach by obtaining the voices, lived experiences, and views of the young people involved (Willis, 2007, Rossman and Rallis, 2017).

The participant voices and stories were gained through narrative inquiry via semi structured interviews, which formed the raw data. For the phenomenological interviews to be successful, it was recognised that the identified participants must be able to talk about their lived experiences (Rossman and Rallis, 2017). FEYAs are based in Welsh Colleges and aim to create and deliver opportunities for their peers and adults to be physically active through sport (Sport Wales, 2021). Thus, it was acknowledged that the confident and sociable nature necessary for the role of a FEYA, deemed these participants capable of talking about their lived experiences. Furthermore, for interviews to be successful, willing engagement for personal interaction is necessary and so asking volunteers to participate, accounted for this (Rossman and Rallis, 2017). Interviews were chosen as a research tool as they provided clarity and insight into meanings that people attribute to their experiences and the events that unfold in their social world (Rubin 2012, Richie *et al.* 2013).

The semi-structured nature of the interviews provided a framework from which to gather sufficient information to pursue the research question in context (Rubin, 2012). Whilst in-depth interviews are time intensive and based on the assumption there is a story to tell (Rossman and Rallis, 2017), in this instance, they allowed enough flexibility to probe or explore content as it was discovered (Richie *et al.* 2013). There was no intention of generalising results and so the interviews welcomed exploration and discovery of the participant's experiences, which in turn, produced the rich detailed data necessary to address the research question (Leavy, 2008, Rossman and Rallis, 2017). The implementation of an interview guide gave the researcher a framework to administer the discussions but also allowed an opportunity for further probing to retrieve expanded answers from participants (Rossman and Rallis, 2017). Looking into the individual

narrative journeys of the FEYA participants provided a holistic insight much more in keeping with the concept of PL itself (Green *et al.* 2018). As identified in chapter two, Taplin (2013) advocates the use of life history to better understand one's PL journey which is vital in a phenomenological approach as subjective meanings need to be explored (Gray, 2004).

Research Design

The purpose of the research was to acquire in-depth information and so a critical case purposive sample was used (Cohen, *et al.* 2013). Semi-structured 1-1 interviews were used to gather narrative voices of the 2021-2022 cohort of FEYAs at the college. The FEYAs were invited to take part in the research via an email explaining the research process and context, emphasising their voluntary participation. The role of the interviewer as lecturer and sports coach to the FEYA participants meant there was familiarity and good rapport, yet the position of power must also be recognised (Cohen *et al.* 2013). This pre-existing relationship between participants and researcher may also have had negative consequences such as embellishment, because participants felt they needed to provide the interviewer with rich responses (Schaerz and Balderson, 2020). It was therefore clearly emphasised to participants that involvement in the research would not affect grades or working relationships and was separate from the participants' educational studies. This was highlighted to gain honest and reliable responses (Cohen *et al.* 2013). The interviewer also informed the participants that there were no correct/incorrect answers to the questions and that the interviewer was only interested in learning about their experiences and perceptions. Consequently, the interviewer had to be aware of personal bias and their own perspective in this research design and so reflective journal notes (appendix 1) were recorded after the interviews in the interest of maintaining reflexivity (Rossman and Rallis, 2017).

Participants were allowed to choose their method of interview implementation, either face-to-face in a classroom at the college, or online remotely on the platform Microsoft Teams. Participants were familiar with both the classroom environment used and the Microsoft Teams technology as part of their ongoing studies with the college. This familiarity and normal way of working assisted the interview process as the participants were already at ease with the protocol systems, making them non-threatening environments (Cohen *et al.* 2013). Both face-to-face and online interviews were audio recorded for transcription purposes using the Microsoft Teams meetings recording feature. The recordings also assisted later in the analysis stage, to further limit bias from unconscious focus on replies (Gray, 2004).

An interview guide (appendix 2) was created and framed around Whitehead's (2013, 2019) definition and concept of PL encompassing all participation in PA throughout the lifecycle; This being that PL is dependent on the "*individual engaging in a variety of movement experiences, movement of different types, in different environments and under different circumstances*" (Taplin, 2013, p. 62). A combination of open and closed questions were used, deliberately avoiding leading questions to minimise researcher bias (Cohen *et al.* 2013). The interview was piloted on an educational professional and refined before use. Researcher reflective journal notes were also taken during the interview process as a validated way of gaining contextual knowledge and addressing bias (Leavy, 2008).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Institute of Management and Health at the University of Wales Trinity St David. Participation in the research was voluntary and all participants gave informed consent (appendix 3), with those under 18 years of age also obtaining parental consent. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of the information recorded in the interviews, as well as the secure storing and safe removal of

audio files after analysis. Participants had the right to not respond to any of the questions they were asked or to withdraw from the research at any time, thus allowing for autonomy in the research (Cohen *et al.* 2013).

Participants

A non-probability sample was applied to this research due to the small-scale research design (Cohen *et al.* 2013). Inclusion criteria consisted of being an active FEYA at the college and giving informed consent to be involved. The purposeful selection of the 5 adolescents were sampled due to their role as FEYAs at the college in the academic year 2021-2022. Overall, 3 female and 2 male students aged 17-18 years participated in the research. At the time of the interviews, all participants were in the final stage of their academic studies with the college.

Data Collection

The pilot interview was conducted using the devised interview guide to check for suitability and to allow for any final additions or changes to the semi-structured interview. The pilot allowed practice for the interviewer whilst the educational professional interviewed was independent of the research. Semi-structured interviews took place on 5 occasions over the course of a month in June 2022. 3 interviews were conducted face-to-face in a classroom at the college and 2 interviews took place online using the Microsoft Teams platform. The reasons for conducting the research were explained to the interviewees at the start of each interview. Questions were asked in accordance with the interview guide (appendix 2) and followed up with more specific questions based on the individuals' responses. Interviews ranged in length from 47 minutes to 73 minutes (mean: 59.4 minutes). The main body of the interviews centred around exploring perceptions and experiences of PA engagement, participation, and interaction at home, in leisure time,

and at school. All interviews were recorded with the participant's permission and later transcribed verbatim (appendix 4). Omission of repeated words, as well as additional filler words, was completed to help seek clarity and informativeness (Cohen *et al.* 2013). Participants were offered the opportunity to correct the transcripts or offer any further comments before their use in analysis. The participants did not make any additions or corrections.

Data Analysis

Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis protocol served as a framework for coding comments from the interview transcripts (appendix 5). Thematic analysis through the frame and lens of the concept of PL was conducted on the transcribed interviews. The interviews were read numerous times combined with repeated listening to identify re-emerging themes or similarities as they arose. These were further coded into key categories and subcategories for subsequent analysis and interpretation. This data reduction made it more manageable and coherent in the aim of identifying patterns, themes, and consistencies for discussion (Gray, 2004). The consequent emergent themes provided important information about the PL journeys of the FEYAs.

During analysis, supplementary evidence in the form of Active Well-being reports (appendix 6) were also included. This provided a point of reference to explore findings of what the FEYAs missed in this role, due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic at the time of the research. Additional researcher notes helped to highlight the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic on the experiences and role of the FEYAs and were used to try and establish how this experience was compromised due to Covid-19 protocols. This in conjunction with the reflective journal notes (appendix 1) helped to gain an understanding of the key issues.

Summary

This chapter justified the use of a qualitative research approach, locating the methodology within a phenomenological research paradigm. Interviews encouraged stimulation around individuals' experiences and perceptions of their PL journeys (Gray, 2004). Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis protocol provided a coding framework, and supplementary information (appendix 1 & 6) highlighted the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst the sample's generalisability is limited to itself, it may help add to existing research (Cohen *et al.* 2013). The following chapter illustrates the processes undertaken to establish themes derived from the thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) and discusses them, considering a PL lens, in relation to relevant literature.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The chapter will present the findings of the research and the processes of analysis undertaken to arrive at the identified key themes. The findings will be discussed and interpreted in conjunction with relevant literature from within the field of PL. Consideration is given to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic upon the individuals' PL journeys and will be communicated throughout the discussion. The chapter concludes with a supplementary paragraph outlining the missed educational opportunities as part of the FEYA roles due to the restrictions of Covid-19 as derived from supplementary evidence in the form of Active Well-being reports (appendix 6).

Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis protocol served as a framework for coding comments from the transcribed interviews. The volume of data gathered required repeated listening to ensure deep familiarisation with the findings and to provide in-depth identification of key points. Note taking occurred during this listening process to identify re-emerging themes or similarities as they arose. Constant referral back to key words and

links amongst various interviews continued until common patterns and consistencies soon became apparent amongst the 5 participants. Table 1 below shows the analysis process and how the themes and ideas materialized.

As a result of the thematic analysis, 5 key themes were identified for providing valuable information about the PL journeys of the FEYA;

1. Desire for Significance
2. Personal Reward
3. Significant Others
4. Imagining future self
5. Environment

TABLE 1. Themes and Categories Relating to the PL Journeys of the FEYAs.

| Theme | Description | Example quotations illustrating theme | PL |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| Desire for Significance | Status, recognition, elitism, pride, representation, competitiveness, winning, ego, prowess, belonging, favouritism COVID-19 = lack of teams, no progress, clubs folding | <p>"So that was good because it motivates me then winning" (A2)</p> <p>"winning games feels great" (A3)</p> <p>"I was such a competitive athlete" (A5)</p> <p>"Teacher's pet" (A2)</p> <p>"You finished with under sixteens and you have to go straight to ladies" (A1)</p> | Motivation, value, competence, confidence, knowledge |
| Personal Reward | positive emotions/ psychological reward, pride, satisfaction, wanting to give back, feeling good, love, escapism, joy, social, opportunity, mental health, image COVID-19 = lonely, bored, missed competition, reduced socializing, new activities and appreciation, new targets | <p>"I find it best for stress relief. That's the main reason I do it" (A3)</p> <p>"I like the reward of them doing well" (A5)</p> <p>"I was literally in every team. Any team I could be in, I was in" (A1)</p> <p>"I don't think I'd be able to live if I didn't have sport" (A2)</p> <p>"the best time of my life, probably playing football, it was the most enjoyable things" (A2)</p> <p>"at the beginning of lockdown I kind of set a target to just work on my physical fitness" (A5)</p> | Embodiment, sense of self, competence, confidence, philosophy, understanding |
| Significant Others | Inspiration from significant others, modelling, role models, vicarious experiences, family unit, cousins, coaches, friends, staff, PE COVID-19 = reduced connection, change in routines | <p>"my mum is my role model, and quite influential in the reason as to why I do physical activity"(A1)</p> <p>"That was also extremely motivating for me to become like. I knew that (dad) trained hard, so I related training hard to winning" (A3)</p> <p>"It was quite lonely...we couldn't see anyone especially with netball" (A2)</p> <p>"during lockdown my dad got a watt bike...we got an app... everyday I was racing people" (A3)</p> | Provide confidence, knowledge, value, responsibility |
| Imagining future self | Personally qualified, careers, whom they want to be, leadership, university, industry, jobs, reputation, skills, growth, self-development, learning, qualifications COVID-19 = reduced/missed FEYA opportunities, increased desire | <p>"I also coach football at a high level so I played sport for, you know, fun, but also for my future career as well" (A4)</p> <p>"I knew it would look good on my CV for university" (A3)</p> <p>"I haven't really done much with it (the FEYA role)" (A1)</p> <p>"Been affected massively, we didn't get to play at all" (A4)</p> | Embodiment, value, motivation, competence, responsibility |
| Environment | Opportunity, access, support, surroundings, schools' active schools, communities, equipment, facilities, space, locality, finance, social norms, safety COVID-19 = lack of access and opportunity, restrictions- new endeavours | <p>"having the opportunity to go play, you're never going to turn that down" (A4)</p> <p>"when camping, we would play every sport possible" (A5)</p> <p>"I got quite a big back garden" (A1)</p> <p>"Sport was massive in my school" (A4)_</p> <p>"Netball was one of the last to return (after lockdown)"(A2)</p> | Responsibility, understanding, embodiment, value, engagement |

1. Desire for Significance

The concept of being good and gaining recognition were repeated phrases in the interviews, as reasons for continued participation in PA. A4 states “I was actually really good and I was flexible and powerful which led me to become really good” and A2 noted “I moved to Swansea, which is a higher standard”. All had participated in competitive sports from early childhood and were forthcoming in mentioning their respective achievements and desired prowess early during the interviews, reflecting the national pride and esteem associated with having ability and elite status (Eather *et al.* 2020, Hallman, 2013, Denham, 2010). Achieving an elite status seemed to be directly linked to their motivation levels; “I got to the top and I would just want to be the best really and play at a higher standard” (A2). Self-categorising as belonging to an elite group of athletes, separate to others, is a human tendency to maintain positive self-esteem suggested by Social- identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) and was reflected in other comments, indicating the desire to inform family of success; “I was selected for Welsh colleges... my whole family are constantly asking after me, so that motivates me to stay at the level” (A3); “My cousin played rugby for the Ospreys U16. That was probably a big I want to do sports moment” (A1). Equally they all expressed enjoying representing teams and the recognition that came with this, especially in A1, A3 and A5, who also mentioned they were captains. This suggests that participating in teams instilled a sense of pride and belonging, adding to the significance felt which could be interpreted as an eagerness to be considered superior in comparison to the cohort. To achieve this status, the FEYAs have reached a competency level that allows them to engage regularly with sport. Therefore, it could be argued that they have broken through the proficiency barrier (Seefeldt, 1980). This may explain their current PA levels and could predict that they are likely to continue to engage in this throughout their lifespan (Williams *et al.* 2012, Gallahue *et al.* 2021). Indeed, prowess was considered important with the concept of training with elite squads being mentioned by 4 participants as a contributing factor for their continued engagement.

The status associated with being a good performer was appealing to those interviewed and was a factor that clearly attributed to enjoyment, as can be seen in A4, “I played rugby for a year, but I just couldn't play. I did not like it and just went back to football”, and A5, “surfing I really enjoyed... I was better than everyone else in the class, which is why I enjoyed it”; they admitted that despite trying other sports, they enjoyed the one in which they were most competent. Motor development research highlights that early execution of FMS attributes to increased competence and success and thus will help lead to lifelong engagement (Clark and Metcalf, 2002, Stodden *et al.* 2008, Barnett *et al.* 2009, 2016). A1 identified that their competency in an activity effected their enjoyment “I used to dread PE when I knew we had to do the 400 metres... I was never, ever good at running”, and A5 liked showing activities where they could prove to others that they were good, as this was important to them “I could prove that I was good because obviously no one in the class has ever seen me do gymnastics... but it was nice to show that I was actually good at a sport”. Perceived competence helps to increase motivation levels when considering psychological needs, as indicated in Self Determination Theory (Harter and Connell, 1984, Deci and Ryan, 2000), which may go some way to explaining why they participated regularly in sport and activity.

Being told you are good at something, by a significant other with expertness, helps drive motivation to participate (Snyder and Lopez, 2002). This concept emerges in many discussions but notably A5 applied for previous ambassador roles in school “it was my teacher... right, you're going to be really good at this” and A1 only applied for the FEYA role as “the 5x60 officer was telling me to go and speak to someone about it”. A3 wants to commence rugby at university because they were told they would be good at it by staff “he actually said that I should follow rugby... so I will pick it up in Uni”. Here we can see that the mere recognition of potential ability from an expert was enough to encourage participation. Moreover, the idea of peers deeming you as capable could also be an influencing factor in engagement, as was the case for A2, commenting “the boys did not want to partner the girl in football but soon got over it when they realised, I was as good and wanted me in the team”. More than just a motivating tool or a factor influencing

engagement, the idea of being competent and belonging to a good standard team appears to make it more enjoyable, as was the case with A4, “that added to enjoyment just going away and playing your mates and be actually good”; the perception of playing in a good team helped to make the college football experience more enjoyable overall for them.

Competence is a key component of Whiteheads PL definition and as discussed above, being talented provokes positive emotions and a drive to continue participating via autonomous motivation. Conversely, lack of competence equated to disengagement behaviour as highlighted by A5, “Didn't like competing with the boys, couldn't do it physicality wise so didn't think I could continue”. When FEYAs mentioned feeling inadequate, this was always linked to their enjoyment of the activity and consequently this dislike resulted in dropout. This was the case with A1, “I went to hockey, but it wasn't for me... I was awful.” This emphasises the connection made between perceived competence, success, and engagement (Stodden *et al.* 2008, De Meester *et al.* 2016) and is consistent with findings revealing perceived motor competence to be an important indicator of continued engagement in PA (Stodden *et al.* 2008, Lubans *et al.* 2010). There are many convincing mechanisms for the feel-good factor in activity (Biddle *et al.* 2015) but being motivated to move and play by winning, and subsequently gaining status of success, was a recurrent statement: “it feels good to win, love that feeling of success, hence the competitiveness” (A3); “we won all of our games the whole year... so that was good because it motivates me then, winning” (A2); “you win and you're on top, you feel brilliant” (A4).

Competitiveness was expressed through how they loved the feeling of competing and striving to be the best as portrayed by A1, “I'm really competitive, so I like that fighting for the win”. A5 recalled “I knew I was fit, and I knew I could do everything, and I enjoyed that” but this theme was even stronger when presented by A3, “If it's a game, you've got to win and that that is it”. The ability to utilise skills possessed in challenging circumstances, such as a competitive environment, could be interpreted as what defines

self-efficacy itself (Bandura 1997, Deci and Ryan, 2000) therefore demonstrating confidence. Competition was cited as the reason for drive or participation by the FEYAs, deliberately turning activity into competitions, “I would run to Amazon and back to see if I could beat myself” (A2); “my brother is very fit, so I want to stay beating him all the time” (A3). By their own admission, A3 was a highly competitive person, suggesting they only took up running to beat a particular person at school and has “just stuck with it ever since”. Even during lockdown A3 turned keeping fit into competition “my dad got a watt bike...I got an app we can race people, so I was in there everyday racing people”. Here we see the view that competitive environments are necessary for improvement with the aim of proving competence over another person. As stated by A5, after a while in lockdown they just “got bored” of completing home workouts, perhaps missing the social and competitive environment they were more used to. FEYAs revealed they prefer interactive games to individual pursuits, “I’m more of a team sports player” (A2); “my favourite activities were football, netball and rounders...back to those team sports again” (A1); “because you’re on your own, it’s not team sport, it’s so nerve wracking going up there on your own” (A3). Comments such as these support the view that elevated self-efficacy and confidence levels can contribute to motivation for goal attainment. This concept could assist in developing and supporting behavioural persistence and increases in activity (Annesi, 2012, Rodgers *et al.* 2014), and correlates with research suggesting self-efficacy is a mediator in PA in young people (Biddle *et al.* 2011).

The idea of FEYAs being favoured by PE staff surfaced in each interview “I was like a teacher’s pet” (A2); “the PE teachers liked me, because I was good at the practical and I was good at the theory” (A5). This reinforces the perception of being recognised as an important factor in one’s sense of achievement. Interestingly, A2 did not like some PE teachers in school as they championed the “non-sporty kids” and thus they did not feel they were getting the acknowledgement they deserved for their talent. Whitehead (2005) warns teaching specific sport skills competency is not in line with the concept of developing the individual to become physically literate, yet here we have an individual that arguably demonstrates traits of PL, craving the sport specific standards of

competency and elitism. This is echoed by A3 who's realisation of self-embodiment was not enough when they declared only enjoying PE after maturation increases meant they started to get noticed by teachers who saw their potential, "when I got to year 9... then teachers were noticing that I was good." This emphasises the importance attributed to being recognised and the desire to be rewarded for ability as a driving factor in participation for the FEYAs. It also poses the question of where the value of PE is placed by our student's perception. FEYAs stated they were the most talented in team sports in PE, but comments were made that it "was nice that others could shine in swimming or gymnastics" (A1). This contributes to the view that praise and recognition in PE means success in team sports, which appears to be considered more worthy than success in the lesser deemed individual sports. This belief seems important to the FEYAs in terms of measuring success. Despite enjoying the elite standard of sport and desiring recognition and significance, badminton and volleyball were specifically indicated as acceptable fun activities to do with friends, "we play in public services as a laugh" (A1), "badminton I loved it, I wasn't very good at it" (A1); "I think games like volleyball... I can enjoy because I don't participate in them so I can relate to other people... this is actually fun" (A3). Perceived competence has been found to explain autonomous motivation for engagement in PE (Goudas, Biddle, & Fox, 1994; Ntoumanis, 2001) yet despite FEYAs self-reporting as lacking perceived competence in some activities and not gaining significance, they still engaged regularly.

With increased competence comes access to more competition opportunities but some mentioned not letting parents come to watch "I hate my mum watching me" (A1). They found the pressure to perform in front of these significant others too much "I feel quite pressured her watching...so I don't like her being there anymore for my matches" (A2). Perhaps the feeling of not living up to expectation or performing poorly puts them off having significant others watch, having equated success to winning and the desire to prove dominance. Whilst this desire for success could be considered a driver and motivator, the image of significance and the importance placed upon achieving it may also prevent further participation. A3 admitted the pressure to perform had a negative

impact “the pressure of the race was getting to me all the time and I’d have bad guts for weeks”. The concept of desire for significance extends further with A2 as they imply the reason for wanting to coach abroad is to find the next talent and be recognised for finding them, “Because they could be the best athletes in the worst place as well”. It seems the value comes from achieving an ego-oriented outcome, as proof of ability and talent even if it is not their own.

The desire for significance encompasses aspects such as elitism, ability, recognition, status winning and drive. These are important determinants in activity continuation amongst the FEYAs and interestingly contrast starkly to the PL ethos. This can be concisely summarised by A3 “I have ambitions to be semi-professional in some sort of activity for the money, the enjoyment and the status”.

2. Personal Reward

As Whitehead (2005) highlights, our embodiment is a key aspect of our personhood through which we interact with the world. FEYAs commented loving the feeling of playing or participating in activity, expressing their enjoyment, “it’s the best feeling” (A5). A1 identified they “felt free” when paddleboarding and A2 stated “I don’t think I would be able to live if I didn’t have sport, it’s the main thing in my life”. This example of embodiment and subsequent intrinsic motivation is powerful, particularly when it is reported that feelings of pure intrinsic enjoyment are rare (Biddle *et al.* 2015). It is worth noting in the reflective journal notes the interviewer picked up on changes in body language and facial expressions when FEYAs were discussing engagement in PA activity “Facial expressions were happy and positive”, “raised voice”, “smile and laugh” (Appendix 1, pp. 70+76). FEYAs would choose to be physically active in their free time “I just love to go for a kick around” (A4). This sense of joy and escapism felt when moving was mentioned in terms of using PA such as running as a stress relief to “switch off and help forget about exams” (A5) or “to reflect on behaviour if I have to apologise” (A3) and “helps me think and be on

my own and get away from things” (A1). These interpretations that movement is connected to the mind and mood, alludes to the sense of embodiment so integral to the PL concept. Whitehead (2019) champions embodiment as an essential aspect of human nature, driven by our innate urge to relate to the world: she terms this intentionality. This perceptual relatedness ambassadors hoped to seek from PA emphasises the sense of reward and understanding that can be gained from physical movement, demonstrating intentionality. Therefore, applying Whitehead’s belief to the comments made, reinforces the perception that PL is necessary in our ability to understand and interact physically in the world. The FEYAs observations about using activity for positive mental health is also consistent with findings in adolescent specific research (Rodriguez-Allyon *et al.* 2019, Alipour-Anbarani *et al.* 2022). Even during the Covid-19 lockdown, intrinsic motivation ensured they continued to walk, run, and cycle, or find new activities, as movement was so interlinked with their own satisfaction and sense of self (Gallagher 2005, cited in Whitehead, 2005). A1 walked on her own for hours in lockdown and “loved it”. Sometimes it was a planned route, and other times it was spontaneous exploration. A4 connected with teammates “we’d all log online at 6:30 in the morning to do a HIIT session” and A3 reported using the garden to “set up badminton with netting” to help satisfy the sporting and competitive urges that were so much a part of their embodiment and subsequent enjoyment. Whilst Biddle *et al.* (2015), suggests further research is needed to explore motivational elements on enjoyment, a common motivational view from the FEYAs appeared to be undertaking demanding activities.

FEYAs reported enjoying the challenges presented and progression seen from engaging in PA. Despite reporting some activities as difficult, they liked the challenging task and enjoyed the opportunities that arose, “Surfing-I think the challenge is really good... I enjoyed it” (A4). They gladly tried new activities for the fun of it, regularly opting to spend their time participating in afterschool clubs or accepting new experiences such as outdoor pursuits modules or taking on “Duke of Edinburgh award last minute” as was the case with A1. Investing time and effort into PA was considered valuable use of time, even during the turbulence of the Covid-19 pandemic when they would choose to take on

fitness regimes or play outdoor games with families, “Yeah, she ordered the badminton net for me and said, oh, we've got a badminton night” (A1). This is expected as findings suggest it is the FEYAs awareness of the value of PA combined with their confidence and knowledge that makes them more likely to engage in these activities (Alipour-Anbarani *et al.* 2022). During lockdown A2 described “the route around my house is a circle route... 5K... So, I'd do that and just try and test myself, see if I could lower my times...And then I went into a 10k” indicating the personal reward they gained from achieving targets they had set when running or cycling. These activities were undertaken to not only counteract the lockdown boredom but to also satisfy the need to move and challenge themselves. The FEYAs are open to new experiences and can navigate and remove barriers in their way to enhance their overall health (Tremblay *et al.* 2018, Satija *et al.* 2018, Alipour-Anbarani *et al.* 2022). For A1 “covid meant no football, no group activities, but I started doing a lot of walking in lockdown”. A5 shifted focus with the absence of sport, “I bought a skipping rope I bought a set of weights I bought like a new yoga mat ... a lot of fitness stuff that would just keep me entertained” This was important as it may have helped to satisfy the sense of self and helped to connect to the world (Burkitt, 1999, cited in Whitehead, 2005) during the strange circumstances of Covid-19 Lockdowns. A3 enjoyed learning new training and techniques in a fitness gym, but also wanted aesthetic gains to feel good about themselves, “In comprehensive, I was skinny... so I weighed 50-60kg, people used to take the mick”. Interestingly it was a peer that encouraged and taught A3 before writing them a program, or else they would not have done it. Peers are strong influencers of behaviour and the social element of participating in activity was regularly cited.

A common view was that participating with friends helped to enhance the value of the activity and when being active with friends it “felt like they were doing something with their time” (A1). Structured and organised activity appears to have been the vehicle for creating strong social networks, which is a crucial element of human behaviour. A4 highlighted, “I think the position I'm in now is mainly due to playing sports and football. I improved my confidence a lot as I've grown up, which meant I can speak to people more freely”. Here it was engagement in football itself that gave them the confidence to make new friends.

Importantly they mentioned not having the confidence to go on residential in school but by playing college football and subsequently creating strong social bonds, this has instilled in them the confidence necessary to cope in such situations, “I think it helped massively... like the college football meeting 15-16 new people, we're now mates”. They went on to represent the college football team at a tournament requiring overnight stays, a pinnacle moment in their confidence levels, “I don't think I had the confidence at the time to do that, so different now”. The personal growth and reward achieved from this was visible in the ambassador “big smiles and grins, lifted/tilted chin” (appendix 1, A4 page. 70) and has now opened a wealth of future possibilities that previously seemed unavailable to them. This arguably represents human flourishing (Whitehead, 2019) helping to justify the concept of PL for all from the affordances this individual achieved through sport participation.

It seems that being active with friends was a rewarding and positive past time with FEYAs deliberately looking for likeminded and similarly active friends. A1 mentioned “I got my friends into paddle boarding” so they could participate together and so has become influential in others PL journeys, as well as nurturing their own. A3 suggested they were “friends with people who are like me”, deliberately finding friends that want to be active as they would rather spend time socially doing activities. Social benefits added to the pleasure of PA as can be seen with A2 who commented, “if you're not enjoying social aspect of it, you're not going to enjoy the sports”, going on to discuss the friendship group from their football team also opt to do activities together outside of football. However, A2 also recognised it is hard to maintain friendships with active people, as “other active people are usually busy as well”.

Choosing to be active with friends or joining teams for social benefits is positive behaviour linked to PL but as A2 pointed out, the extremes of lockdown in Covid-19 impeded this socialising, “I thought it was quite lonely as well because we couldn't see anyone, especially with netball because it was indoor, it was one of the last sports to start back up again”. Not being able to participate in their sporting endeavours was difficult for the

FEYAs as for many years their weekly schedule had been made up of specific club attendance, as participation was their passion. A2 indicated that the restrictions on distances in lockdown meant “I couldn't see a lot of the people I'd interact with... I couldn't travel that far, so I found it really hard”. The nature of sports teams means connections and relationships are made with members residing in all surrounding areas, as they come together for the specific activity. A5 shared a similar view stating after lockdown “I loved joining the college football and belonging to a team again, I had missed that”. Being in a team it seems brought personal reward in the form of friendships and satisfaction from collaboration. It could be viewed that this sense of gaining a personal reward and collaboration urged the participants to pursue the FEYA role.

The FEYAs had previously taken on mentoring and leadership roles in clubs and school positions “I was a prefect and sports ambassador” (A3). It was mentioned that they enjoyed being “a role model to other people” (A2) recognising whilst it was difficult, it was also rewarding, such as when “witnessing someone scoring their first goal” (A1). Wanting to help others was often cited, “making people go further and growing how good they are and just seeing people progress” (A4); “I like the reward of them doing well” (A5). A1 wanted to help others emulate the feelings of personal gain and reward that they obtained from being active “if someone doesn't want to do it, finding a way around it to get them to do it, I love that”. The sense of wanting to “give back” (A3) and increase opportunities for children to experience the same positive benefits and “to enjoy themselves” (A2) was translated as a rewarding feeling. This sense of liking to give back and teaching others new skills can be seen in comments such as “coaching is a rewarding feeling” (A1); “I like teaching” (A5); “I Love learning from the other coaches and gaining experience and seeing people grow” (A4); “It's great to see others doing things you have taught them” (A2); “I had a lot of gratitude from coaching and went home feeling really proud” (A3). Certainly, the concept of seeing people progress was strong in their answers as was the recognition of the importance placed upon the trust others had in you. Noteworthy was a statement from A2, “would like to work with charities that provide activity for

disadvantaged children, they deserve fun as well". They have made a synonymous link between fun and PA, placing much importance upon this relationship.

A2,3,4 and 5 referred to wanting a "career in sport" due to the enjoyment they themselves had gained from participating and competing, thus allowing them to continue to extend their own and others PL journeys. Whilst the FEYAs highlighted liking and enjoying the feeling of being a role model, it is important to remember participation is their predominant reason for engagement; A1 mentioned giving up an activity as it became more about coaching the others and not about personal improvement "it was coaching the younger ones, instead of training". Consequently, if a participant did not feel they were gaining personal reward and enjoyment from participation, they would cease doing so. A1 was not motivated by having to join a new team and "start again" after Covid-19 collapsed their previous club. A5, by their own admission was "hit or miss" with practical modules in college depending upon the "childish" mood of the boys in the class. Despite achieving national honours in cricket, A2 found it "long and boring" and so gave it up. Biddle *et al.* (2015) recognises common motives for PA for young people are fun, skill development, affiliation, fitness, success, and challenge and so not surprisingly, without the personal reward felt by the FEYAs in the forms mentioned by Biddle, continued engagement and participation was unlikely.

3. Significant others

The FEYAs were notably consistent when discussing significant others in their life that support them or steered them towards participating in PA. The immediate family unit (parents, siblings, grandparents) were clearly influential in terms of encouragement, support, and influence. All the parents were involved in junior sport themselves, some to an elite level, with others still currently participating and competing. Parents were viewed as role models and were important instigators in placing them into sports clubs, summer camps and activities. A1 noted how influential mum was leading the extracurricular

activities as a teacher in the primary school “she's a big role model and, quite influential in the reason as to why I do a lot of physical activity”. Early positive behaviours may explain why the FEYAs are still involved in PA, as there is greater chance of continuation of good habits or behaviours if they begin early in life (Telama, 2009, Biddle *et al.* 2010, Jones *et al.* 2013).

Naturally, FEYAs and their siblings were often placed in the same sport that parents once did “Mum also played netball...I think she played for county” (A1); “my mum was a swimmer so that's where we got it” (A5). Having a shared knowledge and passion allows parents to offer support and encouragement. A3 highlighted “I go up the bike park with my dad quite a lot” and when talking about running remarks, “my dad's got involved a lot lately” regularly going out with them. A4 now competes in a club team alongside their father “I still play cricket with my dad”, with FEYAs expressing that they find this motivating and exciting. This is not an unusual occurrence with longitudinal research highlighting that adolescent PA was associated with the father's own activity levels (Pugliese and Tinsley, 2007, Edwardson and Gorely, 2010, Biddle *et al.* 2015). Parents were celebrated for always providing transport, buying the equipment needed or desired sporting memorabilia and even looking for events to attend. A2 expressed taking for granted the expectation of being transported and even pointed out that mum would drive between netball, football, and cricket all on the same day “she is literally, my taxi and takes me everywhere”. These statements correspond with suggestions that the correlation between parental support and child PA is stronger than that of parental PA alone (Gustafson and Rhodes, 2006, Biddle *et al.* 2015). Also noted were Grandparents who usually picked up the duties when parents were working “my grandparents were massive driving force in getting us to play sport” (A4); “my grandfather got me into cricket, he'd come to watch my matches” (A2); “play games in the park for as long as your grandparents wanted you to” (A3). A2, A3 and A4 specifically identified moments of encouragement and unstructured activity with grandparents such as playing with bats and balls in the garden.

Often it was discussed that families would watch sport together “my family are rugby mad” (A1); “me and my mother are Swans season ticket holders” (A4), highlighting the importance of a shared interest and a passion for sport influencing how to spend leisure time. Parents were credited with providing the support needed to engage with PA such as active family holidays or finding new activities or equipment to engage with. This was particularly important in lockdown where opportunities were limited yet A1 credited mum with “walking and cycling” and over lockdown and A4 “helped mum do the couch to 5k”. This is encouraging as parental support is considered the main association with PA involvement in adolescents (Edwardson and Gorely, 2010). FEYAs remembered fondly moments when parents joined in with activities whether it was street games; “My father... he was like a child every night playing football or something with us”(A1); on holidays, “the parents would be bowling and the kids would be batting or we'd do a massive game of football where the parents would join in” (A5); or at a club, “my local club, we did parents against kids” (A3). Additionally, siblings were credited for providing play partners, A3 often will play football and frisbee with their brother, citing competition as the motive, “I'd like to beat him”. A5 recognised “my sister went to Valencia... if I join the football team and actually get good at it, one day I could go and play in a different country as well”; this vicarious experience gave them the confidence to also try for the team when they were old enough. These successes may be down to the ability of siblings to allow for appropriate modelling (Bandura, 1997).

In general, completing PA often involved members of the family whether it was spectating, going for walks, cycling, or playing badminton in the garden and perhaps this was the key to engagement. It was encouraging to hear stories of family walks and garden games during the enforced lockdown. Lockdown particularly impacted upon A4 (who has a brother with Autism) by cancelling the routine family swims. Whilst this may have reduced overall PL and wellbeing levels, instead swimming was replaced, “We would go out walking in the hills and away from everyone ... we've got quite used to this family walk we still love to do it. Most Sundays we go up on the mountain”. Here we can see family PA attributing to maintaining wellbeing support and routine for a family member. These

stories help to accentuate the influence parents may have in establishing healthy habits, even with adolescents. Throughout the discussions, it was clear that having active parents provided appropriate role models and support to thrive, but perhaps more interesting was the strong emphasis placed on cousins influencing behaviour. A1 had cousins that introduced them to new activities “My cousin took me paddleboarding one day last year and I fell in love with it”. A4 credited their cousins for the influence in playing cricket “I think my cousins were very influential. Like they're both similar age to me like we used to be together all the time”. The family unit seems to be integral to creating PL cultures for the ambassadors to model from.

In addition to the family unit, significant others surfaced from the education sector and whilst PE is usually considered important for PL development, (Talbot 2007, Whitehead 2010, Hardman 2011), during this research, education staff in general emerged as influential. School receptionists were credited for inspiring and encouraging participation in women's football “I think she kind of pushed me to want to do football... Oh, come on girls, we've got a match” (A5), and supply exchange teachers for introducing new sports altogether, as was the case with A3 who became involved in Gaelic football “I started in year three with a teacher... and ever since then, I've stuck with it”. Having a bond or rapport with the teacher was important at this early age. A4 had a “cricket mad” year 5 teacher whilst A2 still idolises and works closely with their year 6 teacher who is a netball enthusiast “it was nice to have a woman role model who played netball as well to drive me into playing”.

At post 16 years education, it was the college gold ambassador leader that was noted as particularly inspiring and helpful with increasing activity involvement “She was really, really influential” (A4). The love of movement, sport, and belonging to a group, is the reason all ambassador's stated PE was their favourite school subject and so, unsurprisingly, the predominant influential figures identified were PE teachers. Furthermore 4 out of 5 FEYAs are going on to study sport courses at university which

aligns with research implying active adolescents go on to be active adults (Telama *et al.* 2005, Kjonniksen, Torsheim, & Wold, 2008). This impact of PE is promising as the ambassadors in turn will become educated and may influence the next generation.

Noticeably, FEYAs cited PE teachers that aligned with their own genders, and credited them with creating fun, “so much energy...It would always be enjoyable”(A5), being supportive “he pushed you every session, constantly checking up on you, making sure you're alright” (A3); “there's training, maybe you should go to it” (A2), and enthusiasm “telling us any different sport trips” (A4); “she was amazing, really good with everyone, even if you've never played before” (A1). Encouragement of non-core curriculum activities also sparked rapport and interest thanks to the mix of activities provided by staff. Feeling inspired and encouraged by staff to join clubs is in line with research suggesting teachers are important in the process of creating and shaping a motivational climate (Vallerand & Losier, 1999, Reeve, 2009). The FEYAs sport-specific participation in clubs was often discussed and so as expected, coaches were also recognised as integral to continued participation. A2 noted it was “nice to have someone pushing you and wanting your best interests”. Similarly, A1 recognised their football coach as their role model, feeling encouraged by them to do activity “gives me the kick I need sometimes”. Indeed, role models are helpful in raising efficacy expectations which again can help to maintain participation and engagement (Bandura, 1896).

As previously mentioned in the personal reward section, friendship groups provided feelings of reward but following on from this, it seems friendship networks were also influential when it came to activity type, “me and my best friend did the same activities” (A5); “that got me into playing football because I had a mate there”(A4); “most of my friends played football for a team by me, so I think it was more convenient for me to go” (A1); and therefore frequency of involvement in PA “Two of my best friends...we were on bikes 24/7 or football down parks”(A3). Having someone you knew at a team provided the encouragement needed to participate even when particularly shy as pointed out by

A4', "probably wouldn't have gone" if their friend was not there. A1 credits their best friend for the encouragement and support needed, "he was the one who got me to start playing, the one who got me to join the boys football team". Similarly, A3 was motivated by a particularly knowledgeable peer to take up a new fitness regime which they then completed together "he made it for me... helped me make it good". Having successful friends can spark some extrinsic motivation by pushing you to be as good as them. It was nice to hear that the ambassadors themselves were inspired by each other with A5 cited as "always motivated" (A3) which spurred them on to try and be more like them.

The above discussion points allude to persuasion by a significant other as important in motivation, persistence, and efficacy, but there is a lack of research that specifically addresses social persuasion influences, potentially due to the lesser role it plays as an efficacy source (Biddle, Mutrie and Gorley, 2015). Nevertheless, it is apparent from the interviews that 'others' have a notable influence on the FEYAs PL levels.

4. Imagining Future Self

FEYAs reported reasons for engaging in PA and coaching linked to attaining future aspirations, "I really need to get physically fit to be able to pass the police tests" (A1); "I knew it would look good on my CV and for university" (A3, A4); "it would benefit me going to university" (A5). They all had a keen sense of future direction with potential employment apparent as a driver in the decisions they made. All FEYAs applied to university, with PE teaching or coaching being the preferred outcome for most (4/5). "I want to be a PE teacher to inspire others like my teacher did for me" (A3). Therefore, many of the additional opportunities undertaken whilst at college (such as Duke of Edinburgh or football referee awards), were completed with the intention of gaining the necessary

industry skills required for future employment. This moves away from the innate nature of PL towards a more extrinsic motivation for engagement in PA.

Another extrinsic incentive noted was that of establishing a reputation; “with lecturers it kind of puts them in a good mindset about you” (A3). Engagement in activities was undertaken in the hope that showing willing and helping the college would establish a positive reputation within the industry and stand them in good stead for future career opportunities; “being a sports ambassador, I've got that extra experience that some people may not have” (A5); “having that role looks really big...you've gone out your way to apply to do something like that” (A4). Those that coach in their chosen sports do so in the knowledge that this will be linked to their future career path and so are gaining valuable skills and experience to provide them with a better prospect when applying for jobs. Occasionally learning was credited as a motive for engagement to improve own personal performance and knowledge; “as a referee yourself, you know how to speak to a referee and how to act on the sideline or even on the pitch, when I'm playing”(A4); “I learnt many things that I had never thought of like positioning and to have good communication with players and I have learnt rules I wasn't clear on” (A3). Self-improvement and development align closely with the idea that PL is a unique journey for everyone. This could be interpreted as having the intrinsic motivation necessary to want to improve oneself, but more exploration would be needed to determine what proportion of extrinsic reward or intrinsic satisfaction was driving these decisions.

When asked for reasons as to why they applied for the FEYA role, answers included looking favourable on a Curriculum Vitae or when applying through the university and colleges admissions service. A3 stated “I just liked what you were going to do within the role”, but also wondered if the unconditional offer they received for university was because of the ambassador role itself; (incidentally, all FEYAs received unconditional offers to their preferred university course, but it is unclear if this was due to being a FEYA). It is worth noting that when marketing for FEYAs, there is a strong emphasis placed upon

the value of the experiences gained which could then be discussed on university applications or in interviews. This may have encouraged them to apply as many were intent on achieving success in higher education and beyond. More probing would be needed to determine if they would have applied without the suggestion of a potential advantage.

It was evident that joining sports teams would be a top priority when joining university; “they’ve got a running track and cross-country team” (A3), with some dismay at having to choose between sports due to clashes in BUCS league fixtures, “I’m going to try the netball team and then if that clashes with football, I’m going to decide to join netball” (A2). The sport system at higher education favours specializing, contrasting with the concept of PL and so it was disappointing that FEYAs would be limited in the activities they could engage with. Nevertheless, with the intention of continuing with sport whilst at university, A4 already knows which specific university academy to attend; “obviously play football in Uni 100%, I already know a few boys that play for the university”. A3 deliberately chose the university based upon facilities and location “There’s a 5km track, Park run ...when I started to realize that it was so close to Gaelic, it heavily influenced me”. For the FEYAs, sport was an integral part of their youth and one in which it is clear they are excited to develop at university.

Although reasons for engagement in sport and coaching were often linked to improving prospects, it is important to note that this was in conjunction with the other aspects as previously discussed, and not therefore, the predominant motive for participation. Understandably, it can appear that engagement focussed heavily on gaining advantages in future employment, but other positive gains were deemed important such as leadership and teamwork; “the skills learnt on the ambassador programme are life skills not just for sport, for example, first aid. I could use that anywhere and it's a life skill, not just for sport” (A4). A3 voluntarily completed additional qualifications to “help out in refereeing football around my area because there are limited referees”, highlighting the sense of giving back as discussed in the personal reward section.

The FEYAs have actively taken on leadership and mentoring roles in their PL journeys, indicating their genuine enjoyment of inspiring and supporting others rather than solely pursuing personal future gains. Further investigation into the ambassador's prime motives for engagement would be needed to clarify the most pertinent reasons for their interaction with activities, of which investing in their future self is one.

5. Environment

As advocated by Whitehead (2005), Existentialists and Phenomenologists determine that we create ourselves from our interaction with the world. It was apparent that the FEYAs PL was nurtured because of the many components encompassed within the bracket of environment that allow for rich interaction. It is agreed multi-component interventions of education, family, and community environment, all help to increase PA in young people (Biddle *et al.* 2015). Such factors as school, friendship norms, location, access, provision, and opportunities all appeared in the FEYAs interviews and combined to illustrate how the ambassadors would nurture their PL and realise their human potential from the richness of interactions (Whitehead, 2005). Biddle *et al.* (2015) ascertain that whilst environmental factors can be important, they are not invariably so, yet it appears in this research to emerge as a theme.

Active schools were important in shaping attitudes and habits as A1 found “No clubs available in 6th form...in college I do much more physical activity due to modules studied and playing for the girls' football team”. Research suggests even with small amounts of choice, intrinsic motivation can be increased particularly in adolescent girls (Prusak *et al.* 2004) and so education establishments should provide opportunity to expose students to different activities and spark new interests. Providing opportunities allowed A4 to “go to the NFL in London... I went back three years in a row. It was amazing” this opportunity has now led to them considering joining an American Football team “I’ll look into that when

I go to university". All FEYAs mentioned primary schools encouraging PA by providing equipment to explore and play with at break times "skipping ropes, balls, rackets. There was everything" (A5); "because it was a brand-new school...the equipment we had was actually really good" (A1); "they definitely pushed for us to play" (A3). Moreover, activities in college have encouraged; badminton participation in A4 "play my dad maybe sometimes"; A2 to "like coastering surprisingly" and A3 to try "handball, which I actually really enjoyed. I've never done that before".

After-school clubs such as frisbee, volleyball and badminton combined with encouragement from staff, provided a fun environment to participate "I literally used to stay for every after-school club" (A1). Whilst attending extracurricular clubs remained at the forefront of memories in secondary school, so were the inclusion of after-school games, which were remembered with fondness, recalling the excitement of going to other schools to compete, "one time in year six we went away to Cardiff to play football, which is huge when you are that little" (A4). It is worth noting however, that according to Biddle *et al.* (2015), these FEYAs are amongst the limited range of individuals to which after-school settings appeal. Furthermore, despite reporting enjoying mixing with other pupils once in the clubs "it was nice to play with different people, not just people you're in class with" (A1), merely offering clubs themselves was not always enough of a draw for participation, with friendship groups playing a key role in attendance as mentioned previously. Additionally A1 commented they would "never go to a club to start playing, not at my age anyway", which decreases the opportunities available to them. FEYAs discussed living in different catchment areas to the schools resulted in lack of familiarity with other pupils, "I knew a few people, but I didn't know that many people" (A4); "I only found people my age that I was friends with when I was in about year eight" (A3). Friendship norms were integral in creating an inclusive environment and determining participation. Nevertheless, the FEYAs attended sport specific clubs as a natural progression from participating in school clubs, but the activity type often depended upon availability in the area. This was the case for A1 "when I was younger there wasn't really girls' rugby. So, it was kind of more like, oh, we're going to play football."

It was common for the female FEYAs (A1, A2 and A5) to play in boys' teams due to a lack of female specific provision, "I started football, and I was in a boys' team and I was the only girl" (A1). Research suggests interventions for girls work best when targeting female only settings (Biddle *et al.* 2015), and so the limited progression routes available for female adolescents transitioning from mixed junior teams makes the dropout rate unsurprising. Whilst lockdown group restrictions particularly impacted upon team sports, sadly the female activities suffered most; "netball because it was indoor, it was one of the last sports to start back up again" (A2). All FEYAs reported missing competition and skill-based progression during lockdown, with A2 using the term "lonely" when cycling solo. These dejected feelings are consistent with research indicating physically active individuals will report more negative psychological wellbeing when deprived of activity (Biddle *et al.* 2015). Whilst this appeared a temporary issue for the male teams, the female ambassadors repeated issues of teams folding since lockdown, "No one seems to be interested anymore, and I don't know whether that's because of lockdown or because they know that we're going to have to try and build our team again" (A1). This was not an issue highlighted by the male ambassadors who have many opportunities still available, "during lockdown county team commitment was low, so I went down to my local club again" (A3). Indeed, female ambassadors noted they would not have played much football during the pandemic if it were not for the college. (As a note staff found it particularly difficult to arrange fixtures after lockdown due to falling participation rates in women's teams).

Further opportunities to increase knowledge and experience through extra qualifications (Duke of Edinburgh award, refereeing awards, rugby leaders etc) or the FEYA role itself, all contribute to an active environment in college. The initial move to college instilled confidence in A4 to apply for the FEYA role, reinforcing the role of education in boosting students' confidence levels, affording them access to opportunities to become physically literate (Alipour-Anbarani *et al.* 2022). Moreover, education establishments alleviate the financial burden thus providing access to activities, as was the case with A3 who only uses the gym in college because "I can get for free".

FEYAs reported living in natural areas with plenty of access to outdoor pursuits, but the lack of exposure to this outdoor world meant they did not engage with it as readily as they would a sports club. Family walks in the nearby mountainous areas were mentioned as a lockdown pastime but this was a last resort due to local restrictions. Interestingly, engagement with outdoor pursuits modules was not readily mentioned or recalled by the FEYAs, and whilst the interviewer's concern for leading questions was deliberated, knowledge of the college activities undertaken warranted this direct approach; "Oh yeah, actually I forgot about that" (A5); "Ah, yes I remember" (A3). For some ambassador's college opportunities to engage in outdoor pursuits led to further independent participation in paddleboarding or surfing. It was the new knowledge and confidence gained in conjunction with proximity to the sea that allowed this participation to exist; "wouldn't do sea to summit, couldn't see it if it wasn't for the course" (A4). Self-efficacy has been found to be a successful mediator in PA behaviour in young people (Lubans, Foster and Biddle, 2008) and so, opportunities like those provided in college are important in allowing the FEYAs to believe they can do it, thus increasing their motivation and confidence to do so (Biddle, Mutrie and Gorley, 2015); "Surfing. I've never done that before nor Coaststeering. I will do again, as yeah, I've never even gone near that" (A3).

Safe spaces to participate in activity were also important when determining the way FEYAs moved in their environment. Often it was mentioned that summer holiday camps would be attended at local leisure centres and schools "I always used to go to summer clubs...there was a lot there" (A2). It must not be underestimated the power of a community or a street with other children in promoting additional PA. A2 and A3 reported living in undesirable areas where they were not allowed to play on the street, a problem often alleviated by moving, "when I moved house, then it was just out every single day" (A3); "it wasn't the best place to grow up. That's why we wanted to move out" (A2). Once they had moved, they played street games each night with children their own age. This type of interaction was also mentioned by the other 3 FEYAs as they reported living in secure communities. Not living in what is deemed a safe area also impacted active travel as ambassadors took cars to school instead of walking "I lived in the rough area... dad

never wanted me to walk through it” (A3). The greater likelihood of time inside due to busy roads and fear of safety for children, contributes to lower than optimal levels of PA for children and adolescents (Biddle *et al.* 2015). This provides pause for thought as active travel shows promise in increasing PA (Biddle *et al.* 2015), but this can only be met if the location is suitable.

Those that did not have children to play street games with remember going to the park or woods to meet friends “I always remember going to the park” (A1). Luckily all grew up with gardens and this influenced how they moved, “I’d run up and down the steps and try and beat my dog” (A2); “Hitting the ball in swing ball, but we used to love that” (A4); or “I had a little basketball hoop on my wall” (A3), which allowed for movement even if they could not do so in street games. As children, parents purchased a variety of active equipment such as mini goals and netball hoops, fitness equipment or trampolines, and this trend continued throughout lockdown as mentioned previously. Having access to the internet in lockdown also helped to alleviate boredom for A1 who used Joe Wickes workouts “Him being so motivated and that made me go back and do another one”. This coincides with research that determined adolescents consider the internet a helpful source for health information (Alipour-Anbarani *et al.* 2022).

Supplementary Information

Due to limitations caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the FEYAs faced unprecedented compromises to the usual demands and experiences of the role. The reduction in face-to-face interaction amongst themselves, their peers and programme leaders, meant they missed opportunities to attend additional courses, gain qualifications or participate in workshops, limiting their chances to upskill. The restrictions in social mixing meant the FEYAs could not share their experiences or best practice with other leaders from different institutes, nor could they fully engage with their role as mentors to other young leaders. They did not get to connect with other groups around the college when normally they

would have led activities to increase the PL levels of other students. It was clear to see the disappointment from the FEYAs during the interviews and they had limited topics to discuss in relation to the role as it was significantly minimised. The restrictions on group numbers and use of facilities did, however, provide the opportunity for growth in creativity and problem solving. The FEYAs created online video content around guidance and advice for healthy eating, exercise and wellbeing including the weekly activity challenges and daily tips which were shared across the group's social media channels but overall, the limitations caused by the pandemic meant that the FEYAs were unable to fully meet the dynamic role they had originally desired to fulfil.

This chapter has presented the main findings that emerged from the thematic analysis of qualitative data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The following chapter summarises the findings, presenting conclusions in relation to the research question. Limitations and strengths will be considered before outlining the overall contribution of this research to the body of research currently available. Recommendations for future research opportunities will be indicated.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This research aimed to explore the PL journeys of the FEYAs at a 6th form college. The following chapter will draw conclusions in relation to the 5 key themes the researcher considered influential and significant to the research aims. Limitations and strengths of this research will be reviewed before identifying recommendations for future research opportunities.

Key theme 1: Desire for Significance.

The concept of being considered significant was a prominent feeling expressed by the FEYAs and could be regarded as a means of maintaining positive self-esteem (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). For the FEYAs, pride in being recognised for talent and team selection, were important when engaging and continuing with PA, with the idea of being rewarded for competence linking to both motivation and engagement levels. Additionally, competitiveness derived from the desire of wanting to surpass others, also motivated the ambassadors and so the PL concept of self-embodiment was not sufficient on its own. PE was identified as a favourite subject by the FEYAs and was closely aligned to the belief of being successful in this subject. Aspects such as elitism, ability, recognition, status, winning and drive, were encompassed into the theme “desire for significance” and were considered important determinants in activity continuation. Therefore, the significance of early execution of FMS to allow for such success, and subsequent engagement in lifelong PA, is important (Clark and Metcalf 2002, Stodden *et al.* 2008, Barnett *et al.* 2009, 2016). Early execution of FMS needs to be prioritised to allow everyone access to achieving feelings of pride and significance, whether that be in competition or in personal improvement. As the very nature of sport is about proving superiority, recognition and praise are usually awarded to those more capable; but feelings of pride should be achievable for everyone and not just the few that reach superior athletic performances. Redefining success and reward would go a long way to helping individuals feel satisfied; this can be implemented in school by encouraging other measures of success in PE and retiring comparison of ability. If continuation of activity is to be achieved, competitive situations should be crafted so there is a reliance on each individuals skills, abilities, and progress to be recognised and celebrated. Creating environments to allow representation through your own unique movement journey, will consequently foster feelings of status and a sense of achievement usually reserved for sport teams.

Key theme 2: Personal Reward

Embodiment and intrinsic motivation were closely linked when discussing the love of movement and the feelings gained from being physically active or achieving in the physical domain. This intrinsic motivation ensured the FEYAs continued to move during the restrictions of lockdown as it was so closely linked to satisfaction and their sense of self (Gallagher, 2005, cited in Whitehead, 2005). FEYAs relished opportunities to try new activities or create new challenges and targets for themselves as this is what they enjoyed doing and had become so much a part of who they are. PA has afforded opportunities to create strong social bonds with peers, thus helping to realise their human potential (Whitehead, 2005). Wanting to become leaders and role models to encourage others to be more active was a keen desire expressed, reflecting the personal reward the FEYAs themselves gained from being active. Thus, many identified wanting a career in the field of PA. The FEYAs motives for engagement and participation revolve around the concept of personal reward including factors such as, fun, skill development, affiliation, fitness, success, positive mental health benefits, and challenge; concepts that have previously been identified in research (Biddle *et al.* 2015).

PE provides a platform to access every school student in the UK and so has a unique opportunity to expose young people to a variety of movement patterns. PE must focus on developing and nurturing intrinsic motivation and competency levels in FMS for successful development of PL. Allowing autonomy for students to set their own individual targets and challenges is important, however this differs to the prescribed nature of the curriculum followed by most schools. Peer groups are influential in enjoyment and so opportunities for group movement activities outside the realms of competitive team sports should be employed. Personal reward, success and fun should be at the forefront of planning activities to maximise future engagement.

Key theme 3: Significant Others

Family units, (notably parents, siblings, and cousins), as well as coaches, peers and educational staff were all highlighted as supportive and influential in activity choice and frequency. The term '*role model*' was applied to those adults that were supportive of the ambassador's participation in PA, whether it be through encouragement, showing interest, or providing access. All FEYAs parents had been involved in organised sport themselves and some were still regularly competing and even participating alongside them. This shared passion contributed to the enjoyment and provided additional motivation and understanding. Parents were credited with providing finance, transport, access, opportunities, and support to participate regularly and this encouragement continued throughout lockdowns with the purchase of new equipment or forming of new family exercise habits. Unsurprisingly, PE staff were identified as influential in the ambassadors' PL journeys by initiating new clubs and activities, as well as providing advice, guidance, and encouragement- all of which had a positive influence on the FEYAs' attitudes and habits.

This implies that the most important role models for encouraging PA are community members and the family unit, not elite athletes or celebrities. Championing regular family members in campaigns and advertising, as opposed to the minority of elite performers, may seem more relevant, encouraging, and relatable. Families should endeavour to create whole family group gatherings to allow cousins to interact and inspire each other, particularly if children live without the immediate interaction and modelling from siblings. Moreover, organisations should seek to create and provide whole family PA involvement. Getting parents to become involved with clubs or get back into sport, may prove fruitful when trying to recruit younger members. Children need to see adults engaging in PA and so clubs should target participation in the adult cohort when establishing new teams and activities.

Key theme 4: Imagining Future Self

This was an important external driver in motivating the ambassador's participation and a clear reason as to why they would encourage others to participate. Future aspirations were linked to performance in PA, playing for better teams, becoming coaches or teachers, and gaining more knowledge in the field, driving them to undertake opportunities to upskill and develop. The FEYAs willingly completed additional qualifications offered in the knowledge that this will help them when applying to university or make them more employable. The concept of gaining a positive reputation within the PA field led many to volunteer their time coaching, in the hope that it would be rewarded in the future. The prospect of joining teams at university and continuing to improve their sporting prowess was a determinant in the choice of university the FEYAs would attend.

The message for universities is to modernise and expand the repertoire, facilities, and access of activities available, to encourage more students to apply to their institute. Providing opportunities to be mentored or to gain additional qualifications and experience will be appealing to potential students who are focussed on future employment. Educational establishments should provide scope to develop skills and gain experience through PA projects as well as provide opportunities to engage in a variety of activities instead of merely specialising.

Key theme 5: Environment

Opportunities to engage with activity in the forms of providing safe spaces to play or access to varied equipment and clubs, facilitated the ambassador's PL journeys. Extensive facilities and support from school resulted in increased participation and engagement, and so this provision and access to activity must not be underestimated. Availability of local sport specific clubs determined participation choices, particularly in

the case of the female ambassadors, and it was regretful to note that they were most impacted by closure of clubs after the pandemic lockdowns. Despite the FEYAs having access to a varied natural environment, engagement in outdoor pursuits was limited. Exposure to this environment through education did afford some ambassadors confidence to pursue these activities independently, but participation was minimal when compared to sport clubs' involvement.

Local authorities and community providers need to offer and provide more for their constituents. They should explore ways in which to get the community and families involved and knowledgeable in the wider experiences available within the catchments, working towards interaction with the natural resources available. Confidence, knowledge, easy access, and equipment are necessary to engage successfully with the natural environment but once established, this could increase involvement and participation with outdoor pursuits. Schools need to value PA clubs and continue to nurture, develop, and create a variety of experiences for all students to try. This needs to link with what is available in the community for progression to occur, with provisions being made to nurture female transition into activities. Specifically, sporting governing bodies need to find ways of increasing access to their activities at a female youth level, as they are disregarding participation and talent identification in this cohort.

Ultimately, the FEYAs have all chosen and taken responsibility to engage with the environment and move their bodies in numerous ways throughout their childhood. Organised sport is a firm favourite pastime amongst the FEYAs, but all have had an array of opportunities and experiences spanning education, extracurricular, unstructured social situations, and family moments. Even during the trials and tribulations of the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns, the combination of knowledge, competence and confidence allowed them to find new and diverse ways to remain physically literate and, in the process, some even managed to increase the PL levels of others. Whilst Covid-19 was responsible for scuppering the regular opportunities normally afforded to FEYAs, this did not deter them, with many finding new and novel ways to engage with activity due to their

prior knowledge and competence. The FEYAs choose to spend their time moving their bodies for a variety of reasons but essentially, they continue to do so because this is what they value and what feels good to them. It was encouraging to discover that they were open to new experiences and even managed to navigate and remove barriers in their way to enhance their overall health (Trembelay *et al.* 2018, Satija *et al.* 2018, Alipour-Anbarani *et al.* 2022). The FEYAs openly discussed their motivations, and displayed understanding of both their own and others PA throughout the discussions therefore it could be advocated they are physically literate adolescents.

Limitations

This investigative research was conducted with the purpose of exploring the PL journeys of FEYAs; consequently, the qualitative design means results cannot be standardised. Instead, results allowed for the rich narrative voices of young people to be heard. Additionally, the small non-probability sample size, exclusively from the NPT borough, has its own unique cultural characteristics which also negates the generalisability of the results. The issue of researcher bias has been minimised through using reflexive notes, but it must also be recognised the researcher had taught the FEYAs for 2 years.

Strengths

The in-depth information gathered in this research is a helpful contribution to the literature exploring the PL levels amongst adolescents in Wales, which is an unexplored cohort. The role of a FEYA is to encourage and support others in their PL journey and so research into these groups is both beneficial and necessary. Local policy makers should therefore look to explore the key themes generated in this research and notice the role they play in contributing to the FEYAs current PL and their journey thus far. Furthermore, each key theme that emerged from this research lends itself to be individually examined. Areas of

positivity that emerged can be used to help establish good practice, whilst additional information could be utilised to initiate changes in policy amongst local councils or schools, to help increase and improve PL levels for all in NPT. Professional development for practitioners and teachers could also emerge from exploring this research further; key areas such as facilities in school and access to activities and clubs clearly emerged from the discussions which provides an opportunity for development in these settings.

Similar future research studies conducted with other FEYAs across the UK could prove useful in providing an overview of the PL journeys which help lead to applying for the FEYA role. Additional research amongst other geographical locations and populations would provide interesting insights into the journeys of other young people and the key trends evident in their decision to embark as a FEYA. Establishing key trends and themes amongst those who apply for the ambassador role may highlight similarities thus allowing for targeted interventions to find suitable candidates.

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APPENDIX 1: Reflective Journal Notes

Reflective journal notes recorded by the interviewer Rhiannon Simms after the interviews concluded.

Further Education Young Ambassador 1- Date: 14.06.22 Time: 09.38 Online interview

A bit nervous maybe? Took a while to warm up but then soon got into it and memories seem to come back to them. Injury at the moment seems to be getting them down, seems disappointed- reflected in words and tone of voice. frustration implied through trying to express feelings on this.

Prompted discussion about D of E as knew they had just been out on expedition. - really deflated at not finishing it, body language and facial expressions changed to show this- almost stooped a bit, rounded shoulders.

When discussing activities they liked, voice became lighter, raised maybe more excitable? and had more to say and didn't take them as long to recall an answer- clearly strong, fond memories.

Felt conversational, would check in to see if I understood them so I reiterated what I thought they were trying to say back in a concise manner to check it was correct.

Excited when discussing football, hard to put it into words in interview but saw them smiling on screen, open body language and responses came easily to them when discussing football.

Tried to offer open ended questions and followed the question stream naturally when topics were brought up but used the guide to bring it back to the main questions.

When talking about paddleboarding appears calm and seems to really embody it and capture the feeling of it in their expressions even if they couldn't put it into words. Almost a reflective pause when giving answer and looked up as if drawing the answer correctly.

Cousins were mentioned- seemed to give them confidence and modelling- only child so this makes sense but has vivid memories of these moments- could recall them easily.

Didn't seem that enthused by the gym- definite change in voice in comparison to football, seemed relaxed and calm when discussing walking in lockdown- slightly different to them mood in other parts of the conversation.

Saw walking in lockdown as a means to help with football post covid- not in an activity within itself maybe but could sense was missing interactive sport- not as enthused when discussing this but did seem shocked by own enjoyment.

Would smile or laugh when discussing parents- was a nice reaction to see- definite fondness there

Liked being a leader but looked frustrated at the folding team and lack of interest.

Physical fitness helped by this, would have been hard to get fitness if didn't keep this up- seems to regret this- looks frustrated in hindsight reflecting- missed opportunity maybe?

Activity changed since little dance f.ball netball rugby swimming whereas now only doing football. SINCE secondary school ALL FOOTBALL.- but can see they are passionate about it- smiling, open body language- always has lots to say about football.

Prefers playing football with boys and sport with boys than girls. At 12 years left boys football team and joined women's team- never been the same. When playing for boys everyone looked out for you and tried to include you more- seems nostalgic about this and almost cautious as girls are trickier maybe? lighthearted when discussing playing with boys.

Secondary school- good experience- PE once a week and games 1 a week. P.E. gym and circuits- remembers this quite well.

College- public services different to other ambassadors and maybe seems to have less to discuss in relation to this than the others?

Further Education Young Ambassador 2- Date: 21.06.22 Time: 14.19 In person interview

Quite brief, very to the point was quite hard to get information out of them at times despite having a rapport. Seemed to take questions quite literally and answers were short even in open questions. A lot of the answers were quite blunt when it comes to discussing ability and winning- can see they are used to be successful and the more able performer, didn't seem to have much patience for noncompetitive endeavours.

Constantly twitching and moving/fidgeting- can see has bags of energy.

The feeling of going into the gym is unstructured and will do what they feel like. Makes sense job is a waitress so walks a lot in that job but likes to do something every day so didn't seem to mind- get the impression could not do a static job but did seem bored in tone when talking about job.

It's competitive sport involvement that is key at the moment, but that might not always be the case but will always move every day- clearly values moving- it seemed to be a on negotiable.

LOCKDOWN

Could see they didn't like lockdown- less animated facial expressions when discussing this. Having trials of Celtic dragons were very strange missed not mixing with anyone and when couldn't play other teams just have to keep doing training and fitness- didn't seem impressed- face looked disappointed with this- excitement gone from voice almost fed up that it had changed and was not what they wanted- again disappointed maybe or deflated in presence and spirit/tone.

Lots of confidence to do things- think fo the 5 k challeneges but most of what they do is team sports at all they could kind of engage with but seems a confident person- very sure of their ability to get out of trouble- true PL?

Did cardio to get better at their sport- so always links back to moving to get better at sport not just moving for the sake of it- spoke faster when talking about challenges and became clearer in expression- can see they are driven by these. No new activities but did improve nutrition but got a bit obsessive about this- sped up when discussing this element.

Can see deep appreciation and recognition of mums efforts- definite fondness here as smiles when they talk about the mum, always notices the effort and help needed from them.

Almost seemed frustrated with PE memories- as if it wasn't how they wanted them to be, head goes down and language and sentences become blunter and more pronounced. I can see they are ready for uni and want additional challenges again excited tone, clear messages when discussing this.

Nostalgic about playing games in garden and in woods with friends- small smirks and little laughs to self when thinking about these moments- obviously thinks well of these moments.

Further Education Young Ambassador 3- Date: 22.06.22 Time: 11.47 In person interview

Evident that they are highly competitive- have seen this in classes also but most of the conversation came back to themes of competing, winning and prowess. Always fidgeting and moving- can see the excess energy.

Pace of talking quickens when discussing competitions and sport- clearly gets a buzz from competing and relishes the winning and challenges- eyes almost light up when talking about this and eager to share info on these topics.

When they played when they were younger is mainly unstructured skill-based stuff change the rules and they get bored- clearly sees they thrives on challenge and pushing themselves. Very little engagement from the adults occasionally joined in but this wasn't needed didn't seem disappointed by this

When on holiday always by the beach or by the pool or go to playing kids clubs. So even though it wasn't structured, they were always active- looked for those opportunities- smiled when thinking about these holiday clubs

Refers to PE and then games as part of secondary school. Said it was pretty good. Didn't enjoy it years 7 and eight in your 9 start to enjoy it- linked back to getting recognition and maturing- interesting point as one of the bigger students in class now but doesn't let up when against others competing even though knows how it feels?

Was encouraged to do PE in school- seemed to love it eventually. PE was body management. Physical things like gymnastics games were considered rugby or football- more contact-based stuff and lots of people didn't bring kit- these were the same people every week who didn't do PE- seemed almost disgusted by this pulling faces and nodding head in disbelief- almost as if to suggest why they would do that doesn't know.

Parents were worried about lockdown so severely reduced ability to get out and about- seemed frustrated about this and sighed. Was allowed to go running but only very early in the morning which put them off- gained a lot of weight from inactivity from being alone at covid and seemed annoyed by this- disappointed in themselves almost.

Lost fitness in covid and said they wouldn't do that again and also recently broke foot which knocked them out for a couple of weeks which again they felt impacting fitness- but did come back to practical earlier than should have- competitiveness out did drs orders.

Needed to prompt about the refereeing course but once did was quick to provide information- clear in ideas on this. Found it useful- lighter tone and seemed sincere when wanting to use it to give back to football in the area.

Further Education Young Ambassador 4- Date: 23.06.22 Time: 13.32 In person interview

Can see their love of sport- always smiling and joyous in their expression when discussing sport and participation- grinning, sat up tall, waving hands when got excited and wanted to get their point across. Almost seemed in awe of it- like they couldn't put it into words the feelings they had and the joy of it.

Excited to join football team at university- seemed proud that they had got to this point- seemed to recognise their personal growth with pride and fondness. Facial expressions were happy and positive- big smiles and grins, lifted/tilted chin at the end of sentence- literal embodiment of pride and joy. Body language was open and confident, raised/sat up straight, took a moment to relish in the answer given almost reflecting upon the magnitude of their growth.

Very thankful for the opportunities and passionate- really wanted to get their point across, used confirming words and tried to reiterate their meaning to make sure I captured this. Conversation flowed very easily, and major points all covered with ease, some side points/stories as a result but main points were addressed and recalled in detail. Generally happy and sunny disposition seemed glad to be involved in the research and wanted to share memories which were all positive and happy- sport is a big part of the relationships they have formed and of who they are as a person, and this was clear in the responses given.

Open questions answered well, felt like minimal prompts were needed and if they were lots of answer followed.

Raised voice when talking about football clubs and particularly the ambassador role.

Excited and passionate- quicker sentences and lots to say.

Remembered school PE clearly- loved the teachers and relationships and rapport came through strongly as important for this ambassador. Would get involved in everything at school, again smiling and little laughs to self when recalling memories of activities and trips all linked to sport. Liked the teacher getting them involved in everything valued this and again little head nods accompanied these descriptions helping to reaffirm feelings and thoughts on this.

Family dynamic very different for this ambassador with additional needs in autistic brother. Softer when talking about him but still positive facial expressions, a mature attitude and expression here. Able to matter of factly identify the challenges or strategies put in place as a family but laughed and smiled at the fond memories recalled. Also makes them more practically aware of the opportunities and adaptations that can be made and the importance of them in sessions. Get a real sense of them appreciating opportunities.

Further Education Young Ambassador 5- Date: 01.07.22 Time: 9.02 Online interview

Appears very mature in answers. Manages to express themselves very well. Very chatty and forthcoming with answers. Clear in stories recalled and expanded easily on the open questions asked. Some confirmation needed but explored the topics in depth with minimal prompts.

Gender issues you can see annoyed them- changes in body language and tone- started to use more hand gestures during these discussions and bluntness to tone of voice, leaning forward more to get point across.

Seemed frustrated/exacerbated by childishness of males in class- rolled eyes at this and again used hand gestures to start explaining their answers. Forceful tone to voice when mentioning this- slightly annoyed maybe?

Excited when talking about leadership opportunities- voice sped up at this. Was quick to list reasons why they enjoyed this- didn't have to think very long or hard about this, little smiles and grins and nods of the head to reaffirm what has been said.

Looking forward to continuing studies at university, smiled and was clear in intention on this. Could sense the readiness for the next step- no trepidation in voice, very sure of decision. Seemed driven and switched on to achieve in this field, no wavering in their voice or tell-tale signs of nerves on their face.

Smiled when talking about school PE- clearly remembered with fondness. Easily recalled moments and memories suggesting it was a prominent memory for them. Again, little grins and smiles when talking about school team or activities completed in clubs.

When talking about gymnastics club again words spilled out quickly, stories were reiterated and described and clearly drew upon key strong memories of parents joining in- same as when talking about holidays. Lots of smiling and easily recalled information. Excited tone in voice when talking about unusual moments like parents joining in with fun days at the club. Leaned forward, was in a rush to get the stories out and seemed happy to retell them, remembering more as they went along.

Lockdown seemed to deflate them, was bored of not being able to engage so set themselves tasks and challenges- very matter of fact in tone, neutral expressions which contrasted to the smiles and more relaxed gestures seen when discussing playing with friends and joining in with group/social physical activity. Found it difficult coaching online and could see they missed the normal interaction of face to face. Shoulders stooped when mentioning felt helpless and limited in what they could do coaching wise. Clear they have a passion for trying to help people and couldn't do so in lockdown properly.

APPENDIX 2: Interview Guide

| | |
|---|--|
| Tell me a little about yourself- what are your interests? | |
| What sport or physical activity/involvement do you currently do? Structured or unstructured. Why/how does that make you feel? | |
| How did this look in lockdown- what impact did covid have? What have you done during that time, what did you wish to do? Consider the setbacks caused by illness, when the individual cannot participate; or the sudden awkwardness one feels when taking up a new activity; or when social pressures conspire against participation.- did you have any other setbacks? | |
| Why did you apply to become a FEYA- what are your future aspirations? Keen to involve others in P.A., what are you looking for after college? What does engagement look like to you? | |
| Homelife- tell me about your family, what did that look like. Describe a typical day. Did you have a garden- how was it used by the family? What was your favorite thing to do, can you remember any games you played? What types of things did you do with your family? How did that feel? | |
| Were there children in your street/siblings? Did you play street games? What equipment was available to you? Any rules? Did adults join in? why did you play this? | |
| What did you do in the summer holidays? | |
| Behavior of parents in relation to engagement- did they do anything or watch anything? | |
| Knowledge and understanding to engage in a range of environments- what did you do and where? | |
| Can you tell me about the type of physical activity you did as a child- how did that feel? What about now? | |
| Tell me about what you did with your friends? Has that changed? | |
| Were you involved with structured sport? What did that involve? | |
| Did you have much free play or was it always structured? | |
| Did anyone in particular encourage you? Tell me more about this. | |

Generic extensions

Did you do it on your own? Or with others? Significant others
 How did you interact with others? Co-operative or competitive? Environment
 How did it look back then? How rewarding was that?

Pre school years- foundation and early primary school

| | |
|--|--|
| What kind of facilities did your school have? How did the school use them? Tell me about your teachers and the school ethos. | |
| How far did you travel and how did you get to school? | |
| What facilities were in the area? How did you use them at that age? | |
| How much physical activity did you do in school? | |
| in curricular physical education and extra-curricular work. What was your favourite thing to do in school? | |

Secondary school- separated girls and boys?

| | |
|--|--|
| What was your experience of P.E. in school? In your opinion Did you have high quality p.e? what does high quality p.e. mean to you? What was your P.E. teacher like? What were the school facilities and equipment like? | |
| Did you have any additional roles in school? | |
| What clubs did you attend, why? | |
| Did you receive any guidance in relation to opportunities for you to get active and involved? | |
| parental involvement during school? | |
| Fav teacher? Were they sporty? What was afterschool provision like? | |
| Opportunities for P.A.- was there a teacher that provided more opportunities for you? Or a club? | |
| How much physical activity did you do in school? On your own- or with others? | |
| in curricular physical education and extra-curricular work. | |

Early adulthood – tell me about college? Why this course? Any more points you wish to add? How do you feel your physical activity involvement or engagement has changed? What about going forward, how does it look for you?

APPENDIX 3: Blank Informed Consent Form

Dear Ambassador,

I am asking for volunteers to engage in interviews to form the basis of my dissertation for my MA course in Physical Education, Sport and Physical Literacy with UWTSD. This will involve some directed biographical questions about your engagement with physical literacy throughout your life. The questions will refer to activities and hobbies you have had whilst growing up as well as asking about the opportunities and environment you had for physical activity leading up to your current involvement and engagement. These questions will help to inform the content I will discuss in my dissertation with the aim of establishing what your Physical Literacy journey has been so far. You have been asked to volunteer as you are one of the FEYA's at the college, but your participation is on a voluntary basis and is **not** compulsory. The dissertation title is:

“A Narrative Enquiry into the Physical Literacy Journeys of FEYAs”

No preparation is required for the interview, which will be semi-structured, involving both discussions with and questions from myself. When I have finished the research, this will form the basis of my dissertation in which I need to reflect upon the research process and the findings specifically from the research before writing it up in the correct manner and format.

You are invited to take part in the interview (possibly online via Teams or in person in college depending upon COVID rules). The interview will last around 30 minutes and I will have to audio record the discussions for analysis purposes, but only myself and my supervisor will have access to these files. This research proposal has had full ethical clearance from the university and discussions/interviews will not impact upon working relations, grades or opportunities at the college. All results will be anonymized, and you are welcome to request your transcript if you would like to check for accuracy if you so wish. With the questions I ask during the interview/discussion, you have the right to choose not to answer if you so wish.

Individual meetings will be created on Teams by myself or completed in person if you prefer. No persons other than those involved in the interview will be present or able to join the discussion. Permission to use the Microsoft Teams package with the participants has been granted by the Head of School of the Sport and Public Services Department at NPTC Group. The time and date of the focus groups will be discussed with you the participants in order to choose the most appropriate time for yourselves.

If you or your guardian (if under 18years) have any further questions and wish to email or discuss this further with me before agreeing to take part, then please get in touch- my contact details are included below. If you are happy to take part, then please complete the consent below and email it back to me. Thank you for your help, your participation is much appreciated and valued.

I look forward to working with you.


Rhiannon

Rhiannon Simms

Cydlynnydd Addysg Gorfforol Level A- Grŵp Colegau NPTC
A Level P.E. Co-ordinator - NPTC Group of Colleges

Pronouns: she/her | Rhagenwau: hi



 School of Sport and Public Services, Llandarcy Academy of Sport, SA10 6JD

Research Consent Form

I agree to participate in the interviews and research carried out by Rhiannon Simms. I have read the information related to the research and understand the aims of the project. I am aware of the topics to be discussed in the interview. I am fully aware that I will remain anonymous throughout data reported and that I have the right to leave the research at any point. I am fully aware that data collected will be stored securely, safely and in accordance with Data Collection Act (1998). I am fully aware that I am not obliged to answer any question, but that I do so at my own free will. I agree to have the interview audio recorded, so it can be transcribed after the interview is held. I am aware that I have the right to edit the transcript of the interview once it has been completed.

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Name | |
| Signed | |
| Date | |

If under 18 years old:

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Name of Participant | |
| Name of Guardian | |
| Signature of Guardian | |
| Date | |

APPENDIX 4: Example of interview transcript

Interviewer: Obviously this discussion is for my dissertation research and you don't have to answer anything you don't feel like you want to answer or if you wanted to expand any information then by all means but I just have to check that you are willing to do this interview

Ambassador 5: Yeah

Interviewer: Lovely and obviously like I said you can answer anything you want to or ignore anything you want to and you can withdraw from the study whenever you want as well. The title of my research is looking at the physical literacy journey of the young ambassadors at college and obviously you are one of those. To begin, just tell me a little bit about yourself; what are your interests, what are you currently doing in terms of physical activity, involvement and things like that.

Ambassador 5: Well I'm most interested in gymnastics so I'm coaching gym 3 times a week. I have my own group coaching for our sessions and then I do my own physical fitness. I go to the gym in college every morning and just keep on top of my fitness ready for university.

Interviewer: You said you do coaching in gymnastics, is that where your main interest lies? Did you used to be a gymnast? How did you get involved in that?

Ambassador 5: So I started doing gym when I was I think 6. I started going to a class in a leisure centre near my house and then I got put forward into Swansea gymnastics which I didn't really like and then moved to Neath and then I stayed there for 9-10 years training and then too many injuries kind of force me to just stopped training all together which is when I went into coaching. I was doing it after a training session for an hour or before a training session and eventually I did my level one and then I've had my own group for the last 3-years I think it is

Interviewer: That's awesome so was there anyone that is quite influential in you getting into coaching or did you do it off your own back?

Ambassador 5: I think a lot of gymnasts from my club went into coaching at some point whether they just did it before helping with the little ones, all the older ones would help out in the morning especially on the weekend. Before I was training and some of us you stuck it out then eventually we got our own groups and people dropped off. We all wanted to have a go and try it because you know when we all want to be a coach at some point you want to work with kids

Interviewer: Lovely so what is it you think you enjoy most about your coaching element then?

Ambassador 5: I kind of like having fun with the kids, I like the reward of them doing well and like seeing them be happy, seeing them achieve something I know I'm doing it right, if I'm making the kid happy, if I'm making them smile and laugh and if they even enjoying with their friends. Then you know if you have a bad session, I'm not doing it right there's something wrong there's a few good sessions it's just really rewarding for me.

Interviewer: That's great so did you do any other coaching or anything else alongside your gymnastics?

Ambassador 5: No not really anything else like off my own back anyways apart from all the stuff you do in college

Interviewer: OK lovely we'll come to talk about college a little bit later so you also said you go to like a fitness gym as part of your routine, is that structured activity that you do or is it unstructured for you, see how you feel when you get there, like how do you engage with it?

Ambassador 5: It is kind of unstructured, it depends, like most days in college I'm there early so a bunch of us go to the gym and it's kind of like when we did our 6-week programme with Paul, I pretty much followed that quite closely I didn't do everything on there, I'd miss a session or change a session. I think that's what helps me to stay in the gym. I could just look at my phone and go OK that's what I'm doing today get on with it if it wanted to know add stuff in, take stuff away, I was able to do that. There was no like standing around thinking of what I'm doing, it was easy enough to get on with

Interviewer: Brilliant, so why is it that you go to the fitness gym what do you think you'll get out of it?

Ambassador 5: I just feel good I feel good when I feel my healthiest like if I'm feeling down most, it's likely because I haven't gone to the gym or I've eaten unhealthy or I'm not feeling self confident in the way I'm looking. I know by going to the gym, I am burning calories and getting fitter makes me feel good in myself

Interviewer: How many times a week do you think you do that? I know you mentioned it was unstructured.

Ambassador 5: I'd say at least 3-4 times a week

Interviewer: How do you get to the gym?

Ambassador 5: My coaching gym or my fitness gym?

Interviewer: Let us do both, how do you get to your fitness gym?

Ambassador 5: Because I get dropped off at college before my mum goes to work so I am there early so I go to the gym for however long then go upstairs to college and wait for my lessons to start

Interviewer: So do you think you'd do gym-based activities if it wasn't as convenient as it is in college?

APPENDIX 5: Raw Thematic Analysis Example

| Inspiration from significant others- role models | Personal Reward/positive emotions/psychological reward | Desire for significance | Imagining future self/personally qualified | Covid 19 Lockdown | Opportunity/environment/access/support |
|---|--|-----------------------------|---|---|--|
| family/ family unit Parents, siblings and grandparents | Coaching was rewarding | Competitiveness/winning? | University- want to go to higher ed- looks good on UCAS | boring | Active schools |
| cousins | Liked to give back | | Jobs- want in the industry as well as getting skills in readiness | Picked up new fitness habits | GCSE P.E. |
| coaches | Felt good | proWess | reputation | Worked on cardio/fitness | Equipment, clubs, facilities, space |
| Friends Knowledgeable friends | Friends make it enjoyable- escapism | Belonging/fitting in/clicks | Learning and self development- getting better, intrinsic motivation, learning new skills and qualifications | Explored via walking and biking the area | gyms |
| Staff p.e. teachers were favourite staff | Nothing like it- the feeling of playing sport- escapism | Teacher's pet | | Missed competition and teammates | YouTube/Internet access |
| | Love sport and wanted career in it | | Leadership roles/ambassadors/peffects early on | Missed opportunity | Confidence to ask for help? |
| | All wanted to give back or see opportunity or progress for people to enjoy sport | | | Couldn't engage with ambassadors role as much | |
| | Leadership roles/ambassadors/peffects early on | | | | |
| | confidence | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| | Mental health- escapism | | | | |
| | Image- escapism | | | | |

Definition of Physical Literacy: “individual engaging in a variety of movement experiences, movement of different types, in different environments and under different circumstances” physical literacy is defined as the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life”

Potential Themes

Family unit- Cousins, Parents, Siblings, Leadership roles/ambassadors/perfects early on, Confidence, Active schools, Gender segregation or not?, Competitiveness, GCSE p.e, P.e. teachers were favourite teachers, Coaching was rewarding, Escapism, Mental health, Friends, Learning/self development
 Opportunity, Environment, Gender, Image, Role model, Lockdown, University, Jobs/reputation, Titles?, Imagining future self, Desire for significance, Personally qualified, Inspired by role model, Belonging/fitting in/clicks, All wanted to give back or see opportunity or progress for people to enjoy sport, All wanted to go to higher education, People you are with make it enjoyable, Teacher's pet/ favourite in the p.e department, all in competitive sport, Enjoyed opportunities for outdoor pursuits, Had lots of equipment and opportunity from parents and active holidays, Most had sporty schools in their descriptions, Confidence is key

APPENDIX 6: Active Well Being Reports



Active Wellbeing Project 2020 – 2021

NPTC Group of Colleges

Overview

Colegau Cymru, in partnership with **Sport Wales** manages Active Wellbeing project funding for the FE sector in Wales. This funding has the aim of supporting college programmes in increasing activity among learners with the strategic vision of **Active Colleges – Active Lives – Active Wales**.

The academic year 2020 – 2021 saw the introduction of the new Active Wellbeing strategy to support project planning and delivery, it has also seen Sport Wales introducing new reporting systems for partners and other stakeholders.

Unfortunately, the year has been severely disrupted (continuing from March 2020) by the Coronavirus pandemic with major changes to college teaching and learning and long periods of remote or blended delivery. For some young people this will have made accessing activity even more difficult, particularly for those from traditionally underrepresented groups.

Despite the challenges presented there have been many cases of colleges adapting delivery, re-aligning their project goals and providing activity and support for the wellbeing of learners. In many cases this will have looked very different to a “normal” project year, and it is hoped that this template will allow you to share the learning, successes and challenges from your projects during this period.

Introduction

Please give a general overview of the situation in college since September 2020 and new or strategic developments linked to Active Wellbeing:

2020-2021 has been an unprecedented year due to the unforeseen impact the pandemic has had on physical health and mental wellbeing. Our Young Ambassadors were involved initially in the development of the Active Wellbeing Strategy where they visited the Senedd to speak about our successful programme of delivery at NPTC Group. Despite the issues we have faced due to Covid, the outcome of the Active Wellbeing project has been substantial; Innovative new approaches have enabled a cultural shift which has influenced successful implementation across the group. There has been increased collaboration with areas such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, the new E-Step tutorial programme, external instructors, the local authority’s NPT Pass sports department and staff initiatives arranged by the new Health & Wellbeing team. We have engaged new learners such as the ESOL

students and ILS learners with additional needs at Newtown and Brecon. We have adapted new ways of delivering activities such as the use of Microsoft Teams, the Student Community channels, live broadcasting through social media and the creation of a new YouTube channel.

What has been the biggest learning during the project year?

This could include adaptation to online activity, learner motivation, examples of things you will take forward into future project delivery etc.

Due to limitations faced because of the pandemic, our **8** Young Ambassadors (FEYAs) were innovative in adapting sessions to allow them to continue providing physical activity sessions online via Teams. Activities Officer Dewi Williams recruited during the pandemic delivered sessions online to new groups of learners with additional needs from Brecon and Newtown who would usually struggle to engage in sessions due to a lack of facilities. External instructors such as yoga instructor Hannah were able to increase the number of sessions delivered online for our ILS learners due to the time saved not having to travel from one campus to another.

The use of technology was instrumental in breaking down barriers to attract new learners. ESOL students from Newtown had not engaged previously due to cultural differences but were able to from the comfort of their own home due to the privacy this offered. They are keen to continue with this new blended approach in the new term. This type of remote delivery has been hugely popular and is definitely something we will take forward. Various different campaigns were also delivered such as the January Weekly Health & Wellbeing planner for students and staff, the Physical Activity week with Student Union and the 'Step into Spring' Challenge in conjunction with the Welsh Bilingual team. Sessions were tailored to the preferences of tutorial groups. Since Sept 2020 despite the barriers we faced, there were a total of **2562** attendances by students, over **295** hours of session delivery.

What has worked well?

Despite the pandemic there have been lots of great examples of innovation and adaptation in delivery, planning and engagement. This could include things that worked at certain stages but were less successful at other stages.

- Young Ambassadors

Our volunteer workforce is an integral part of the Get Active programme and fundamental to its delivery. Students have been working hard to adapt activities over the past 12 months to motivate and engage students online through guest spots during tutorials, social media takeovers and via our many channels posting tips to support mental health, physical activity challenges and healthy recipes as well as creating exercise videos. Due to the ongoing link with our sports department and the local authority's NPT Pass team, our Ambassador programme is sector leading. Our FEYAs have also been engaged in developing the Colegau Cymru FEYA further education YA programme, the Active in Mind project and are now Active in Mind Champions.

- External Instructors

An increased number of external coaches and specialist instructors were also employed to support programme delivery. Due to the pandemic instructors have delivered activities virtually through live and pre-recorded sessions via Teams and on SharePoint. They had more time available due to time saved travelling between campuses so able to deliver sessions that were recorded and saved which allowed us to create a catalogue of sessions from meditation and stretch sessions to cardio and high intensity interval training. We also now have a small catalogue of workshops and videos providing health and well-being support and advice around the importance of exercise, nutrition guidance, stress management and sleep that can be found on our Get Active Teams Community channel and on SharePoint for staff.

- YouTube channel

At the start of the pandemic, NPTC Get Active created a YouTube channel. Physical activity sessions were delivered by students, staff and external instructors and recorded exclusively for students and staff to access via the Teams Student Community and SharePoint Health & Wellbeing channels. Videos are posted 'unlisted' to YouTube, so only those with the link are able to access them making them exclusive for students and staff of NPTC Group of Colleges. So far, the engagement has been substantial with **559 video views** in total.

- NPTC Get Active Student Community

NPTC Get Active now also has a Teams page within the NPTC Student Community where all students are automatically enrolled at the start of each academic year. These easily accessible pages have been fundamental to the delivery of the programme during lockdown and our most preferred method of delivery for students has been through pre-recorded physical activity sessions however we have also delivered live sessions.

- NPTC Get Active Hub on SharePoint

NPTC Get Active has also developed a Get Active hub on SharePoint within the Health & Wellbeing section for staff to access information on local walks, cycle routes, clubs and associations. There is a library of pre-recorded Get Active fitness videos and information and links to the Cyclescheme programme that is managed by the Get Active team.

What did not work well?

In the new format of reporting this is seen as an important part of the project review process, if for example you were unable to deliver planned activity or developed resources that were not taken up, please provide some background and examples here.

- No allocated timeslot for wellbeing and physical activity

Clashes in timetables with no allocated day or time dedicated to health & wellbeing made it difficult to deliver sessions. For example, online videos were developed and arranged with external instructor Emma who is a life coach. She provided a series of workshops centred around mental health, nutrition, stress and sleep that were delivered live via Microsoft. The take-up was poor with low numbers attending the live sessions. This is a reminder of project delivery in the early days, when sessions would be drop-in, however numbers would always be extremely low due to timetable clashes and a lack of commitment from learners. Delivery of activities during tutorials is always the preferred time for delivery as the uptake is always higher.

- Technology

Issues with technology such as a poor signal or a lack of WiFi sometimes became an issue for some staff and students. Also on occasions students were sharing devices at home such as laptops so would struggle to join in. Some students found it difficult to engage in physical activity online due to limited appropriate spaces at home. Feedback from coaches who delivered activities for the whole year found that students sometimes got a bit bored after a while due to the limitations of home workouts such as lack of equipment and space.

What were the needs and motivations leading project delivery?

This section is likely to be very "Covid" related as the need to adapt and motivate learners changed significantly. In this section, please include any changes in learner needs / motivation experienced and possibly where you used their feedback to support planning and development?

During the first lockdown, morale was high and learners quickly adapted to online delivery. The FEYAs and external instructors made many adaptations to the usual style of delivery to engage learners in physical activity. FEYAs took to social media to motivate learners through live videos, fitness tips, and wellbeing hacks. By the time of the second lockdown, both FEYAs and instructors were feeling quite deflated and demotivated so regular check-in calls were arranged via Microsoft Teams for students to meet up virtually and talk about the challenges they faced. FEYAs were keen to use their time at home to upskill so they embarked upon mental health training to allow them to better support themselves and others during these uncertain times.

Where were Skills, Motivation and Confidence developed through sport?

This section relates mainly to activity where you have supported those learners who are ambassadors and volunteers or those who normally might have lacked confidence to take part in activity?

Feedback from our learners provided during the research conducted by BlwBo demonstrated that both FEYAs and students felt isolated and demotivated throughout the past year. FEYAs approached this issue in many innovative ways; most memorable were the daily activity garden challenges they created for students that were communicated via our social media channels. Feedback was positive as students found these challenges fun and motivational to take part in. These challenges were mentioned in newsletters and 'Good

News' stories circulated by our marketing department to encourage others to join in, staff too! A few of our ambassadors were cricketers so enjoyed providing skills which led to our wider sports cohort getting involved and delivering skills challenges from other disciplines such as football, netball and rugby. Students reported that the opportunities provided by NPTC Get Active enabled them to feel connected, and for some it improved their mood, given more energy and boosted their confidence.

To what extent are you able to offer inclusive opportunities?

Tackling inequalities remains a priority area for Sport Wales and college communities include the groups traditionally considered as underrepresented or hard to reach. Examples would include young women and girls, learners with ALN requirements or disability, those from BAME populations and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Tackling inequalities by targeting harder to reach and underrepresented groups has always been at the forefront of project activity at NPTC Group. Working closely with the Head of School for Foundation Studies and Adult Learning, we have been able to embed NPTC Get Active into most courses within the school and sport is offered as a curriculum option for many students. At the end of each academic year students are presented with a 'Certificate of Achievement' during an end of term awards ceremony which took place this year online. Despite limitations due to the pandemic, we were able to continue with the delivery and increase the number of ILS learners accessing opportunities. Since Sept 2020, a total of **287** regularly weekly sessions were delivered online for 89 students with additional learning needs.

Paula Davies Course Coordinator Gateway IT group: Thank you for giving the students access to these sessions, I know these have been very beneficial during what has been a very difficult year for all of us. I personally feel that they have not only improved their fitness but their mental health in challenging times. Dewi has been fantastic; encouraging and very responsive to student's suggestions to have easier/harder sessions or workouts for particular areas of the body. When students have been unable to access Teams, he has provided work-out sessions in the Chat for them to follow at their leisure. He is always encouraging and easy to chat to and this has been crucial to ensuring learner engagement for ALN learners. I have discussed the sessions with both groups and the feedback has been very positive, please see some of their comments below:

- *'I felt that it has improved my mental health and fitness overall'.*
- *'It has given me more energy during the rest of the day, more than I had before we did the lessons'.*
- *'It breaks up the day and keeps me moving'.*
- *'It has made more flexible, fitter, and stronger'.*
- *'It makes me energised'.*
- *'I think it has helped people in lots of ways and would like to do more in the future'.*

The consensus is that they would definitely like to continue with the sessions in the future if the opportunity presented itself. Online has worked very well for less confident learners as they have been able to take part with their camera off and therefore increased their engagement in activities that they would not normally take part in. Face-to-face obviously has its own merits and promotes teamwork etc so a balance would be ideal scenario.

Sarah Welch ESOL Course Coordinator (Newtown): Hannah's sessions with the ESOL group has expanded the types of activities available to them particularly as their access to working with community groups has been limited due to Covid. Going forwards, on line delivery is preferable as it is currently a mixed group it allows for privacy to meet cultural needs.

Stevie-Ann Fraser Course Coordinator Foundation Studies (Afan): My students have engaged every week, doing on-line Yoga with Hannah. They have all really enjoyed, (and so have I). These sessions are so important for their health and well-being so we would like them to continue!

Amanda Cruse Foundation Studies Lecturer (Newtown): Megan, Emma-Louise and Vicki wanted to say a big thank you for coming every week to teach them yoga. They also wanted to wish good luck to Hannah for her forthcoming wedding so they made thank you cards and wedding cards for her.

Julie Mercer Head of School for Foundation, Adult and Community Learning: Many thanks to you, Hannah, Dewi and team for the work undertaken and the sessions delivered – I receive excellent feedback from the staff on student (and their own!) engagement and

enjoyment. The sessions are so important for the health and wellbeing of our learners especially during this last year and lockdowns - we are very keen to continue.

Collaboration with others?

This can include internal and external collaboration, attending and contributing to ColegauCymru activity and where you've accessed new resources to support delivery. Any work that has connected with the WG Better Mental Health project funding would be useful to include in this section:

- Youth Sport Trust Active in Mind programme

Our FEYAs completed an intense 2-day workshop with Youth Sport Trust in conjunction with YA Cymru to become 'Mental Health Champions'. The training was delivered by Commonwealth athlete Tom Davis as part of the Active in Mind programme to use psycho-social tools, stress-busting strategies, peer mentoring and physical activity to support young people experiencing mental wellbeing issues.

- BlwBo/ Colegau Cymru Qualitative Research Project

Colegau Cymru recently commissioned BlwBo Ltd to undertake research to determine the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the wellbeing of FE learners involved in sport and volunteering. All 8 FEYAs contributed to the research which will be used to guide future development of a wellbeing toolkit, supporting young people's personal development, and also providing guidance for the sector on the experiences of the 16-19 age group during this time. The research will also inform the future monitoring of wellbeing and development.

- Duke of Edinburgh Award

NPTC Group of Colleges invested in a Duke of Edinburgh licence and Lindsay Piper was appointed Manager of the DofE programme. In November 2020, despite the restraints of the pandemic, we recruited **8 new** Open Gold students who have been able to complete their volunteering, skills and physical aspects of the award. Working collaboratively with the School of Creative, Visual & Performing Arts we have also recruited **7 new** Bronze Award

students. Lindsay successfully applied to DofE to waive all registration fees for the students, saving them between £23 each for Bronze and £30 each for Gold. We also have **14** Open Gold students recruited in the year prior, who are almost at completion of their Open Gold Award.

3 staff members recently completed training fully funded by DofE and are now fully qualified Expedition Assessors. Lindsay also arranged for funding to be waived for 2 staff members from the School of Creative Visual and Performing Arts to become qualified Lowland Leaders; one of whom also completed her DofE Assessor qualification in June 2021.

- Student Rep Celebration Day

The FEYAs delivered physical activity challenges during the Student Rep Celebration Day event such as plank and squat challenges to an event that involved students sitting at a desk all day. **98%** of attendees reported enjoying the slot, with **87%** of attendees rating it as 'Excellent' or 'Good'.

- E-Step tutorial lessons

All NPT Group of Colleges students were enrolled on the E-Step tutorial at the beginning of the new academic year. Senior Officer Lindsay Piper contributed teaching resources and activities to the Personal Lifestyle & Wellbeing section delivered by tutors during tutorial lessons. In total since Sept 2020, **2551** users accessed the various different activities set within the section during tutorial lessons.

Where is more help needed?

Please indicate what would help to develop or support project delivery at your college, this could be an internal request, external via ColegauCymru or general development needs?

- Increased Workforce

To ensure sustainability and to increase participation, it is inevitable that the size of the NPTC Get Active workforce has to increase to meet its demands. The target going forwards is to re-deploy students as coaches and instructors in a paid capacity, who have already had a role within NPTC Get Active.

- Allocated time for extra-curricular activities

Timetabling is always an issue. A-level and BTEC students wishing to participate in our many sports teams such as netball, badminton, cross country, basketball and football are currently unable to do so due to a clash in timetables on a Wednesday afternoon. This creates a huge barrier for participation, and is often a huge contributing factor to why girls drop out of sport when they begin college at the age of 16. The Duke of Edinburgh Open Gold Award and CCF are also open to all students however most are also unable to access these sessions on a Wednesday afternoon due to clashes in their timetable. Future consideration should be given to allow students allocated time on a Wednesday afternoon for extra-curricular activities in line with other local colleges and like we did ourselves many years ago.

- Incentives

To better support the Young Ambassadors, incentives could be put in place. A lot of the work they do involves capturing and recording evidence and posting social media content. This requires technology so ipads would be good tool to aid them in their voluntary work. Also, a recognisable FEYA / Sport Wales branded kit that FEYA students from all over Wales could wear could work as an incentive, as they would be wearing a kit that they would be proud to wear, easily identifiable across our sites and across Wales as young ambassadors and therefore would also be seen by their peers as role models.

Opportunities for the FEYAs provided at NPTC

Annual Young Ambassador National Conference held at Cardiff City stadium
 First Aid training (FTF imperative)
 Disability Inclusion Training (DIIT training) delivered FTF by Sport Wales (lots of practical activities)
 Delivery of multi-sports activities to our under-represented groups (females, disabled students)
 Representation at Fresher's events and Student Union events to promote physical activity/deliver events
 Promotion of Young Ambassador programme to schools - delivery at school festivals and events
 Link to local authority volunteer opportunities throughout year at events such as Margam Park Disability Inclusion festival
 Level 1 coaching quals opportunities (eg badminton, cricket)