TRANSFERABLE LIFE SKILLS LEARNED THROUGH SPORTS PARTICIPATION
BY UNIVERSITY ATHLETES COMMITTED TO THEIR SPORT

by
SUMERLEE EDEN SAMUELS

B.A., University of British Columbia, 2002

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Counselling Psychology)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 2006

© Sumerlee Eden Samuels, 2006
Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify transferable life skills that are learned via sports participation. Understanding the importance of these particular skills were explored by directly asking the athletes. Eight focus groups constituting three to six people, aged 18-28, who are currently participating in sport at a university level were interviewed. The opening question for each focus group was “I would like you to talk about some of the life skills you have learned through participating in sport that will be valuable in terms of a future career.” A second question pertaining to transferring the learned life skills into other environments was explored. The second question athletes were asked was “Which, if any, of the life skills mentioned in response to the first question could be transferred to other environments?” Data were analyzed using six steps offered by Krueger. Findings indicated that athletes mentioned over 200 life skills learned through sport participation including, time management, communicating with others and receiving feedback. The emerged life skills are discussed in light of Brooks 1984 study, and grouped into five overarching categories Interpersonal Communication/Human Relation Skills (IPC/HRS), Problem-solving/Decision Making Skills (PS/DMS), Identity Development/Purpose in Life Skills (ID/PILS), Fitness/Health Maintenance Skills (F/HMS) and Other. Findings from the second question indicated that athletes identified 36 skills, which they deemed transferable to other setting which were later organized into four categories Teamwork, Setting and Achieving Goals, Personal Drive and Perspective Taking. The conclusions of this study are discussed in relation to the relevant literature.
Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................ ii
Table of Contents ......................................................................................... iii
List of Tables ............................................................................................... v
List of Figures ............................................................................................. vi
Acknowledgements ..................................................................................... vii
Chapter One – Introduction ........................................................................ 1

Chapter Two – Literature Review ............................................................... 6
  Life Skills ................................................................................................. 6
  Life Skills in Non-Sport Settings ............................................................... 12
  Life Skills in Sport Settings .................................................................... 14
  Transferring Life Skills ......................................................................... 15
  Sport Career Transitions ....................................................................... 18
  Research on Sport Career Transitions ................................................... 22
  Commitment to Sport ............................................................................ 26
  Using Focus Groups to Collect Data ....................................................... 28
  Summary ................................................................................................. 29

Chapter Three – Method ............................................................................. 31

  Participants ............................................................................................. 31
  Procedure ............................................................................................... 31
  Measures ................................................................................................. 33
  Data Collection ....................................................................................... 34
  Data Analysis .......................................................................................... 34
  Role of the Researcher ............................................................................ 35
  Rigor ........................................................................................................ 35
  Ethical Considerations ............................................................................ 36

Chapter Four – Results ................................................................................ 37

  Opening Remark ...................................................................................... 37
  Brooks 1984 Proposed Categories of Life Skills .................................... 37
  Additional Categories ............................................................................. 41
  Inter rater Reliability ............................................................................. 41
  Problem Solving/Decision Making Skills .............................................. 44
  Interpersonal Communication/Human Relation Skills ......................... 47
  Identity Development/Purpose in Life Skills ......................................... 54
Fitness/Health Maintenance Skills ........................................... 58
Other .................................................................................. 60
Secondary Findings that Emerged from the Data ................. 61
Explanation of Themes .......................................................... 61
Teamwork ............................................................................. 62
Setting and Achieving Goals ............................................ 65
Personal Drive .................................................................... 66
Perspective Taking ............................................................... 68

Chapter Five – Discussion ...................................................... 69
Comparison of Findings with Literature .............................. 70
Significance of Study .......................................................... 82
Limitations of Study ............................................................. 83
Athlete Reflections ............................................................... 85
Implications for Counselling Practice ............................... 87
Summary ............................................................................. 87

References ........................................................................... 89
Appendix A Recruitment Poster ........................................... 97
Appendix B Letter of Invitation ........................................... 98
Appendix C Speech Delivered to Athletes Requesting Participants .................................................. 99
Appendix D Informed Consent Form for Participants ..... 100
Appendix E Demographic Questionnaire ............................. 103
Appendix F List of Resources ............................................. 105
Appendix G Orienting Statement ....................................... 106
Appendix H Life Skills Learned Through Sport Participation In Categories ........................................ 107
Appendix I Categories of Life Skills Deemed Transferable to Other Settings ................................ 110
List of Tables

Table 1: Suggested Life Skills That Are Deemed Valuable Across Settings…….. 11
Table 2: Demographic Characteristics for all Participants................................. 38
Table 3: The Top 2 Most Identified Life Skills in Each Category.......................... 42
Table 4: Suggested Life Skills Acquired Through Athlete's Sport Experience...... 43
Table 5: Suggested Life Skills Athletes' Found Transferable Across Settings....... 63
List of Figures

Figure 1: Combining Nine Proposed Life Skill Categories Into Four...............8
Acknowledgements

Having the opportunity to finally consider this thesis finished, I would like to reflect on those who have endured this process from beginning to end and express my sincere gratitude

To Dr. Colleen Haney for being patient, supportive and always excited about the potential and progress of this study

To Dr. Norman Amundson for reminding me to take some time away from school to get to the range and hit some balls

To Dr. Bruno Zumbo for sharing my fascination in the benefits of sport participation

To Dr. Steven Danish who taught me that academic research is a small world and behind the names on an article can be found extremely warm and encouraging people

To the athletes at UBC for continually striving for excellence

And to my family, boyfriend and friends, for ongoing support and continually, at least appearing interested in the project which I have recently brushed most of them off for

This work is dedicated to all the aforementioned, without whom this project would still be just an idea.

Thank you.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“He shoots, he scores!” As early as the 1920’s, broadcasting great, Foster Hewitt coined this enduring phrase, a well-known Canadian rally cry, through enthusiastic dramatic play-by-play calls in ice hockey. It has been suggested that sport is a major source of entertainment for many people and permeates all of society making it a cultural phenomenon (Danish, Petitpas and Hale, 1993). In light of this major influence in our culture, the value of sport in relation to an athlete’s future career beyond competition begs to be explored. The majority of the literature reports that the lasting value of sport lies in the recognition of the principles learned thru sports participation and their application to other areas of life (Danish 2002; Danish, Fazio, Nellen, and Owens 2002). It has been repeatedly suggested that what is learned through sport participation transfers directly to other environments (namely the classroom and boardroom). It is further suggested that although the skills learned on the playing field may be transferred to other domains, they can only be done so, if sport experiences are designed and implemented with this goal in mind (Danish, Petitpas and Hale, 1993). It appears as though sport can be seen as an effective target for intervention and can serve as a metaphor for enhancing performance in other areas of life.

Most research identifies multiple reasons for sports participation. The most commonly suggested motives include having fun, improving skills (physical competency), and being with and making new friends (social competency) (Hodge and Danish, 1999).
Literature regarding the cost and benefits of sports participation report favorably on the psychosocial effects of sport (Sabock, 1985). There is a large amount of research supporting the notion that sport is a major influence in the development of one’s identity and feelings of competence across the life span (Baillie and Danish, 1992; Danish, 1983; Danish, Petitpas and Hale, 1990). It has been noted that sports participation provides an opportunity for attempted successes, from which one can draw a perception of competence (Nicholls, 1978). Research on personality development also supports a beneficial relationship between sports participation and perceived competence (Roberts, Kleiber and Duda, 1981) as well as highlights participation in sport influencing several components of one’s personality.

A literature review of competence yields a definition for personal competence as the ability to do life planning, be self-reliant and seek the resources of others (Danish, D’Augelli and Ginsberg, 1984). Therefore, to be competent, one must develop and maintain specific interpersonal (ability to communicate) and intrapersonal (psychological) skills to facilitate these abilities. These cognitive and behavioral skills are termed “life skills” (Danish, Petitpas and Hale, 1993).

There appears to be limited information on transferable skills learned through sport participation. Some authors have investigated this specific topic by proposing valuable life skill programs for athletes (Danish, Petitpas and Hale, 1993) however, more readily found, is associated literature on broader topics such as the value of sport, transitions made by athletes and life skills programs. However, this related literature is rarely empirically based and descriptive in nature. Knowing that sport provides an effective setting to learn transferable skills, it is curious that the literature on sport career
transitions suggests that athletes are often poorly prepared for leaving sports and that the transition out of sports is often a troublesome process (Baillie and Danish, 1992). When exploring sports participation benefits, like promoting an athlete’s personal competence and teaching transferable skills, in light of athletes’ career transitions, there appears to be a missing link in the research.

The overarching research problem is that there is limited data and literature on the mix of life skills and sport career transition experiences (specifically on athletic and non-athletic factors that influence a successful career transition). Furthermore, there are minimal first-hand accounts of athlete’s experiences with life skills in their careers. Some first-hand interviews can be found, however they mainly share the characteristic of being retrospective accounts of already retired athletes. Directly asking current athletes their experiences in sports participation is a departure from traditional methods and seems to warrant further investigation.

The present study intends to address this theoretical gap in the sport career literature. The research question intended to address the missing link by way of focus groups is “What are transferable life skills learned through sports participation?” Despite the extensive research that exists on athletic retirement, it appears that no previous studies directly ask current athletes what life skills they have learned thru sport participation and the transferability of those life skills. The research question chosen serves to give a prospective voice to a specific target group, as well as, to add to the literature regarding particular benefits of participation in sport. Additionally, this study will identify specific life skills learned through sports participation that athletes deem transferable across environments. The recognition of these learned skills is intended to contribute to the sport
career transitions literature regarding better preparation for athletes embarking on retirement.

The purpose of this study was to explore athletes’ thoughts and feelings about the life skills they have learned through sport and their potential of transferring them into various environments. Developing a more concrete understanding of transferable life skills learned through sport, as perceived by athletes, may lead to increasing the value put on sports participation in our culture, as well as, redirecting a focus for sport career development and athlete retirement models.

The use of focus groups as a method appears to be a major departure from the common methodological approaches used in previous qualitative studies investigating life skills and athletes. Most empirical research in this area reports using either semi-structured interviews or paper and pencil assessment measures to collect data from athletes, whereas the focus group format allows members to interact with each other (Morgan, 1993). It has been noted that people tend to disclose more about themselves to others who resemble them in various ways than to people who differ from them (Jourard, 1964), therefore it appears that a focus group setting helps maximize the range of discussion that can be expressed by participants (Krueger, 2000). Focus group discussions are noted for their ability to (a) elicit personal experiences and self-disclosure (Krueger, 2000) (b) lessen the anxiety that is sometimes associated with individual interviews (Madriz, 2000) (c) facilitate interaction between participants (d) elicit groups norms (Murphy, Cockburn and Murphy, 1992) and (e) promote participant control over the direction and content of the discussions (Wilkinson, 1998).
Sport is undoubtedly threaded throughout our culture and effects many people in various capacities. The significance of this study was to identify specific life skills learned through sports participation as seen by athletes, generated through group discussion. As well, this study aspired to confirm benefits of sports participation, empirically support models of teaching sport activities and contribute to sport career counseling.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

There is an ongoing debate in the literature regarding the potential benefits and costs of competitive sport for athletes; however, many potential benefits have been outlined in the research. For example, sport is seen as a positive influence in the development of an individual’s identity and feelings of competence across the life span (Danish, 1983). Furthermore, it has been frequently stated that what is learned through participation in sport can be directly transferred to other environments. Danish (2002) suggests a major benefit of sports participation lies in the opportunity to learn transferable principles and learn how to apply them into other areas of life.

Life Skills

Life skills have been discussed often but rarely defined. A commonly reported conceptualization is that life skills are transferable behaviors (i.e. valuable principles applied to other pursuits) (Danish, 2002) and transferable skills (i.e. abilities learned in one role that can be used in another role) (Petitpas et al., 1997). Another compatible view is that life skills are the skills needed for effective interpersonal functioning and effective living (Brooks, 1984). In a chapter discussing teaching life skills through sport by Danish, Fazio, Nellen and Owens (2002) life skills are reported to be both behavioral (ex. communication) and cognitive (ex. decision-making) skills learned in a particular environment, which, with the right considerations, can be transferred and help us flourish in other environments. Wilder (1999) highlights that Neyer (1994), in his dissertation, considers these skills as both conceptual (strategies related to performance) and adaptive (ex. dedication, and discipline).
Consistent amongst various definitions of life skills is that transferability appears to be their main feature. Life skills enable people to succeed in the environments in which they live by allowing a shift of behaviors from setting to setting across life situations as needed. The importance of life skills is due to the increasing number of environments one needs to succeed in as we age (Hodge and Danish, 1999). Life skills are learned through demonstration, modeling and practice (Danish, Petitpas and Hale, 1993) and can be assumed to be part of an on-going developmental process of learning, which is developed over the life span. In an attempt to conceptualize life skills in order to help foster transferability for healthy development throughout the lifespan, Brooks (1984 – dissertation) developed a taxonomy of developmental life skills by conducting a modified three-round Delphi survey enlisting 191 experts (comprising three panels) to respond to a pool of life skills descriptors appropriate for three major life periods (childhood, adolescence and adulthood). Brooks generated nine original proposed generic categories of life skills: Aesthetic Awareness Skills (AES), Career Development Skills (CAR), Emotional Awareness Skills (EMO), Family Living Skills (FAM), Fitness/Health Maintenance Skills (FIT), Identity Development Skills (IDY), Interpersonal Communication Skills (INT), Problem-Solving/Decision Making Skills (PRO), and Social Relations Skills (SOC). Brooks suggested that “...analysis of the content of the items classified under aesthetic awareness skills, career development skills, emotional awareness skills, and family living skills indicated at least the possibility that these items were special cases of other generic categories, such as identity development skills, interpersonal communication skills, or problem-solving/decision making skills.” He further speculated, “...the two categories of interpersonal communication skills and
social relations skills could perhaps be combined” (Brooks, 1984, p.139). Brooks offered a suggestion of collapsing the original nine categories into four proposed generic categories of life skills (see Figure 1). The final four proposed categories, suggested to be consistent across the life span were: Interpersonal Communication/Human Relation Skills (IPC/HRS), Problem-Solving/Decision Making Skills (PS/DMS), Fitness/Health Maintenance Skills (F/HMS) and Identity Development/Purpose in Life Skills (ID/PILS).

**Figure 1 Combining Nine Proposed Life Skill Categories Into Four**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AES</th>
<th>CAR</th>
<th>EMO</th>
<th>FAM</th>
<th>FIT</th>
<th>IDY</th>
<th>PRO</th>
<th>INT</th>
<th>SOC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EMO</td>
<td></td>
<td>EMO</td>
<td></td>
<td>EMO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CAR</td>
<td></td>
<td>CAR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FAM</td>
<td></td>
<td>FAM</td>
<td></td>
<td>FAM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SOC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F/HMS ID/PILS PS/DMS IPC/HRS

It appears as though neither a definition of life skills has been accepted, nor a complete list of life skills been generated. It is interesting to note that the concepts of life skills can also be found under different terminology. As noted before, in a commentary article, Danish, Petitpas and Hale (1993) use the terminology “interpersonal and intrapersonal skills” interchangeably with ”life skills”, suggesting them to be an equivalent concept.

Other research utilizes the term “psychological skills” which also appear to be analogous to life skills. For example, Vealey (1988) performed a content analysis on books focused on the application of psychological skills, techniques and strategies for sport stakeholders (i.e. athletes, coaches and sport psychologists). Vealey suggests that acquiring certain psychological skills (for example, self-awareness, attention and
interpersonal skills) facilitates successful performance and a positive approach to sport competition. Vealey highlights cognitive psychological skills beneficial for athletes to gain in order to help cope with numerous sport demands. It was further reported by Mahoney, Gabriel and Perkins (1987) that the mastery of “psychological skills” can be used to discriminate elite athletes from less exceptional ones. They set out to assess psychological skills relevant to exceptional athletic performance, and did so by questioning elite (n=126), pre-elite (n=141) and non-elite (n=446) collegiate athletes. Their results show that successful elite athletes (as compared to non-elite athletes) tended to report stable self-confidence, balanced anxiety management, efficient concentration, internally focused mental preparation, and higher motivation to do well. The suggested skills identified by successful elite athletes are reminiscent of life skills suggested elsewhere amongst the literature.

Another set of skills that appears comparable to life skills are termed “mental skills”. Zhang, et al. (1992) suggested that the value in teaching children mental skills is to enhance quality of life by having skills that endure over time. There is a similar value in of teaching life skills. Similarly, Gilbert and Orlick (1996) intended to assess the extent to which elementary school children could successfully implement specific mental control (i.e. stress control) strategies in a variety of situations. They found that after teaching children mental skills (i.e., relaxation skills and stress control skills), the children could later successfully implement them into their daily lives. The transferability of the mental skills from one setting to another strongly resembles the transferability of life skills.
Although there appears to be a variety of ways to title these skills, there is an incredible overlap of suggested examples beneath the headings, as well as, identifiable common characteristics. Therefore, it is curious as to whether the literary sources might be referring to the same concept, however using various titles/categories. Wilder (1999) reports that in his dissertation, Neyer (1994) presents “transferable skills” to include time-management, perseverance, ability to accept critical feedback, adhering to commitments, and learning self-control. Vealey (1988) reports three similar general categories of “psychological skills” including: foundation skills (motivation; self-awareness; self-esteem and self-confidence), performance skills (attention control, arousal control [physical and mental]) and facilitative skills (interpersonal skills and lifestyle management). Similarly, Brooks (1984) breaks down his over arching “developmental life skills” categories and highlights specific skills including: effective communication, perspective taking, goal setting, problem identification, stress management, self-monitoring, and making moral choices. Danish, D’Augelli and Ginsberg (1984) use the term “personal competence skills” which, although referred to differently, are akin to skills noted before, including life planning, self-reliance, and seeking the resources of others. In 1993, Danish, Petitpas and Hale provided a similar list of skills, this time termed “life skills” that are deemed valuable across various settings (see Table 1). Examples include performing under pressure, having self-control, setting goals, communicating with others and being self-motivated. Furthermore, in a later review paper, Danish (2002) suggests the title “transferable behaviors” which contain performing under pressure, solving problems, meeting deadlines and challenges, setting goals,
Table 1 Suggested Life Skills That Are Deemed Valuable Across Settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To perform under pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be organized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To meet challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To communicate with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To handle both success and failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To accept others' values and beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be flexible in order to succeed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To take risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make a commitment and stick to it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To know how to win and lose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To work with people you don't necessarily like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To respect others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have self-control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To push yourself to the limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To recognize your limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To compete without hatred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To accept responsibility for your behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be dedicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To accept criticism and feedback in order to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To evaluate yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make good decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To set and attain goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be able to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To work within a system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be self-motivated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

communicating, handling success and failure, working within a system and receiving critical feedback.

After reviewing the various literature on terming specific skills, which appear to all be comparable, Brooks’ (1984) taxonomy of developmental life skills (i.e. four proposed life skills categories) appears to be the categories that most appropriately encompass the largest number of various suggested headings of “life skills”.

Based on the classifications suggested by Brooks (1984), Gazda and Illovsky (1985) created a Life-Skills Development Scale – adolescent form (LSDS-B). This measure was constructed to assess perceptions of adolescent’s own life skills development in order to determine the need for developmental interventions. This instrument is rooted in four general life-skills descriptors (i.e. Interpersonal Communication/Human Relations Skills, Problem-Solving/Decision-Making Skills, Physical Fitness/Health Maintenance Skills, and Identity Development/Purpose in Life Skills). Originally, the LSDS-B had 110 items, however, has been appropriately revised to be a 65-item instrument. The revised LSDS-B has been suggested to produce a general score of global efficacy (Darden and Ginter, 1996) as well as specific scores on four sub-scales. The measure has been found to be useful in a clinical setting. Due to the total score reliability being high, one’s total score has been deemed appropriate for use in comparing individuals in terms of the general like-skills construct. Sub-scales have been recommended for use during group comparisons.

Life Skills in Non-Sport Settings

Life skills can be recognized in a variety of settings. First, they have been established in the literature on business and coaching. Berger (2002) overviews
professional and life skills coaching models and what environments they can be effective in. He advocates that life skills enable people to achieve success in their personal environments and notes that life skills coaching is a flexible approach that can be used across a variety of environments including a professional (i.e. corporate) one. He advocates that life skills coaching can help people be more successful at work and in their professional environments.

The literature also indicates the value of life skills in successful work rehabilitation. Chan, Rubin, Lee and Pruett (2003) confirm that life skills are considered crucial for successful living in a study regarding development of a life skills inventory for use as a component measure of a multi-dimensional program. The authors conducted a study where certified rehabilitation counsellors were placed in focus groups to generate a number of life skills outcome areas. As a result the authors developed a Life Skills Inventory measure comprising five categories of life skills. The five categories were reported to be general employability skills, work related communication skills, self-direction skills, self-care skills, and work tolerance skills. Results showed that one’s mastery of skills, within the five categories, is highly essential for a successful return to work. It appears as though regardless of the environment in which life skills are studied, their function continues to be aiding in the improvement and enhancement of one’s performance.

Second, life skills have been referred to in mental health counseling literature as an appropriate approach to mental health counseling interventions. A life skills counseling approach can be effective in a variety of settings and widely applicable to a variety of client concerns (Darden and Gazda 1996; Ginter 1996; Ginter 1999). In an
article describing certain life skill dimensions used to assess a client's developmental position and needs by Darden and Gazda (1996) it is suggested that a life skills construct suits mental health counseling. It is noted that the life skills construct is supported by educational theory and is theoretically developmentally based. Empirical support is derived from the life skills taxonomy developed by Brooks (1984) and can be appropriately linked with major assumptions of mental health interventions. The authors outline the top ten assumptions of mental health counseling (a) there are well-defined areas of human development (b) coping strategies can be determined from these areas (c) each area includes identifiable stages requiring mastery before advancement (d) accomplishment of developmental tasks is dependent on mastery of life skills (e) life skills are optimally learned within specified age ranges (f) optimal life functioning is achieved when operational mastery of fundamental life skills is attained (g) failure to develop certain life skills can result in neuroses and functional psychosis (h) life skills training serves the role of preventative mental health when introduced at a developmentally appropriate time (i) life skills training can serve the role of remediation when introduced in a time of emotional or mental disturbance (j) the greater the disturbance the greater the likelihood that the individual suffers multiple life skill deficits. The alignment of mental health counseling assumptions and life skills knowledge can provide an appropriate therapeutic model for mental health counseling (Darden and Gazda, 1996).

**Life Skills in Sport Settings**

There are research articles on life skills in the context of sports participation. The most discussed aspect of how these two areas fit together is through the transferring of
skills learned in sport to a school or work setting (Hodge and Danish, 1999). Although it has been suggested that sport is a highly appropriate environment to learn transferable life skills, it has been further noted that the process is not predestined (Danish, Fazio, Nellen and Owens, 2002) in that skills are not automatically transferred from one environment to another (Danish, Petitpas and Hale, 1992). Life skills transferability is not the same for all people and is dependent on what skills one has already mastered, other resources one has, and one's real or perceived opportunities (Danish, Fazio, Nellen and Owens, 2002). With this in mind, it could be suggested that life skills transferability might be influenced by individually specific interventions highlighting life skills learned through sport and correlating career skills.

**Transferring life skills**

Life skills can be transferred if the right considerations are set in place. In a chapter describing interventions using sport to teach life skills by Danish, Nellen and Owens (1996) it is suggested that the actual benefits of sport do not occur unintentionally, but rather need attention and cultivation. In a chapter similarly discussing community based programs to enhance adolescent development by Danish, Fazio, Nellen and Owens (2002) it is reported that several considerations must be addressed in order for skills to transfer. For example, athletes must believe that they have skills valuable for other settings, learn that the skills are both physical and cognitive, recognize how they learned the skills, understand the rationale for learning skills and think they can be successful in other settings. Without deliberation of these concerns, athletes in transition may continue to feel as though they possess only sport-related skills and hesitate to try their familiar skills in a new career.
Suggested hindrances to the transferring of skills include an athletes lack of confidence in their ability to apply skills in different settings, lack of motivation to explore non-sport roles, difficulty seeking out necessary social support to help transfer a skill and difficulty adjusting to initial failures or setbacks in attempting to transfer the skill to different settings (Danish, Petitpas and Hale, 1993).

With the consideration that teaching life skills must be accompanied by explanations of how and why these skills will be useful in other domains, counsellors working in the area of sport can teach athletes how to transfer skills learned in sport. One highly regarded intervention, the Life Development Intervention (LDI) is offered by Danish and colleagues (Danish et al., 1993; Danish et al., 1995; Danish, D’Augelli and Ginsberg, 1984). Danish et al., (1984) suggest that the LDI is described to be based on a human life span developmental perspective. With an underlying assumption of continuous human growth and change, the basis of this intervention is that life-changing circumstances, known as critical life events, are inevitable over the life span. One’s reaction to critical life events is dependent on their available resources, level of preparation for the event and past history in dealing with the event. The LDI intends to enhance responses to critical life crises by enhancing personal competence (life planning, being self-reliant, and seeking resources of others) via teaching life skills. The method of intervention appears to be applied by occurring at three different points in an athlete’s career. For example, in the case of an athlete’s retirement, using enhancement strategies (e.g. helping anticipate life events) with individuals before the event, using supportive strategies (e.g. linking athletes to appropriate resources and encouraging athletes to provide support for one another) with the individuals during the event and using
counselling strategies (e.g. teaching skills to help cope with future events) with individuals after the event occurs.

Lavallee (2005) recently investigated the efficacy of this life development intervention on career transition adjustment in recently retired professional athletes. The intervention used in this study was modified to only use supportive and counselling strategies. Lavallee recruited 41 recently retired male professional soccer players to participate in a life development study and further contacted 41 recently retired male professional soccer players to makeup a control group who would receive no psychological interventions during their immediate 4-month period following career termination. The specific components of the intervention that were used in this study were the assessment of life events, helping individuals transfer life skills from one domain to another and teaching skills to cope with future events. What was found was that the life development was shown to be effective in significantly assisting elite athletes in their career transition adjustment. It seems as though only using two of the three suggested interventions from the LDI (supportive and counselling interventions) was a practical approach when investigating already retired athletes, however it would be interesting to assess the efficacy of the entire LDI (including enhancement, supportive and counselling interventions) with current athletes as they go through the entire retirement process.

SUPER (Sports United to Promote Education and Recreation) is a sport-based life skills program for adolescents designed by Danish, Fazio, Nellen and Owens (2002). This program links sports and life skills through teaching sport clinics with three sets of activities: learning the physical skills related to a specific sport, learning life skills related
to sports in general and playing the sport. Papacharisis et al., (2005) examined the
effectiveness of an abbreviated form of this life skills program for youth (aged 10 – 12)
who participated competitively in sport. Two studies were conducted (n = 40; n = 32,
respectively). It was found that a program that integrates sport and life skills training can
be effective when life skills training are suitably rooted within sport exercises. It was
further noted that sport skills are not sacrificed for life skills but rather both skill sets can
be used together to help improve sport performance by allowing the application of the life
skills taught during sport practice.

Similarly, Miller and Kerr (2002) have recently proposed a model that encourages
the development of life skills during the athlete’s career, in order to promote personal
excellence as well as inhibit career transition adjustment difficulties. It is notable that
these authors mention how uncommon it is for elite athletes to have a way of evaluating
their life skills, and further suggest the value of sport consultants assist such appraisals. It
appears that there are major benefits to including enhancement strategies simultaneously
with sport practices. It would be interesting if counsellors who work in the area of sport
could promote this idea of additional development and the long-term benefits among both
athletes and coaches.

Sport Career Transitions

The termination from sport is an inevitable process or event, which usually creates
a crisis for ill prepared athletes (Ogilvie and Howe, 1993). The reason for ending in sport
has most frequently been shown as one of four factors (a) age, (b) injury, (c) free choice
or (d) de-selection (Taylor and Ogilvie, 1994). Some athletes are able to make a
successful transition (adjust to retirement and create a new career) while others struggle
to cope with the significant life changes (Miller, Ogilvie and Adams 2000) of disengaging from sport. A suggested explanation is offered in a chapter by Greenspan and Anderson (1995) who speak to the noted idea of identity foreclosure (Pearson and Petitpas, 1990) and describe athletes as people who may have developmentally "shut out any other identity possibility" (Greenspan and Anderson, 1995, p.180). This could explain, in part, a troublesome athletic retirement transition. It might be supposed that athletes may not have had the chance to develop well rounded personalities, or been exposed to a range of other career opportunities due to athletic ambitions and encouragement to place education and work exploration on hold. Numerous studies have noted that athletes with a strong sense of athletic identity appear to be higher at risk for emotional uproar upon transition out of an athletic career (Baillie and Danish, 1992; Pearson and Petitpas, 1990; Werthner and Orlick, 1986).

For an athlete, preparation for career transitions (i.e. preparing for future needs) is as critical as the transition itself (career switch or retirement from competition) (Miller et al., 2000). It has been suggested that if an athlete solely focuses on sport before the termination of their career, they might begin to neglect other areas of their life (Ogilvie and Howe, 1993). In a guide focusing on athletic career development, planning and transitions, Petitpas et al, (1997) recommend that athletes should strive for a balanced life as well as efficient life skills in order to prepare for successful career transitions. Learning that one has skills outside of sport and self-worth in other abilities beyond sport appears to be a valuable lesson for any athlete since it is inevitable that they will eventually face sport retirement.
In a chapter focusing on the trauma of termination from athletes Ogilvie and Howe (1993) suggest that the transition out of sport follows a somewhat predictable course. They note that upon consideration of termination an athlete’s reaction may be one of shock. It is further noted that after the initial reaction subsides, the athletes engage in denial and eventually anger. The third stage is suggested to be depression (i.e. a sense of loneliness and helplessness). Ogilvie and Howe suggest that no matter how successful athletes are at working through these stages, there tends to be unresolved feelings due to future activities lacking the same intense satisfying and rewarding feelings as their participation in sport.

In a chapter discussing sport transitions and maximizing one’s potential Murphy (1995) suggests two essential concerns that might need consideration in attempt to aid athletes achieve optimal career transitions (a) career planning assistance and (b) individual counselling. Murphy suggests the major steps in career planning assistance include: understanding the career process, developing job-related skills, identifying personal career needs, identifying job-related opportunities and setting career goals. Along with specialized career considerations, it is further noted that an optimal transition includes addressing certain emotional issues for example, self-identity, emotional and social support, coping skills and sense of control. Like other reviewers, Murphy suggests two overarching goals of career assistance programs (a) teaching the importance of understanding the transition from sport and (b) teaching the implications of leaving behind part of one’s identity. In a chapter by Danish, D’Augelli and Ginsberg (1984) proposing a life development model, it is asserted that the identification of transferable
life skills acquired from involvement in athletics is an essential component of a life skills model, as well as, success after college.

The approach of other skill training programs for athletes is even more so multidimensional, including both psychological and interpersonal skills training. Content of these certain programs often includes (a) alcohol/drug education (b) career termination (c) transitions (d) decisions making (e) time management (f) developing relationships (g) effective communication and (h) disordered eating issues (Danish, Petitpas and Hale 1995; Carr and Bauman 1996), however very few studies have evaluated the effectiveness of these programs. The objective of one study by Curry and Maniar (2003) was to determine the possible influence of performance enhancement principles (including psychological and life skills) on athlete perceptions and athletic performance. It was shown that university student athletes who had taken a peak performance course showed enhanced achievement over athletes who did not, as rated by coaches.

Despite the wealth of studies that investigate the career termination process of athletes, there has yet to be a traditional theory of retirement suitable for this unique experience (Baillie and Danish, 1992). Other theories have been applied to sport career transitions (i.e., gerontological theories and thanatological models) however none have proven completely effective. It has been suggested that these theories are limiting our perspectives and instead should include developmental elements (Blinde and Greendorfer, 1985). Taylor and Ogilvie (1994), offer a conceptual model of athletic retirement, however it is mainly focused on athletic factors and neglects non-athletic factors that might impact successful sport career transitions.
Research On Approaching Sport Career Transitions

The literature yields research that proposes various ways to approach sport career transitions. Stambulova (1994) offers two theoretical models (i.e. psychological descriptions) of the sports career, as supported by the investigating the sport careers of over 200 Russian athletes through interviews. According to Stambulova (1994, 2000) the sport career is considered as having various crises (i.e. predicable transition phases), all of which bring difficulties the athlete must work to resolve in order to continue their sport career. These six crises as identified through content-analysis of student athletes written accounts of their sport career include (a) beginning the sport specialization (b) transition to intensive training (c) transition from mass popular sports to high-achievement (d) transitions from amateur to professional sports (e) transition from culmination to end of sport career and (f) end of sport career. Stambulova (1994) further notes that when athletes are unable to cope with any of the transition crises, they require a psychological understanding of the nature of the crises or else will be forced to end their sport career prematurely. Although Stambulova presents six crises, which appear to span the career of an athlete, there is no mention of the athlete’s final transition to a new career or activity.

What has been realized is that this particular transition can be an opportunity for social “re-birth” (Coakley, 1983) and should be seen as a transitional event rather than a one-time event (McPherson, 1980). Stambulova (2000) notes that a crisis is a turning point in the development of a system and specifically that sport and an athlete’s experience in sport can be considered as a condensed model of one’s life span. Using these assumptions, further research has been carried out on investigating the sport career transition process to determine other tenets for an appropriate retirement model to rest on.
Torregrosa et al, (2004) interviewed 18 active Olympic athletes regarding their views of retirement in order to add a prospective view of retirement to the career transitions literature. It was discerned that active athletes gradually build an image of retirement from sports during their career. From this knowledge, consideration should be given to decreasing the problematic nature of athletic retirement by supporting athletes in seeing the transition as a process rather than a singular event or an ending. Alfermann et al, (2004) investigated the overall consequences of sport career termination of national and international level athletes, by asking 254 European athletes to reflect retrospectively via questionnaire to their sport career termination. It was found that planning the retirement resulted in better emotional, cognitive and behavioral adjustment. Again it appears that considering methods and interventions to prepare athletes for the inevitable retirement transition warrants valuable consideration. However, before focusing on possible interventions, it could be advised to hear directly from current athletes what they deem necessary for a smooth transition.

Erpic et al. (2004) investigated the effect of both athletic and non-athletic factors on sports career termination by questioning former elite athletes. There were 85 participants, all of whom were former international and national level Slovene athletes, each retired for less than four years. It was found that the difficulties of career termination depend on the voluntary-ness of career termination, athlete’s subjective evaluation of athletic achievements, athletic identity and non-athletic factors such as educational status and occurrence of other non-athletic transitions. Breaking down the sport career termination process and validating the importance of considering factors other than athletic, might inform interventions regarding the interplay of factors in the retirement process.
Werthner and Orlick (1986) investigated transitions of 28 Olympic athletes through open-ended interview questions. They found several factors that play an important role in determining the nature of the transition out of sport. These include (a) new focus (b) sense of accomplishment (c) coaches (d) injuries/health problems (e) politics/sport-associated problems (f) finances and (g) support of family and friends. In their summary, it was suggested that coaches and athletes develop an awareness of how to best approach the difficult transition out of sport participation.

There is further support for an educational athlete retirement model and a supportive athlete career counseling framework focused on emphasizing the life skills an athlete has which are transferable (Sinclair and Orlick, 1993; Taylor and Ogilvie, 1994; Lavallee and Anderson, 2000). Athletes will benefit from the realization that skills learned in sport are transferable to the rest of their lives (Danish, Nellen and Owens 1996). Petitpas, Danish, Murphy and McKelvain (1992) presented a program called Career Assistance Program for Athletes (CAPA) to assist Olympic athletes with career transitions out of sport. The program is based on a life span development framework, which is rooted in enhancing personal skills and competence and which has been vastly discussed in the literature regarding an athlete’s transition out of sport. The article describes the CAPA workshop and presents evaluation data. In order to acquire evaluation data, athletes were asked to rate the workshop presentations and rated the transferable skills presentations as the most useful content area and felt that the awareness of the transferability of skills could better help in coping with their transition from sport to another career. The authors further highlighted that feedback from athletes reiterated
that many athletes do not recognize the skills they acquire in sports participation that are transferable to other settings.

Stambulova (2000) discusses implications for psychological interventions in terms of counselling interventions with athlete’s facing crisis. Two basic models of psychological assistance in crisis are presented, substitution and mobilization. Substitution is described as a technique where a coach or a sport psychologist leads an athlete in their decision-making. Mobilization is described (as the name suggests) as orienting the athlete towards creative search for crisis resolution and self-improvement. Stambulova suggests that substitution does not promote athletes’ acquiring the necessary transferable skills for coping with difficult situations and hard decisions, whereas mobilization increases the athletes involvement in decision making and pushes the athlete’s thinking forward to consider crisis resolution from different perspectives. The mobilization technique consists of three coping strategies that the athlete can choose to employ: rejection (avoiding the crisis situation, ceasing the activity or breaking a relationship), acceptance (remaining in the situation and changing one’s perception and attitudes toward the situation), and fighting (changing the athlete’s attitude toward the situation and attempting to change the situation for better). Stambulova concludes that the mobilization technique is a preferred intervention due to providing the athlete with necessary transferable skills to independently manage future crisis whether in or outside of sport.

In consideration of the history of attempting to approach the sport career transition, it appears as though athletes, regardless of their athletic status (i.e. amateur or
professional) or their level of commitment, can make their career transition smoother by knowing that skills learned in sport are transferable.

Commitment to Sport

In 1993, Scanlan et al. introduced a sport-specific theoretical model of commitment, termed the Sport Commitment Model (SCM). With a basis of recognized social psychology literature, Scanlan and colleagues argue that gaining insight into athletes' motivation for and commitment to sport participation, specifically, continued involvement, is valuable because commitment has face validity, is a term commonly used to signify the motivational force behind persistence and has a substantial theoretical and empirical tradition.

According to Scanlan et al., (1993) sport commitment is defined as a psychological state representing the desire to resolve or continue sport participation. The SCM model, suggests that sport commitment is made up of five determinants (a) sport enjoyment (a positive affective response to the sport experience that reflects generalized feelings such as pleasure, liking and fun), (b) involvement opportunities (valued opportunities that are present only through continued involvement), (c) personal investments (personal resources that are put into the activity which cannot be recovered if participation is discontinued), (d) social constraints (social expectations or norms which create feelings of obligation to remain in the activity) and (e) involvement alternatives (the attractiveness of the most preferred alternatives to continued participation in the current endeavor). It is further suggested that greater sport enjoyment, personal investments, social constrains, involvement opportunities and less attractive involvement alternatives lead to a higher level of sport commitment.
Scanlan and colleagues (1993) successfully tested their model through three phases, with samples (phase one n=140), (phase two n=178), (phase three n=1342) of youth athletes and showed that their results supported the hypothesized relationships between several of the model’s predictors and commitment to a youth-sport program. It was further noted that two of the suggested determinants of commitment, sport enjoyment and personal investment accounted for a significant portion of the sport commitment variances in their sample.

With interest in athletes’ underlying continued involvement in organized sports, Carpenter et al., (1993) tested the SCM model to test its practicality with a heterogeneous group of young athletes using a structural equation model. According to Carpenter and colleagues, commitment can be assessed with respect to a particular program, particular sport or to sport in general. Further noted is that the SCM model was designed to apply to adult and youth sports from recreational to elite contexts. Subjects included over 1300 athletes from various sports and were assessed midseason (a time when athletes had a clear, concrete and common reference point for describing thoughts and feelings) in regards to their commitment. Athletes were tested using a survey that contained items assessing the variables of the SCM and were rated on a five-point Likert scale for all the model variables. Results showed that the model accounted for 68% percent of the commitment variance and that as hypothesized, greater commitment was significantly predicted by greater sport enjoyment, involvement opportunities and personal investments. What was found counter to the hypothesis was that greater commitment was predicted by lower social constraints.
Alexandris et al., (2002) also tested the validity and applicability of the Scanlan et al., (1993) Sport Commitment Model, however the authors used the model in context of exercise and fitness participation. Subjects were drawn from three randomly selected private health clubs in Greece. Results indicated support for the model in predicting psychological commitment as well as support for the construct validity and internal consistency reliabilities. Furthermore, results highlighted the most important predictor of commitment to be involvement opportunities.

As noted, athletes who show commitment to their sport have sport enjoyment, involvement opportunities, personal investments as well as certain social constraints and possible involvement alternatives. Athletes with a high commitment level were desirable for this study for two reasons. First, focus groups tend to promote more in-depth discussion when members have commonalities and second, it can be assumed that the more committed an athlete, and the more time invested into a sport, the greater the chance that the life skills the athlete has learned have been done so through sport participation.

Using Focus Groups to Collect Data

Focus groups as a qualitative approach tend to be used near the beginning of a research process when key constructs are yet to be determined (Gifford, 1998). The use of focus groups as a method appears to be a major departure from the common methodological approaches used in previous qualitative studies investigating life skills and athletes. Most empirical research in this area reports using either semi-structured interviews or paper and pencil assessment measures to collect data from athletes, whereas the focus group format allows members to interact with each other (Morgan, 1993). It has been noted that people tend to disclose more about themselves to others who resemble
them in various ways than to people who differ from them (Jourard, 1964), therefore it would appear that a focus group setting would help maximize the range of discussion that can be expressed by participants as noted by Krueger (2000).

The rich data source from the focus groups is found in the interactions and responses provided by participants on a topic introduced by the moderator (Morgan, 1993; Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990). Altogether, focus group discussions are noted for their ability to (a) elicit personal experiences and self-disclosure (Krueger, 2000) (b) lessen the anxiety that is sometimes associated with individual interviews (Madriz, 2000) (c) facilitate interaction between participants (d) elicit groups norms (Murphy, Cockburn and Murphy, 1992) and (e) promote participant control over the direction and content of the discussions (Wilkinson, 1998). Due to the noted beneficial aspects of the focus group atmosphere, as well as, appearing to be the most appropriate method to obtain the information I was seeking, focus groups were used in this study.

Summary

After reviewing literature pertinent to the scope of this study it is concluded that there is a concern in regards to the potentially grave effects of sport termination, which universally occurs in the lives of athletes of all age groups and levels of competition. Regardless of the inevitability of this process, it appears rare that an athlete is prepared with career options and must be directed in ways that can help to promote opportunities for a smooth transition into another career. Due to a general lack of concern and planning for life-after-termination, the career transition is rarely easy and the committed athlete usually lacks the opportunity to develop a sense or awareness of anything other than sports skills. Therefore, investigating the transferable life skills learned through sport
participation as identified by current athletes will be beneficial for not only sport career transitions programs used in athletic programs, but also for all parties involved (i.e. coaches, athletes, families and counsellors).
CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

Participants

Male and female, undergraduate and graduate student athletes who were currently participating in a Western Canadian university or college level sports/athletics program (including individual sport and group sport) were invited to comprise the focus groups in this study. Recruitment materials such as posters (Appendix A), letters to coaches (Appendix B), and recruitment presentation speech to athletes (Appendix C) indicated that the researcher was requiring athletes who currently participate in university or college level sport, to participate in a focus group discussion about life skills they have learned via participation in sport. Effort was made to recruit athletes who have a high level of commitment to their respective sports. This study acquired as diverse a sample as possible in regards to ethnic background, culture, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status, in order to increase the breadth of the results. This study included approximately 20 male and female participants ranging from 18-28 years old.

Procedure

Focus groups, a qualitative approach of gathering research, were chosen to explore the experiential nature of athletes learning and identifying life skills.

As noted in the literature review, focus groups were an appropriate method for data collection for various reasons. First, due to focus groups being well suited for obtaining in-depth participant responses (Morgan, 1993) this format was used to gain an in-depth understanding of the athletes' perceptions of transferable life skills learned through sport. Second, focus groups enable discussion of personal experiences (Krueger, 2000) and
allow participants to react, agree or disagree, build on and provide further insight into the
comments made by other participants (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990). Third, focus
group format allows for sharing information that might otherwise be lost in a paper and
pencil measure and might not be touched upon in a one-on-one interview. Therefore,
bringing together a target group with a commonality of sport was an effective way to
collect data relevant to this study.

The design of this study considered the focus of the study, the most effective
methodology, the best-suited participants and the researchers own assumptions. The
research question “what are transferable life skills learned through sports participation?”
was created in order to obtain a first hand account of athlete’s experiences of sports
participation. This study outlined athlete’s perceptions of transferable life skills learned
through sports participation that are later applied to other environments.

Participants were recruited from the University of British Columbia’s Thunderbird
Athletic Program. For initial recruitment of participants a letter was sent outlining who I
am, the objectives and intention of the study, the nature of the interview questions and
how the information will be used to coaches at the UBC athletic department inviting their
team members to participate in focus groups on the life skills learned in sport. The letter
was followed-up with a phone call one week later. The third contact was my attending
interested teams team-meetings to further explain the purpose and procedures of the
study. Athletes were encouraged to indicate their interest in participating in the study in a
confidential manner (i.e. direct contact through provided e-mail or phone contact
information), without knowledge of other team members or coaches. All interested
athletes were given a brief demographic questionnaire (which included seven questions to
assess appropriateness for participation [i.e. commitment level]), at the beginning of their focus group. Purposeful sampling was used in hopes of interested participants having prior reflection about this topic. Athletes were randomly assigned to focus groups.

As a graduate student in counseling psychology, and with prior group experience I led the focus groups. Introductory comments included a statement about voluntary informed consent (Appendix D), as well as a description of the procedures for the group (i.e. use of the audiotape) and a clear explanation about the purpose of the groups. Before beginning the focus group discussion and before starting the audiotape, participants were invited to sign informed consent forms as well as to fill out a short demographic questionnaire (see Appendix E).

The orienting remark was: “I would like you to talk about some of the life skills you have learned through participating in sport that will be valuable in terms of a future career. For example, meeting goals.” Following the responses to the primary comment, open-ended questions were asked and empathy was used in order to clarify situations described by participants. All participants were given an opportunity to respond and the facilitator encouraged diversity in athlete reflections and promoted athletes to respond further. All focus groups were audiotaped and transcribed. The final step was thanking the athletes for their participation and answering any questions they had.

Measures

Demographic Questionnaire: This short questionnaire (Appendix E) included questions regarding background variables such as the athlete’s age, sex, ethnicity, sport, how many years playing sport, highest level of competition, role on team and how many hours a week dedicated to sport. The questionnaire further included seven sport commitment
questions derived from Scanlan et al., (1993)’s Sport Commitment Model. This model suggests five main antecedents of sport commitment encompassing the notions of attraction (i.e. sport enjoyment), alternatives (i.e. involvement alternatives) and restraining forces (i.e. social constrains, involvement opportunities and personal investment). It has been hypothesized that greater sport enjoyment, personal investments, social constrains, involvement opportunities and less attractive involvement alternatives lead to a higher level of sport commitment. Commitment was scored on a five-point Likert scale. The addition of these questions was to ensure that athletes were dedicated and committed to their sport.

Data collection

This study began with an initial a pilot study in order to test the orienting comment and to refine focus group procedures. There were eight focus groups in total. The compositions of the groups were mixed gendered and depended largely on the number of participants involved. A demographic questionnaire (including sport commitment measure questions) was administered at the beginning of each focus group session. Focus groups were audiotaped and later transcribed verbatim. The focus groups were held on UBC campus for duration of an hour (60 minutes) each.

Data Analysis

All of the focus group data were content analyzed in order to identify transferable life skills. Krueger’s (2000) considerations were followed in analyzing the data (a) considering the words (b) considering the context (c) considering the internal consistency (d) considering the frequency of comments (e) considering the extensiveness of comments (f) considering the intensity of comments (g) considering the specificity of the
responses (h) finding the big ideas (i) considering what was not said (j) considering the purpose of the study. There was an inter-rater reliability check put in place to verify consistency.

Role of the researcher

The role of the researcher in the focus groups was to guide participant responses (3 - 4 minutes each) and to provide empathy to the participants. Overall, the researcher had four roles throughout this project: facilitator, listener, observer, and eventually inductive analyst. In terms of bracketing and attempting to keep researcher neutrality, recognizing the assumptions the researcher brings to the research was an important step. My assumptions stem from personal sport and counselling experience and are first, that although sports participation provides life skills learning opportunities, athletes are not necessarily taught to recognize these skills and their later usability in other environments. Second, life skills are not only learned through sports participation and might be hard to distinguish as skills learned specifically in the sport environment and not in other environments the athlete is encountering simultaneously. Third, everyone, if given the opportunity, can culture life skills in some capacity and last, athletes participating and dedicating time to university and college level sport/athletic programs suggests a high level of commitment to their sport. During my research, I remained aware of my biases regarding an athlete’s commitment to sport, as well as how and where an athlete learns life skills.

Rigor

My concentration was directed at doing good practice, meaning researcher neutrality and systematic procedures to ensure that results were trustworthy and accurate.
I aimed for quality of information (i.e. the results accurately reflected how participants felt and thought about the topic). To ensure the trustworthiness of my procedures, and to further validate any findings, strategies were put in place such as running a pilot study, audiotaping the focus groups, listening to some of the focus groups with my supervisor, transcribing the discussions, reviewing the tapes in conjunction with the transcripts and closely following Krueger’s considerations. A further step was to ensure inter-rater reliability by having a second person (other than myself) place sentence fragments from focus group transcripts into already determined themes.

Ethical Considerations

The Ethical Research Review Committee of the University of British Columbia approved this study. The certificate of approval is available upon request. In preparation for possible emerging ethical issues, I firstly investigated consent forms and confidentiality techniques for group work. Secondly, I reviewed Gottlieb’s (1993) model for multiple relationship resolution, and lastly provided athletes with a list of possible referral sources (Appendix F) upon arrival to their focus group.

Three anticipated ethical issues were considered. First, possible coercion of athletes to participate by their coaches, second, confidentiality within the focus groups and last, the potential of possible previous relationships between participants. However, as noted previously, every attempt was made to not have athletes who know each other in the same group. None of these issues were a concern for participants.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The data in this study were collected from running eight focus groups, of thirty-two varsity athletes dedicated to their sport from the University of British Columbia. The athletes ranged in age from 18 to 27 years (M = 21 yrs; SD = 2.05 years). Thirteen athletes were female while nineteen were male. Athletes represented eight sports in total: volleyball, cross-country, ice hockey, field hockey, basketball, baseball, rugby, and soccer. See Table 2 for athlete demographics.

Opening remark

From the main research question “what are transferable life skills learned through sports participation?” came the orienting remark “I would like you to talk about some of the life skills you have learned through participating in sport” which was used at the beginning of each focus group in order to obtain a first hand account of athlete’s experiences of sports participation (See Appendix G).

I will first provide a definition and examples from each proposed category from the Brooks (1984) study to capture the essence of each proposed category. Rich examples of life skills and themes that emerged from the current study’s data will then be identified.


Initially, the skills that emerged from the first discussion topic were grouped together under tentatively named categories. Upon reviewing Brooks’ (1984) four generic categories of life skills, it appeared that his already outlined categories matched the tentative themes and could be used as a basic framework for data analysis. The four
Table 2 Demographic Characteristics for all Participants (n = 32)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African/Arabic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Indicated</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Represented:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Hockey</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Country</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Hockey</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest level of competition:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varsity</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Indicated</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of dedication:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dedicated</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sort of dedicated</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of time put into playing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your sport this season:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretty Much</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Much</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of effort Put into playing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your sport this season:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretty Much</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Much</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Options to pursue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career/Work</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Participant responses to questions regarding level of dedication, amount of time and effort invested in sport (n = 31). Participant responses to question “What do you intend to do when you are “finished” your sport?” (n = 30). Combined participant responses to the question “Options to pursue when you are finished your sport?” exceed 100%, on account of many athletes reporting more than one option.
proposed categories, which were used as the categorization framework for the data from the first discussion topic included: Problem Solving/Decision Making Skills (PS/DMS), Interpersonal Communication/Human Relation Skills (IPC/HRS), Identity Development/Purpose in Life Skills (ID/PILS) and Fitness and Health Maintenance Skills (F/HMS) (See Appendix J).

The Problem Solving/Decision Making Skills (PS/DMS) category is identified by Brooks as the skills necessary for information seeking, information assessment and analysis, problem identification, solution, implementation, and evaluation, goal setting, systematic planning and forecasting, time management, critical thinking and conflict resolution.

The Interpersonal Communication/Human Relation Skills (IPC/HRS) category is defined by Brooks as skills necessary for effective communication, both verbal and non-verbal, with others leading to ease in establishing relationships, skills for small and large group community membership and participation, skills for management of interpersonal intimacy, skills for clear expression of ideas and opinions and skills for the ability to give and receive feedback.

The Identity Development/Purpose in Life Skills (ID/PILS) category includes skills and awareness necessary for ongoing development of personal identity and emotional awareness, including self-monitoring, maintenance of self-esteem, manipulating and accommodating to one’s environment, clarifying values, sex-role development, making meaning and moral/values dimensions of sexuality.

The Fitness/Health Maintenance Skills (F/HMS) category is defined by Brooks as skills necessary for motor development and coordination, nutritional maintenance, weight
control, physical fitness, athletic participation, physiological aspects of sexuality, stress management and leisure activity selection.

Additional Categories

Through the course of data analysis it became apparent that some of the life skills mentioned by athletes did not fit into any one of the proposed four generic life skills categories. These skills were grouped together and placed under a fifth category termed Other, defined as miscellaneous life skills.

All mentioned life skills were extracted through the data analysis process outlined previously in the methodology section. Skills were drawn from each transcript and audio recording. Life skills most commonly identified among focus groups can be found in Table 3. Examples of skills that emerged in the course of individual accounts of experience in sport were also extracted and included in this section (see Table 4), as well, For all life skills identified by participants see Appendix H: Life Skills Learned Through Sport Participation Sorted in Proposed Categories.

Inter-rater Reliability

At first count, the author came up with a total of 229 life skills that emerged from the data. Another person, non-psychology related, categorized the 229 skills under the five categories, independent from the first round categorization. Inter-rater reliability was initially 65% agreement of the placement of skills under the categories. After the two categorizers met to discuss and agree upon final placement of skills, some new skills were discerned making a final count of skills totaling 247, and resulting in 100% agreement.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Specific Life skill</th>
<th>Percent of groups who reported it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving / Decision Making Skills (PS/DMS)</td>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goal setting</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Communication / Human Relation Skills (IPC/HRS)</td>
<td>Teamwork / Group work</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dealing with many types of people</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness/ Health Maintenance Skills (F/HMS)</td>
<td>Dealing with stressful situations</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity Development / Purpose in life Skills (ID/PILS)</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self improvement</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Re-focus</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Examples of life skills that emerged</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving / Decision Making Skills (PS/DMS)</td>
<td>Time Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dealing with adversity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adapting to new situations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bouncing back from defeat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Communication / Human Relation Skills (IPC/HRS)</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sacrificing for the greater good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognizing others' needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communicating with a variety of people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working towards a common goal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Getting feedback</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working with others you don’t like</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deal with many types of people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity Development / Purpose in Life Skills (ID/PILS)</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open-mindedness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competitiveness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness/Health Maintenance Skills (F/HMS)</td>
<td>Dealing with stressful situations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overcoming injury</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking Downtime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Finding peace of mind</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mental Skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Problem-Solving/Decision Making Skills (PS/DMS)

Under the Problem-Solving/Decision Making Skills (PS/DMS) category, several distinct skills became clear from the data. For example, one common life skill was time management. One athlete mentioned:

"... time management is huge I think ... it's really helped me personally organizing – I'm almost better when I'm – like you said when I'm going to play ... you know when you're actually in season you're better at organizing your life than if when you're not ... because you don't have that structure like .... Practice times, when I have to be here – would I ... You just kind of ... your - your weekends are all – you're off-seasons weekends are all – all of a sudden open – I don't even know what to do with like – when do I start – when do I start to work ... when do I start school work – when do I do this – when do I do that - ... it's kind of ... you almost – it's almost with sports it's almost easier for me ... to ... structure my life even though there's less time ... to do things I guess..."

Another athlete stated:

"... Time management for example – it's a huge factor and especially when you're traveling and what-not ... with the team and ... becoming efficient in ... in you know in your life in terms of your planning ... your scheduling ... even your work habits have to be efficient ..."
The skill *planning* also emerged:

"... I can consciously remember planning ... planning things a lot more than I - I used to ... I’m trying to thin of a specific – yeah like ... In specific I’m actually using a day planner ... ever since junior high I’ve had a day planner and I I’ll use it for like 2 days and then it’ll get lost or something right? from like using a day planner now and .... Yeah like when I have ... when I have things to do in a day I’ll kind of ... it’s not as random as it used to be ... I’m - I’m really – I could consciously say that like ... I’m actually planning more before I actually do something ... yeah ... before I used to just kinda do it ... and now I’m kinda planning it a bit more ... “

*Dealing with adversity* was a different identified life skill in this category. One athlete remarked:

"We talked about dealing with adversity ... in terms of playing with injuries ... That – I’m sure we’ve all played injured at one point in our career ... And ... You know there’s times when you know you think you’re better and you go back to early and then you re-injure yourself ... and you take a huge setback ... and ... you ... have to fight through that ... to begin with and then making your way back in the line up and you know getting that same conditioning level back up and – and then just being able to play with confidence that you have before ... you got injured
it’s a big factor in terms of your return and you know a lot of times you’ll have … You’ll - you’ll be – you’ll be kind of … like nursing that injury … let’s say it’s a shoulder injury … and you’re not really getting on the corner … like you used … for the first while until you feel it’s solid … and that happened with me … And you know it’s something I had to deal with and … like you know … say for instance my coach got on me one time … and … I had to explain to him why this happened … and … just say I wasn’t feeling great and … you know eventually it - it got better … and I and I returned back to my old form but it took a while and it was frustrating … but … it was you know dealing adversities like that – I think make you a better player and a better person being able to deal with those things … That … appear in sport but also in life so … it’s part of dealing with … with what comes – with what comes at you so …”

For the skill *adapting to new situations* one athlete revealed:

“…like being like able to adapt to a lot of different situations I’ve found … is – I guess has been tough in playing at a lot different places and just a lot of different people – different atmospheres all the time – so it’s a lot of like getting your mindset around … just being in a different spot … and it’s not always – like it’s never the same thing twice … so … just being able to adapt to a lot of different stuff … “
As well, another athlete pointed out:

"...learning to adjust to ... to playing in you know totally climates and humidity and - and dealing with different languages and ... and cultures and food and what not to eat when you’re on the road and what to eat –and one of the best experiences with sport and definitely the ... opens your eyes to ... through meeting different teams ..."

Another noted life skill was bouncing back from defeat. One athlete remembered:

"... Dealing with defeat like ... bouncing back like we ... we lost in the final at nationals – got a silver medal and it feels horrible right ... but then like .... You know you learn like ... well there are things we could have done to have prevented that and sort of to ... okay take that in stride and then ... move on and learn how to ... ... we’ll do it next time...”

Interpersonal Communication/Human Relation Skills (IPC/HRS)

Within the Interpersonal Communication/Human Relation Skills (IPC/HRS) category, several significant skills emerged. For example, two athletes spoke to the skill leadership:

"...being a leader at times and delegate like different jobs – trying to find out what people’s strengths are and where you can apply then and I think that’s definitely a ..."
“...leadership ... that I - that I always start like ... like as being the captain one of the big things is ... like being a bridge between like our play – the players and the coach ... like you’re kind of the voice in between them both ... so ... like whenever problems come up either one way or the other you’re kind of the person who has to take it in between both ... like so you - you deal with a lot more stuff like on that side of it ...”

Other athletes described the skill sacrificing for the greater good:

“... you have to sort of take a step back and try and think of the team as opposed to just yourself personally and what you can do to contribute ... and ... it’s sort of selflessness that you have to try and give ...”

“...I think it just goes to being like sacrificing yourself for the greater good you know ... like you can’t go out and be stupid one night and you can’t just go and like – the whole team rests on your shoulders ... you know like you have to be accountable to everybody else too – just like in the workplace .... Like you have to do your part of the job but you’re expecting everyone else to too so...”

A different life skill in this category, recognizing others’ needs was addressed as well:

“...you learn to read people really well – like you know instantly if someone’s like they’re hanging their head ... and
like you know they’re not okay ... and maybe all they need is feeling like – given them a high 5 or something ... but then that translates off the court and obviously that will translate into life as well you know like you ... - I’ve had friends where like they walk up to me like you – they say hi on the phone ... and you’re like – what’s wrong? And they’re like – how did you know? ... and it’s like I don’t know ... something’s wrong... and you’re - you’re right and obviously lots of people can do that but ... I think team sport has helped me out with that a lot ...”

*Communicating with a variety of people* was a life skill that was commented on in various focus groups. Two athletes discussed this skill directly between each other:

“...Just being able to communicate ... with a variety of different people ... it’s not just like oh I can communicate only with ... This type of person but ... A team has so many different people or so many different kinds of athletes and you learn - learn how to ...approach each and every one of them ... And be able to communicate appropriately ... so ...”

“yeah that’s kind of a big thing is knowing like different respond to different things ... like ...what works for one person ... really doesn’t work for another...”
Another athlete mentioned:

"...communication skills ... learning how to get everyone to ... buy into something like a team kind of atmosphere and working together is so much better than butting heads with someone.... And you can get so much more accomplished ... so ... communication skills definitely and being able to communicate with others ... and ... get on the same level playing field as everyone else ... “

A life skill that received much attention was working towards a common goal.

One athlete explained:

"...the idea’s like there’s like it’s a – it’s one single goal ... for a group of people and it’s like do whatever you can but just get to that goal... you know so if it means that you don’t have to talk to somebody ... on the team – don’t talk to them... maybe that’s the best way to get along ... right? .... That’s it – yeah – it’s not like that you have to ... even really get along with everyone and be buddy, buddy with everyone it’s just – maybe it’s just as simple as recognizing like you just say hi to this one guy ... and .... That’s all you – that’s as far as it goes yeah....”

A different life skill that received a good deal of attention was getting feedback.

For example one athlete stated:
"... we tend to respond to things quite personally and then tears come out once in a while so ... learning to deal with that ... and ... trying to make sure that those problems don’t arise but that you can still push each other and challenge each other ... in sort of positive ... like constructive criticism ... sort of things ... definitely ... big thing you learn about ... playing on a team sport ...

Another athlete pointed out:

"... the life skill I’ve learned is to take criticism and learn to actually use it and not get mad at yourself or get frustrated with your coach and lash back or ... do something just outrageous ...."

A common skill that came up among athletes under this category was teamwork.

For example as one athlete commented:

"... I think a lot of people who don’t play sports really don’t get the idea of how close you get with your team ... how much time you spend with them ... I mean most people ... spend most of their time with friends and family – well mostly family – we – I - I bet we all spend most of our time with – now that we’re in university ... with our team rather than our family – like our actual family ... and ... I think a lot of people actually don’t - don’t go through that ... experience and it’s really like unique experience I think – like it’s not something you can’t just ... get
anywhere – to be with – to be that close with a bunch of people ... some cases living with them ... seeing them every single day ... and ... knowing that you’re come working together towards eventually whatever goal you want to ... ... so I think that it really helps you to be able to ... interact with people because you have to do it so often .... You’re kind of – you’re not really – you can’t really choose who you’re going to hang out with ... like the recruits come in ... they’re on the team, you have to learn how to ... get along with them and be with them so much you have to get along with them .... And obviously there’s problems on every team – whatever but – for the most part I think most teams are kind of – they have that unique culture and everyone goes towards that culture of how things are supposed to be around here and this is the way we do things ... the right way to do things so ... just being able to do that – I think is like a huge skill adjusting – being flexible to other people.... Is a big thing ...”

Another athlete explained:

“...again playing hockey and a lot of teamwork and both on and off the ice a lot of it has to do with communication .... A huge part of it is communication but just working others on and off the ice and learning how to motivate each other ... and learning
how to work together and ... all kinds of stuff like that ... so a lot of team work ...”

A different athlete recalled:

“...this summer ... I was ... downtown in like an office setting ... and ... I ... didn’t think it would ever happen but I sat beside the person I dreaded the most ... that the most I’ve ever met in my life ... I didn’t like ... it’s really harsh to say this and I’m sorry if I’m coming across as like ... a really negative person but ... it’s just one of those people that like we just clashed and I ... maybe you should – I don’t know maybe I just clashed more with her than anything else but .... I just kinda put it past me that ... I had like that ... we didn’t really get along that well and ... so on but it was because of like team settings and stuff where you learn sports and competing throughout that you can’t really get anywhere with – as like one person – you have to work as a team and ... it’s through teams like team coercion that you’ll get success so ... that was just one example that I had with working with somebody but ...”

An alike life skill, *working with others you don’t like* was acknowledged:

“...conflict on teams is like a constant problem ... because like ... you’re stuck with someone for 5 years – potentially – who you just don’t like – or you know and like maybe you do like them – maybe you love half your team and there’s just one
person and you have to figure out how you’re going to figure that out ... like how you’re going to work that out ... because you don’t get to overtly not like people on your team – it doesn’t work like that so ... I think that’s a huge life skill – is learning to deal with people that you don’t necessarily – you – love or want to be with all the time ...

Many athletes referred to the skill dealing with many types of people. For example one athlete reported:

“.... The season our coach also coached the junior national team and they were at the world cup .... And three of our key obviously members of our team ... and ... our coach were gone for almost our first month ... of season and our season’s only like just over 2 months long so ...I think a lot of like the communication and learning to deal with people was really important in that time because we had ... 8 rookies, no real coach ... and we had to kind of pull through ourselves ... so it was really – it was really cool like ... the way we got to sort of help each other ... out and stuff ....”

Identity Development/Purpose in Life Skills (ID/PILS)

There were numerous life skills that surfaced under the Identity Development/Purpose in Life Skills (ID/PILS) category. For example confidence was a life skill that was often referred to. One athlete confirmed:
"... confidence.... Like I was pretty shy person you know ... through elementary school and high school ... and ... just being in sports ...and being like around people – interacting ... I guess it just made me more open and ... like I don’t ... being around ... and just .... Cross-country and track ... like I guess pretty much individual .... So you’re always ... I’ve been on so many different teams ... and I’ve had to be around so many different people that it just – I find now it’s easier to be thrown into a group like this where you don’t know ...”

Another athlete acknowledged being open-minded:

"... I have gained a lot more open-mindedness ... and just ... yeah my - my outlook on life is that ... like not really judging people and - and being open-minded about everything ... and you know giving everyone a chance and that kind of thing...”

One athlete discussed two life skills together persistence and dedication:

"...probably the - the most important skill I’ve learned from - from playing sport all my life is that ... it requires dedication and persistence ... to succeed – you have to be committed to what you’re doing or else you’re not going to achieve what you want ... and ... you have to be fully and totally committed to - to that process no matter what ... whatever challenges and adversity you face so ...."
Another athlete also reported dedication:

"...like in terms of dedication ... examples would be ... you know just 6 am practices or something like and you just don’t want to go ... and you don’t want to get up in the morning but you have to ... and you know – you know it’s going to pay off eventually but ... at the time it sucks and - and it’s just like the last thing you want to do – especially when you know you have exams coming and you’re practicing and you know you’re not thinking about practice as so much as you know what’s coming up on your place and how busy your schedule is so ... but yeah .... It all relates – I mean those are something that there’s dedication ... or even in the you know in the summer training hard ... being in the gym six days a week ... And - and ... You know fulfilling those time commitments is a big part of - of ... the off ice training but it’s important to you know to reach that success that every player wants so ... that’s in terms of dedication ..."

One athlete described the skill of patience:

"...I think a lot of it is patience too ... so ... Knowing that if you’re working at something it’s not going to come right away but .... You gotta just keep putting in the time and ... And eventually it will come knowing that – knowing it will come like – some people put in a lot of time ... and ... they’ll just give up
because they don’t see anything’s happening for them but I
think with sport – we’ve all put in a lot of time ... and then
we’ve seen results in the long run or seen something like maybe
... a player went all through high school ... and college and
didn’t win a championship ... and kept working harder and got
... to the university level and won a championship and ... and
from that he learned ... you know ... okay at the beginning I
didn’t get anything out of it ... but at the very end you know
there’s something bigger – so just ... patience and time ...”

**Competitiveness** was another life skill mentioned by multiple athletes. One athlete
participant in particular remarked:

“... one of the first things I thought was just .... Just about my
idea of competitiveness is ... I think sports has taught me
everything I know about ... competitiveness and like I think ...
Like you can get so ... Grandiose when you’re looking about
like where competitiveness is in society like I think our society a
lot of it is based around – like in capitalist society ... around
competitiveness and like success – success in winning ... and ...
and you know like a merit based democracy and all that stuff –
like the thing about sports that I think that it’s taught me is that I
don’t believe so much that it’s about being better than someone
but it’s about you know cliché thing about you know improving
yourself ... and - and of course you want to have competition
with another person because it betters yourself ... and so I’m so happy that I’ve learned that ... because you see it in school with bell curves and stuff like that .... Where with the system ... the - the way it works is that ... it can make students or and just society in general as well can make the – one of the main ... er ... make - make the point of ... to be better than someone else ... when in reality I think it’s so much better if you’re working on improving yourself ...

The life skill being motivated also emerged. One athlete declared:

“.... Sports has kind of taught me ... like to have dreams and aspirations ... and to kind of set them pretty high like – it’s like when I go out running – I – you go out for like – if you’re going to go an hour or if you’re going to go for like 2 hours ... or whatever ... you kind of ... you do have a lot of time to sit and think about this ... and like you just think ... like a lot of the time I spend thinking about like .... Like how fast I want to run ... like what place I want to be like how I want the team to finish and stuff .... And .... It just kinda ... it drives you – it’s what motivates you ...”

Fitness/Health Maintenance Skills (F/HMS)

Specific life skills were contained by the Fitness/Health Maintenance Skills (F/HMS) category. Dealing with stressful situations was a popularly noted skill. One athlete stated:
“... when you’re trying to come back to ... to play or to be a part of the season ... you’re dealing with stress ... you’re dealing with just like overcoming both mental and physical challenges and working to get healthy...”

Similarly, another athlete mentioned:

“... when you’re trying to come back to ... to play or to be a part of the season ... you’re dealing with stress ... you’re dealing with just like overcoming both mental and physical challenges and working to get healthy .... And then dealing with the ... the pressures that that sort of brings when you’re only kind of half back ...”

A somewhat related skill, overcoming injury was reported:

“ I’d hurt my arm throwing ... and it’s just is really hard to get over the fear of doing it again – like being able to come back and throw as hard as you can even though you know you - you can but you just don’t want to hurt yourself again so it’s – it’s just overcoming a pretty big fear...in yourself to try and overcome it ...“

One athlete acknowledged taking downtime:

“You learn through the importance of down time ... because like ... (laughing) after like – bas – basketball season’s pretty long ... cause we train every day ... like all the way from September to March ... which like I’m sure you guys do too ...
but ... like ... You’re just – you’re in that team environment every day ... and so when you’re done ... like by the time you hit nationals ... you’re ... you’re ready to be finished ... When like when ... a championship goes through ... like you learn the importance of taking a month off ... cause if you went straight for five years…”

Other

Under the Other category, significant life skills emerged which did not fit into other categories. For example, one athlete noted finding peace of mind:

“...when things get tough ... outside of my sport .... I really find that my sport can be meditative or calming .... And that ... that yeah it’s - it’s ... not sure of the word but ... yeah it’s so nice when you’re having a tough day that you can always go to the gym and know that your team is there and that your sport is there and it’s – and like there’s – like once you get into the rhythm of a of a sport it’s - it’s meditative .... And ...and it just gets you into that peace of mind ....”

Another noted life skill in this category was learning mental skills. One athlete mentioned:

“...through sports also had access to like sports psychologists and for the first time working on .... Everything from like breathing techniques .... To ... positive self-talk ... and goal setting – learning to block out distractions ... so ... yeah the – I
think the further you go in sport the more you sort of learn ...
how many different resources there are ... beyond just the
technical skills that you learned in practice ... or whatever but
... Things like physical training and mental training whatever ...
That can help you... sort of achieve your goals ...”

For the life skill *focus* one athlete commented:

“...I-I found that I actually do better in school during season
because I’m really focused on just like this is the only time I
have to study – I have to do it now…”

*Secondary findings that emerged from the data*

Once the responses to the first remark seemed exhausted, a second statement from
the facilitator was made “I would like you to talk further about the life skills you have
already identified in terms of which you think will be valuable in terms of your future, for
example, career.” This remark encouraged athlete’s to reflect on the transferable life
skills learned through sports participation that might later be applied to other
environments.

I will provide the overall themes that emerged as a result of the above question.
Then specific categories and rich examples of life skills proposed by athletes to be
transferable during the current study are reported.

*Explanation of themes*

After reviewing the data it seems as though four clear categories have emerged in
response to the remark “I would like you to talk about the life skills you have identified
as being learned through sport, which you think will be valuable in terms of your future,
for example, career.” The categories are: Teamwork, Setting and Achieving Goals, Personal Drive, and Perspective Taking. Not all athletes reported each life skill falling under each category. I reported the entire list skills that emerged under each category (see Appendix I). As well, I identified examples of life skills found under the themes that emerged in the course of individual accounts of their experience in sport (see Table 5).

Teamwork

The Teamwork category is defined as life skills used in dealing with others. For example, under this category several main life skills became clear from the data including: knowing your goals vs. team goals, getting along with others and dealing with many types of people. For the skill knowing your goals vs. team goals, one athlete commented:

“you have goals ... of your own and there’s also team goals ... and how to achieve your own goals ... when .... Maybe the team’s goals ... aren’t exactly the same or they’re just .... I don’t know it’s just like ... the captains are .... Like shapes ... helps shape the way the team’s going but if it’s – but if like they’re just not going in the same direction as you as how you handle that and I guess sort of like with jobs if you have a boss that you guys just butt heads or whatever you like you realize how you can deal with it and how can still get what you want out of it ... even though you’re like underneath this person that ...”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Examples of life skills that emerged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Working with others you don’t like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dealing with conflict immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Your goals vs. team goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Getting along with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dealing with many types of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting and Achieving Goals</td>
<td>Knowing your role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adapting to different situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Setting goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Set and achieve goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dealing with pressure situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Drive</td>
<td>Keep going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hard Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Push Yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not giving up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dedication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective Taking</td>
<td>Balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Controlling your response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being able to say no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The life skill getting along with others emerged as a skill to be used after sport. As one athlete remarked:

"...taking that to the workplace too – I know my job ... they – that was one thing they told me after I got the job is that it was the personality like ... you’re – like they said I was easy to get along with and that’s what they want ... like that’s obviously want somebody in an office or in any work environment to ... be able to get along with everybody and ... what-not and I think that’s ... like being able to make friends ... as simple as it is ... if you get along with your co-workers...”

Another athlete mentioned the skill of dealing with many types of people:

"...well I think like especially one big skill that would translate into the is cause what is a team working and being able to work with other people because almost anything you’re going to do involves – there’ll be other people working with you ... like working around you doing stuff along with you so ... like learning to deal with all the different people within your team – like different attitudes, different everything is big in whatever job you take ... because there’s always going to be people around you that you’re going to have to talk to, get things from ... no matter what you’re doing so ... I think that’s a pretty big thing ... no matter what ..."
Setting and Achieving Goals

Within the Setting and Achieving Goals category, defined as life skills used to develop and execute a plan, significant skills surfaced including adapting to different situations and setting goals. For example one athlete spoke about adapting to different situations:

“...I think we need to adapt because like I was in Canada and then when I went down to the States I was just thrown into this like ... totally new training program ... like it was completely different from everything – everything was different – like every aspect ... and I had to like adapt to it like ... right away like this is what you’re doing ... like ... and so yeah I can take that into ... jobs when ... yeah it’s just like adapting to different situations ...”

Setting goals was another commonly mentioned life skill. One athlete noted:

“...I want to get better at my sport I know that I have to like you know practice a lot and go to the gym whatever like work really hard ... so and that’s similar in life like ... you get a job where maybe you don’t have like someone telling you what to do every step of the way – you kind of actually like okay – this is what I have to do to get where I’m going ...”

Another skill that materialized under the Setting and Achieving Goals category was dealing with pressure situations. As one athlete acknowledged:
"...I think sports puts you in so many different pressure situations that just ... that transfers over – I mean I find there are - are few jobs that have no pressure ... whatsoever – like most jobs you have will have some sort of pressure ... and ... having been put in that ... I think your coping skills are just ... already there – just so much better ... which is ideal ..."

**Personal Drive**

The Personal Drive category is defined as the life skills in knowing one’s strengths, values and work ethic. Some life skills that surfaced under this category included *being responsible, working hard and passion*. For example, one athlete described transferring the skill *being responsible*:

"... again when you consider about the - the sense of responsibility – like I can definitely see that ... tying in like when you when you have a family or something like that – realizing that ... you know I mean why am I working this crappy job ... well because I have to support my family ... and ... the same sort of thing in sports ... like why ... why am I working so hard – well cause people are counting on you ..."

A commonly touched upon life skill was *working hard* and equally *not giving up*. Three different athletes referred to these skills straightforwardly:

"...like in practice and stuff ... like you we practice every day – like you don’t get to sit out when you’re tired – like you keep you know you keep going ... and I just think you kinda learn
from that environment – like just constantly being surrounded by – when you’re – at your workplace ... like for us ... not ... sports is not really work but I guess it’s comparable to and like ... when you’re there you do your job ... like you practice and like you don’t sit out because you’re tired or cause you’re not in the mood or ... cause you have work to do ... like you go to practice you do your job ...”

“... maybe it’s translated from the - the field ... like just constantly being driven to work hard and you know ... and 90 percent is not acceptable ... so ... that’s one thing I’ve learned like ... and it’s translated into school because it’s helped me with studying and what-not ... and ... hopefully it translates into my ... work... my workplace and I’m ... maybe that’ll lead by example too and people will realize that ... the harder you work – you know you get out what you put into it kind of thing ...”

“...I have to be back on the ice by – before September ... be back in - in practice or game shape and so hopefully that can carry over too ... just ... not giving up ... like ... of course – like I said I had something to look forward to but ... I tried to keep positive and keep working ... at it the whole time ...”

One athlete made a powerful comment regarding the life skill *having passion:*
"...I hope it carries in you know every job I get in the future – I hope I enjoy it and you know passionate about it like ... I am with sports so ... carrying that aspect of passion in it because I enjoy it so much ... it’s the reason why I do it ... and put all the time and effort and you know if that can carry into the working world and enjoy your job that much I think it would be a great life so ... yeah hopefully it’s – hopefully it’s going to turn out that way..."

Perspective Taking

Within the Perspective Taking category, defined as life skills used to understand, react to and internalize external stimuli, the life skills that made up this theme were addressed openly by athletes such as one athlete who mentioned the skill creating balance:

"...like I think it could be applied to like work and family and social or being able to balance those and like have them all going at once and so I think that could definitely apply later ...."

Another athlete directly addressed the life skill being able to say no:

"...I guess maybe that could be transferred to the real world ... when your boss asked you to do this one more project and it’s already 9 at night ... decide type thing – like you said being able to say no like ... sometimes like – sometimes your health is more important to your life – sometimes being able to separate things is I don't know is more important I think..."
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION

One presenting problem in sport research appears to the discrepancy between some of the benefits of sport participation for athletes (i.e. learning life skills) and the difficulty many athletes have with sport career retirement. It has been extensively addressed that sport is an effective setting to learn transferable life skills (Danish 2002; Danish, Fazio, Nellen, and Owens 2002; Papacharisis et al., 2005). However, it has also been repeatedly recognized that athletes are often poorly prepared for sport career transitions (Baillie and Danish, 1992), a process which requires athletes to maximize their learned life skills. Many researchers have investigated this divergence, such as Danish, Petitpas and Hale (1993) who state life skills have the capacity of being transferred, but can only be done so if sport experiences are designed and implemented with this goal in mind. A more recent study by Papacharisis et al., (2005) further agrees that it is not just the sport participation that augments positive development, but moreover the athletes’ perception of their experience in sport that is the critical factor. These authors state that emphasis must be placed on valuable skills and attitudes learned in sport participation and how to transfer them to other settings. Papacharisis and his colleagues discuss that life skills training embedded in sport training need not happen at the expense of athletes’ sport performance rather, it can be supplementary and in turn enhance an athletes’ overall sport performance. Several studies have generated results indicating that programs with this specific focus, for instance the LDI presented by Danish and colleagues, significantly increase elite athletes adjustment to sport career termination (Lavallee, 2005). It seems as though athletes already somewhat possess life skills prior to their athletic retirement.
hence creating an opportunity for targeted interventions (like the LDI) to encourage nurturing and awareness of these skills during sport participation.

In light of the importance of athletes’ perceptions of their own sport experience and the probability that athletes already possess valuable life skills the main research question in this study posed to current athletes was: “What are transferable life skills learned through sports participation?” A secondary focus of this study was directed at asking athletes: “Which, if any, of the life skills mentioned in response to the first question could be transferred to other environments?”

The results of this study indicate that athletes are aware of the life skills they have acquired through sport participation and are able to discuss these specific skills when asked straightforwardly. The results further show that athletes are able to suggest the transferability of certain life skills to environments other than sport.

This chapter will compare and contrast these findings to the literature presented in the literature review, address the limitations of this research, the significance of the research findings, and summarize the findings of this study. I will also discuss reflections of athletes during the study, the implications for future research and the implications for counselling practice.

Comparison of Findings with Literature

The results of this study reflect much of the current literature that was cited in the literature review. Due to life skills having many conceptualizations, it becomes a challenge to be certain that each party was talking about the same skills. For example, Danish, Fazio, Nellen and Owens (2002) report life skills to be both behavioral and cognitive skills learned in a particular environment, which, with the right considerations
can be transferred and help us flourish in other environments. The athletes in this study highlighted numerous life skills that they perceived to have acquired through sport participation and when broadly considered most skills mentioned can be identified as either cognitive (staying positive, being open-minded and having confidence) or behavioral (saying what I think, working with others and delegating tasks). Furthermore, this study's finding also shows some similarities to Neyer's (1994) dissertation, where life skills are conceptualized as being conceptual and adaptive. Most of the life skills recognized by athletes in this study can also be broadly classified as either conceptual (analyzing events and performance analysis) or adaptive (dedication and discipline).

The athletes in this study specifically highlighted a wide range of life skills for example, time management, goal setting, teamwork, dealing with stressful situations, confidence, self-improvement and focus. These examples confirm the findings of several other studies (Neyer 1994, Danish, Petitpas and Hale 1993, Vealey 1988; Brooks 1984), which include these skills in their definitions of life skills regardless of how they are termed (i.e. life skills, psychological skills, or mental skills). Therefore it appears that the athletes in this study were addressing and explaining the same skills that other researchers have referred to in previous research.

The results of this study further illuminate the voice of committed varsity athletes in their experience considering what life skills they have learned through sport participation. The athletes addressed numerous life skills, however, in no particular order. Upon the initial observation of the life skills generated by athletes from the focus groups in this study, it became apparent that the life skills could be sorted into four general themes. The general clusters were decision-making skills, communication skills, self-
knowledge skills and health skills. Overall, these general clusters parallel the categories presented by Brooks (1984). Brooks developed a taxonomy of developmental life skills and showed an outcome of nine generic life skills categories. In his discussion, he further suggested collapsing the nine original categories into four proposed generic life skill categories due to some of the categories not appearing exclusively independent of one another. The four proposed generic life skill categories were Interpersonal Communication/Human Relation Skills (IPC/HRS), Problem-Solving/Decision Making Skills (PS/DMS), Fitness/Health Maintenance Skills (F/HMS) and Identity Development/Purpose in Life Skills. Due to the resemblance of Brooks categories to the findings of this study, his four suggested categories were used as a framework for categorizing this study's results.

For instance, Brooks gives examples of the descriptors that make up the Interpersonal Communication/Human Relation Skills (IPC/HRS) category including: *Is able to establish and enjoy relationships within social groups, responds to the feelings of others and is able to express one's own feelings, understands that accomplishment of group goals may require compromise and re-evaluation of personal goals and works and plays cooperatively.* Along the same lines, the athletes in this study identified skills such as: *cooperating, knowing your goals vs. team goals, having relationships and recognizing emotions in others*. For example, one athlete mentioned:

"...conflict on teams is like a constant problem ... because like ... you’re stuck with someone for 5 years – potentially – who you just don’t like – or you know and like maybe you do like them – maybe you love half your team and there’s just one
person and you have to figure out how you’re going to figure that out ... like how you’re going to work that out ... because you don’t get to overtly not like people on your team – it doesn’t work like that so ... I think that’s a huge life skill – is learning to deal with people that you don’t necessarily – you – love or want to be with all the time ...”

Clearly the life skills are a match for Brooks’ Interpersonal Communication/Human Relation Skills (IPC/HRS) category.

Brooks also provides examples of the descriptors that make up the Problem Solving/Decision Making Skills (PS/DMS) category, for example: *Sets goals and applies personally chosen performance standards to their achievement, is able to do critical task analysis as an initial step in problem-solving and balances security and risk taking in decisions.* The athletes in this study identified risk-taking, analyzing events and goal setting as some of the skills that they had learned. One athlete commented specifically on goals:

“...looking forward to something like goals I think is drilled into our heads as athletes is like – set goals – short-term goals – long-term goals like...make sure you like I don’t know...I – we’ve – I’ve been told that a million times...”

These recognized skills were compatibly placed under Brooks’ Problem Solving/Decision Making Skills (PS/DMS) category.

When the athletes in this study were asked to further discuss life skills they perceived to have learned through sport, further skills were identified including managing
emotions, recognizing strengths/weaknesses in self, creating balance and building responsibility. For instance, one athlete responded:

"...Like it can’t all be about sport... you’ll – I guess it can be for some people but... You generally kind collapse... so you learn to balance your life a little bit better..."

Likewise, in Brooks’ study examples of the descriptors that make up the Identity Development/Purpose in Life Skills (ID/PILS) category incorporated: balances mental, physical and emotional resources in maintaining effective functioning, assess objectively one’s strengths and weaknesses for various life roles, manages one’s emotions in constructive ways and takes responsibility.

Brooks offers descriptors for the fourth generic life skill category Fitness/Health Maintenance Skills (F/HMS). Examples include: Promotes physical fitness through appropriate regular exercise and dietary habits, Incorporates appropriate health and fitness activities into one’s life-style and learns to set reasonable and safe limits on physical activities. When referring to health type life skills, the athletes in this study mentioned: taking care of self, having general fitness and listening to body. One athlete acknowledged:

"...sports helped me just with general fitness, with eating, with strength, agility...just trying to make sure that like all areas of fitness are sort of covered..."

Brooks’ descriptors and the noted life skills by the athletes in this study seem akin to one another.
Brooks’ 1984 research resulted in a taxonomy of life skills and generic categories, which are consistent across the life span. This taxonomy was created by considering human development (i.e. childhood, adolescence and adulthood) and further allowed him to classify a set of life-skills into several generic categories and consider if these categories were applicable to all age groups. Unlike Brooks’ study this current study did not consider life skills across the life span but rather inquired about the acquisition of life skills by a specific target group (i.e. athletes aged 18 – 28). What was noted was that the participants in this study mentioned additional life skills such as blocking distractions; breathing techniques and being calm and meditative which were neither mentioned in any of Brooks’ descriptors nor fit under Brooks’ four proposed categories. As an example, one athlete cited:

“...through sports also had access to like sports psychologists and for the first time working on... Everything from like breathing techniques... To ... positive self-talk ... and goal setting – learning to block out distractions ... so ... yeah the – I think the further you go in sport the more you sort of learn ... how many different resources there are ... beyond just the technical skills that you learned in practice ... or whatever but ... Things like physical training and mental training whatever ...

That can help you... sort of achieve your goals ...”

This finding appears to be significant because it demonstrated that directly interviewing athletes (a specific target population) yielded additional specific sport performance life skills to Brooks’ generic life skills list. As discussed in the literature review there are
multiple benefits of sport participation (Baillie and Danish, 1992; Danish, 1983; Danish, Petitpas and Hale, 1990; Danish, Petitpas and Hale 1993). The findings in this study appear to agree with previous research and further suggest additional benefits of sport participation (i.e. valuable specific sport performance life skills can be learned, recognized and possibly transferred to other environments). Future researchers might want to further explore the discrepancy between suggested generic life skills lists and additional life skills potentially acquired by specific target populations.

The athletes in this study accredited many life skills that they perceived to have learned through sport participation as assets to their future career. The notion of transferring life skills received attention by many athletes commenting on the process of transferring skills themselves:

"...it's probably going to be ... it was probably near impossible to separate what we learn from sport and - and what we're going to do in the working world - like it's pretty much who I am and probably who most athletes are ... Is what they've learned in sport and - and life is what they're going to take into the working world and ... and be whatever they do... It doesn't matter I think - there are those skills such as dedication like you said - and even time management - it's huge and communication skills ... These are major factors for ... for succeeding in the business world ... and it's eventually what our - I'm sure most of our goals are ... is to enter that workforce at one point in our - in our lives whenever we grow up so
(laughing) but yeah I mean those are things that are inseparable between the person we are and the person we're going to be so ... right now we're students but we're going to be eventually working and in families and marriages and what-not ... and it's going to be still part of our lives ... Or my life at least and ...probably for most athletes too ... what I've seen ... so...

"...I don't see how all of them aren't really ... I know growing up my dad always told me – it's like basketball's not just a game of basketball – it's like the game of life ... like and I totally believe it ... like ... everything I've learned in basketball like ... practicing every day like ... working hard at something to get better – in - in any aspect of life ... you're not going to get better unless you work at it ... and so ... I don't know I take I take all of them ... and I ...communication skills... taking care of myself ... learning how to sacrifice ... Say your time ... like instead of watching TV for an hour you could be doing something else to ... better yourself ... Just that kind of stuff yeah ... so I - I can't see how any of them ... don't really apply that we've talked about so far...

These two comments are notable considering an ambition of this study was to address the preceding literature which supports putting value on athletes recognizing and transferring their already developed life skills for a more successful career transition. It seems
encouraging to discover that when asked directly, a number of athletes are already able to identify and discuss transferring their life skills. This finding parallels the work of Danish, Petitpas and Hale (1993) who have provided a list of life skills deemed transferable across settings (see Table 1). For example, Danish et al., (1993) list skills including: to perform under pressure; to communicate with others; to recognize your limitations and to be dedicated. This information is consistent with the findings in this study. For instance, when other athletes were asked which life skills could be considered transferable to a career setting, they revealed more specific skills such as: communication skills, dealing with pressure situations, dedication and being able to say no.

Multiple studies note that the process of athletes transferring their learned skills is not predestined and that the life skills are not automatically transferred from one environment to another (Danish et al. 2002; Danish et al. 1992). The literature further explains that the actual benefits of sport do not occur unintentionally, but rather need attention and cultivation (Danish, Nellen and Owens 1996). The description of this process was recognized and described by various athletes during the focus groups. For example, three separate accounts of this experience were declared:

"...I guess just the fact - the application - all these things we - we have from sport ... we still have to apply them through our lives and still do it you know what I mean ... I don't know ... anyone ... like an example - they've lost - like we can say all these things ... but then you have to still do it - you have to be an example you know ... like in sports..."
"...all this talk about how sport builds responsibility – like ...
like other than sports I’m absolutely brutal ... like I - I showed
up for this 10 minutes late ... (laughing) so that’s kind of kind of
proof and like ... for school and stuff like that ... I’m a brutal
procrastinator so...”

"...I’m just saying like the - the question of whether some of
that what I learned in sports carries on to outside of sports and
that aspect, can use a little more work ...”

Therefore, it seems as though the athletes in this study already have some awareness
around what the literature suggests is the difficulty of how to make use of the skills they
are already familiar with, in other environments.

Many studies speak to the troublesome athletic retirement transition and offer
possible reasons for this trying stage (Ogilvie and Howe, 1993; Miller, Ogilvie and
Adams, 2000; Greenspan and Anderson, 1995; Pearson and Petitpas, 1990). Although
this specific topic is somewhat outside the scope of this study, athletes still addressed this
concern. For example, one athlete admitted:

"I think it would be really hard ... I think cause like ... how do
you define yourself? Like when you introduce yourself to people
...Like I’m Annie I play basketball at UBC and so suddenly I’m
just Annie – like that’s - that’s a really big difference and I think
that will be pretty tough when it comes up.... And just in
relation to the like friend thing – I think sport is very much like
a relationship ... like it's you're dating your sport ... there's ups – there's downs ... sometimes you love it – sometimes you hate it and at ... sometimes – at some point there will be an end to it and for some people there isn't – they coach their whole lives...”

It is clear that the athletes in this study already have a sense of the difficulty of transitioning out of sport, an idea that is also strongly supported throughout the research (Miller and Kerr, 2002). This particular quote demonstrates what some of the current related literature (North and Lavallee, 2004) has stated regarding athletes choosing sport related jobs as future careers. North and Lavallee (2004) note that this choice by athletes is possibly due to having not gained skills and experience in areas outside of sport, causing athletes to choose careers that utilizes similar skills that were acquired during sport participation. Although a valuable point of discussion, this study is proposing to ward against athletes facing a forced choice situation (being reliant on only sport related careers) and rather help athletes recognize and identify the transferability of life skills learnt while competing. This on-going theme throughout this research joins many other studies (Danish, D’Augelli and Ginsberg, 1984; Petitpas, Danish, Murphy and McKelvain, 1992; Danish, Petitpas and Hale, 1993; Sinclair and Orlick, 1993; Taylor and Ogilvie, 1994; Danish et al., 1995; Danish, Nellen and Owens, 1996; Lavallee and Anderson, 2000, Miller and Kerr, 2002; Lavallee, 2005; Papacharisis et al., 2005) in suggesting the potential of enhancing the sport experience for athletes by creating athletic programs promoting the recognition of life skills learned in sport and their viability in other environments.
A uniqueness in the present study is the focus on the acquired life skills and their transferability by athletes who are actively competing and have not yet embarked on career termination. Most previous research in this and related areas seems to be often done retrospectively with already retired athletes (Wilder, 1999; Petitpas et al., 1992; Alfermann et al., 2004; Erpic et al., 2004). Even so, this study suggests many comparable points with the previous research.

According to what is being stated in the literature, it appears as though athletes are not only struggling to maximize their learned skills during their retirements, but also, struggling to transfer their skills to other environments. Future study paying attention to this and related areas is needed in order to link prior research to a stronger empirical base, as well as, to assist athletes and others working with athletes in more effectively dealing with the process of sport career retirement.

It has been suggested that future researchers continue to explore the career transition process with current athletes and to further investigate their readiness for change in terms of discussing and planning their career transitions. North and Lavallee (2004) suggest that there is unwillingness by younger athletes and those who perceive themselves to still have time left in their sport, to develop career plans prior to retirement. An athlete in this study independently provided one possible explanation for this proposed reluctance:

"...I think that like ... there might be some kind of ... even after an athlete quits there will be some kind of withdrawal ..."

Continued focus on this and like concerns appears important in order to assist athletes in their career transitions in light of previous literature suggesting the
termination from sport being inevitable and usually creating a crisis for ill prepared athletes (Ogilvie and Howe, 1993). Furthermore, related research emphasizes that the preparation for sport career transitions is as critical as the transition itself (Miller et al, 2000) and the transition is considerably less problematic when it is a well-planned process (Torregrosa et al., 2004).

Significance of this study

Again, the overarching issue being addressed is the discrepancy between the many benefits of sport participation (including specifically the development of life skills) and the difficult sport career retirement process characterized by many athletes being seemingly unable (or perhaps unwilling) to recognize the well developed skills they have attained and applying them to the retirement process and other environments.

There are minimal first hand accounts of athlete’s experience with life skills in their careers. The current literature seems to be scarce, retrospective, highly descriptive in nature, and further needs to be connected to a stronger empirical base. The significance of this study lies firstly in its success providing insight into current athlete perceptions of what life skills they learn through sport participation as well as which of those skills are transferable to other environments and secondly in its sound empirical methodology.

This study aspired to continue to examine the value of specific life skills intervention done before an athlete’s retirement from sport. The results of this study offer the idea that current athletes are able to acknowledge learned life skills and suggest their transferability to other environments. Secondly, the results confirm that a major benefit of sport participation is the viable opportunity for athletes to learn transferable principles and to apply them into multiple environments. These two findings alone seem to advocate
for a continued increase of value our society places on sports participation due to the opportunity it provides to promote personal excellence.

Thirdly, the results of this study add to the empirical support base by suggesting a tangible understanding of transferable life skills learned thru sport as perceived by current athletes, which may further contribute to the sport career transitions literature regarding better retirement preparation including the encouragement of life skill awareness and transferability. This study demonstrates a potential benefit of offering athletes an opportunity to reflect on the life skills they have acquired through sport participation and a chance to consider how they might apply those skills in other future settings.

Limitations of Study

This study was a qualitative study and findings represented a minimal number of participants therefore cannot be generalized to the broad athlete population. However, the value of exploring current athlete experiences certainly set the stage for future research. The last focus group did not reveal anything new, thus, it appeared that saturation had been achieved despite the low number of focus groups. Additionally, there were many commonalities among the athletes' accounts; therefore I feel this shows that these results are reliable.

A second limitation may have been due to the familiarity of some athletes with one and other (i.e. being from the same team or sport), which seemed to impact the comfort level of the other athletes in the focus group who were not from that particular team or sport. Due to this occurrence happening during one of the first focus groups, every attempt was made to keep athletes who were familiar with one another separate in later groups.
Lastly, this study may be limited by the specific sports represented and the particular life skills learned from participation in those specific sports (i.e. certain sports might teach certain life skills while others may not, for example, individual sports versus team sports). The opportunity for the group facilitator to explicitly address this limitation developed and two individual sport athletes (cross-country) responded:

"...I played every sport in high school pretty much ... like it’s not really ... I don’t think I’ve shifted away from like team sport ... I still play field hockey ... in the community and stuff so ... it’s a different level but it’s still ..."

"...there’s no concepts that are kind of – they’re the same though – you still have to motivate people – it’s almost a ... a ... even just getting people to come out like ... because some people are going to slack off and stuff ... and ... it’s kind of those underlying concepts ... and making sure that there’s kind of a good feel ... and ... and also the team aspect ... you feel you don’t want to let down the team too ... right? It’s the same way in other sports like ... So there’s that kind of ... but just – and just the cooperation I guess ... but ... There’s also cooperating and ... like in practices and stuff ... to some degree – so I think you learn the same skills but they’re not ... as emphasized or as apparent as they would be in other sports...I’d say the big difference is the performance ... like in the
individual sport it's up to you ... like there's no one ... it's not a collective thing ... it's ... you and that's it...”

It seems as though there are some differences and similarities in the skills learned by participation in individual sports and team sports, however the exact skills are still unclear. Exploring the differences and similarities between the life skills learned in individual sports versus team sports might be an interesting investigation for future researchers.

**Athletes Reflections**

Throughout the focus groups some athletes offered additional commentary regarding their experience in sport participation as well as their views on life after sport. For instance, one athlete acknowledged the *overall effect of sport*:

“...yeah I think sport can – it can it - it affected all of us positively I guess – but I mean to some people it can have negative effects too ... because ... in that like I guess I don't know how to explain it I guess but sports can just ... I guess can affect people in different ways and it’s – I’m glad that it’s affected me positively but ... we’ve also seen where it’s just been people come out of that – that practice and they’re saying you know what I’m - I’m done, I’m walking away from ... from sports, you know what I mean ... I’ll quit the team or ... and it’s kind of weird and you kind of look at them and you kind of you know you try to figure it out but ... I don't know it’s - it’s hard to ... it’s hard to figure – to figure that that out...”
Interestingly, this athlete articulates what has been found in previous research regarding the many effects of sport participation. Researchers who have studied the effects of sport have noted both positive and negative effects. For example, Mahoney and Stattin (2000) suggest that when determining whether sport participation produced positive or negative effects for participants, it is important to evaluate the level of structured activity (i.e. high or low) and specificity of the activity. It seems that researchers and athletes alike have noticed that while sport promotes many positive effects there are possible negative effects that can transpire from sport participation.

Furthermore, two athletes openly recognized the novelty of transferring what has been learned in sport to other environments:

"...I think that they triggered a lot that I ... I didn’t – sometimes maybe I didn’t really think about ... like just when you said sacrifice ... yourself for something bigger ... I don't know that’s just ... it’s such a good call I didn’t necessarily realize that – what we’re doing is..."

"...yeah it totally transfers over into the sport ... I - I never thought about that really ... too much until ... just recently so..."

Although some athletes in this study seemed to be able to overtly identify life skills and suggest their transferability, others appeared to realize this potential upon participating in the focus group. Apparently, for some athletes in this study, participating
in a focus group centered on identifying life skills, was a valuable intervention in and of itself.

Implications for Counselling Practice

Lastly, the implications of this study for the bigger issues include guiding counsellors to participate in sport psychology. These results suggesting a value in promoting athlete's awareness and future use of life skills is a specific focus, which might compliment the theoretical approach of many counsellors who are very skilled in delivering psychoeducational services (ex. goal setting, skill teaching and preparation for career transitions). Working with athletes (especially goal oriented athletes nearing the end of their sport career) seems to be a highly appropriate population for counsellors to effectively work with in terms of discovering what life skills athlete's already draw on and how to continue to effectively use them. Furthermore, the results of this study reveal that many athletes are aware of the life skills they have acquired, however, require the opportunity to acknowledge them and consider where and when they may be used in their futures. It appears as though the athletes in this study are prime candidates for psychoeducational training focused on the transferability of life skills learned through sport participation.

Summary

It has been widely acknowledged in the literature that retirement from sport or injury leading to forced retirement can be a struggle for many retiring athletes. Athletes can find themselves having distressful reactions to career transition adjustments and for this reason the process of athlete retirement is a problem that must continue to be studied.
Non-athletic retirement models (for instance gerontological theories or thanatological models) do not appear to fit the entire scope of the retirement process of athletes, and therefore it seems necessary to cultivate sport specific retirement models to help further develop an understanding of athletes and their needs when faced with this stage of change. Research seems to be focused in this direction, for example researchers are continuing to assess how athlete retirement programs and interventions can be more effective (North and Lavallee, 2004; Lavallee, 2005). What seems to be changing is the emergence of what appears to be prevention models and programs aimed at preparing athletes before their retirements by encouraging increased attention paid to athlete’s personal excellence (Miller and Kerr, 2002) and important skills and attitudes learned during sport participation (Papacharisis et al., 2005). In addition to the change in research, there appears to be an emergence of life skill development programs for varsity athletes on university and college campuses (Miller and Kerr, 2002).

This study appears to be aligned with the direction of research in that its focus was concentrated on two aspects of athlete’s perceived experience in sport participation (i.e. learned life skills and transferability of those skills). The findings of this study suggest that when athletes are directly asked to reflect on the life skills they have attained through sport they are able and willing to identify many valuable life skills and also suggest their transferability to other environments. This overall implication of these results suggests the potential substantial benefits for current athletes’ involvement in a group intervention (or multiple group interventions) at vital points of their sport career.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX D. Informed Consent Form for Participants

CONSENT FORM

What are transferable life skills learned through sports participation?

Principal Investigators:

Name: Dr. Colleen Haney. Faculty: Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology & Special Education. Title: Full-time lecturer. Contact number: 604-822-4639.

Name: Dr. Norman Amundson. Faculty: Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology & Special Education. Title: Professor. Contact number: 604-822-6757.

Co-Investigator:

Name: Sumerlee Samuels. Title: M.A. student. Faculty: Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology & Special Education, University of British Columbia. Contact number: 604-822-4639. This research is for a graduate thesis.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of athletes who are currently competing in sport. The specific information accessed will be used to identify transferable life skills that athletes have learned via sports participation. By directly asking the athletes, understanding the importance of these particular skills during athletes’ future career transitions can be explored. Through this study it is intended to access information that will benefit athletes from the realization that skills learned in sport are transferable to the rest of their lives.
**Study Procedures:** Focus groups will be conducted at UBC campus in order to explore transferable life skills that athletes have learned through sport participation. Each group will be audio taped and transcribed. Focus groups will take approximately 60 minutes. Immediately after the focus group discussion, participants will be asked to fill out a demographic questionnaire, which will take approximately 10 minutes.

**Confidentiality:** Participants will be asked to keep the information discussed confidential. However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in a group format. Any subject identity information resulting from this research study will be kept strictly confidential. All audiotapes and transcripts of the interviews will be kept in a locked filing cabinet, and be identified by pseudonym only. Data will not be kept on a computer hard disk. Participants will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study.

**Contact:** Any questions or desired further information with respect to this study may be directed to Dr. Colleen Haney 604-822-4639 (answering service is available). Concerns about treatment or rights as a research participant, may be directed to the Research Subject Information Line at the University of British Columbia at 604-822-8598.

**Consent:**

- Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy.
- You understand that results from this study and specific quotations will be used for the completion of Sumerlee Samuels’s M.A. thesis and may also be used for subsequent professional publication.

- You understand that you will not be paid for your participation, and that you may request a summary of the final results once the study is completed.

- Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

- Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

______________________________  ______________________________
Participant Signature            Date

______________________________  ______________________________
Witness Signature                Date

* If you would like a summary of the results of this study please indicate so here:

☐ Yes, I would like to receive a summary of results.

Contact information: __________________________________________

☐ No, I would not like to receive a summary of results.
APPENDIX E. Demographic Questionnaire

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

The following information is meant to provide a description of the people who took part in this study. Please do not put your name on this sheet of paper.


4. Sport: __________________________________________________________________________
   □ Individual Sport
   □ Team Sport

5. Ranking on team (e.g. 3 of 10) (if applicable): ________________________________

6. Role on team (e.g. Captain) (if applicable): ______________________________________

7. Hours a week dedicated to sport: ________  8. Highest level of competition: __________

9. How much longer do you intend to keep playing at this level? ___________

10. Do you intend to play at a higher level? 
      □ Yes  □ No

11. Do you intend to play at a lower level?  
      □ Yes  □ No

12. What do you intend to do when you are “finished” your sport? _______________________

13. Is continuing to play your sport one of your career options? _______________________

14. How dedicated are you to playing your sport?

      1  2  3  4  5
      Not at all dedicated  A little dedicated  Sort of dedicated  Dedicated  Very dedicated

15. How hard would it be for you to quit your sport?

      1  2  3  4  5
      Not at all hard  A little hard  Sort of hard  Hard  Very hard
16. How determined are you to keep playing your sport?

1  2  3  4  5
Not at all determined  A little determined  Sort of determined  Determined  Very Determined

17. What would you be willing to do to keep playing your sport?

1  2  3  4  5
Nothing at all  A few things  Some things  Many things  A lot of things

18. How much of your time have you put into playing your sport this season?

1  2  3  4  5
None  A little  Some  Pretty much  Very much

19. How much effort have you put into playing your sport this season?

1  2  3  4  5
None  A little  Some  Pretty much  Very much

20. How much of your own money have you put into playing your sport this season for things like entrance fees or equipment?

1  2  3  4  5
None  A little  Some  Pretty much  Very much
APPENDIX F. List of Resources

LIST OF RESOURCES

UBC Student Services – Counselling Services

Address: 1040-1874 East Mall, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z1
Tel: (604) 822-3811
Web: http://students.ubc.ca/counselling

UBC Life & Career Centre

Address: UBC Robson Square, 800 Robson Street, Plaza Level Vancouver, BC V6Z 3B7
Tel: (604) 822-8585
Web: www.lifeandcareer.ubc.ca
APPENDIX G. Orienting Statement

Orienting Statement:

I would like you to talk about some of the life skills you have learned through participating in sport. Life skills are defined as transferable behaviors and skills (i.e. abilities learned in one role that can be used in another role).

Life Skill examples: To perform under pressure, to be organized, to meet challenges, to communicate with others, etc.

Can you explain that more in depth?

Can you give an example of how you learned that skill?

Which, if any, of the skills we discussed do you see as transferable and as possible assets to your future?

What does it mean to you to be “finished” with your sport?
### APPENDIX H. Life Skills Learned Through Sport Participation In Categories

**LIFE SKILLS LEARNED THROUGH SPORT PARTICIPATION IN CATEGORIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROBLEM-SOLVING/DECISION MAKING (PS/DMS)</th>
<th>INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION/HUMAN RELATION (IPC/HRS)</th>
<th>IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT/PURPOSE IN LIFE SKILLS (ID/PILS)</th>
<th>FITNESS/HEALTH MAINTENANCE (F/HMS)</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>Group work / team work</td>
<td>Take emotion out</td>
<td>Taking care of self</td>
<td>Stress/ Relaxation Techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuality</td>
<td>Team cohesion</td>
<td>Getting emotions out</td>
<td>Listen to body</td>
<td>Calming/ Meditative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time commitment</td>
<td>Knowing the roles on the team</td>
<td>Manage emotions</td>
<td>Treat body well</td>
<td>Sport Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Working with people you don't like</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Fitness general</td>
<td>Breathing techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Cooperating</td>
<td>Determination</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Blocking distractions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling</td>
<td>Working towards a common goal</td>
<td>Talent</td>
<td>Love of exercise</td>
<td>Re-focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>Dealing with many types of people / mentalities/ views</td>
<td>Patience</td>
<td>Honest re: injury</td>
<td>Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being efficient</td>
<td>Communication in public/ groups</td>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Playing without fear of injury/ Overcoming it</td>
<td>Mental skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a training plan</td>
<td>Compromise</td>
<td>Maturity</td>
<td>Using stress positively</td>
<td>Finding peace of mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with pressure</td>
<td>Different roles with one goal</td>
<td>Passion</td>
<td>Dealing with stressful situations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing under pressure</td>
<td>Others counting on you</td>
<td>Devotion</td>
<td>Taking downtime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Execute performance</td>
<td>Your goals/ team goals</td>
<td>Open-mindedness</td>
<td>No drugs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure situations</td>
<td>Getting along with others</td>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcoming pressure</td>
<td>Making a team</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing it right the first time</td>
<td>Using feedback</td>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No second guessing</td>
<td>Getting feedback</td>
<td>Perseverance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieving a goal</td>
<td>Being close with people</td>
<td>Sticking to something</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal setting</td>
<td>Social interactions</td>
<td>Work ethic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete objectives</td>
<td>Making friends</td>
<td>Applying self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on a goal</td>
<td>Camaraderie</td>
<td>Quality over quantity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured environment</td>
<td>Having relationships</td>
<td>Mental toughness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with adversity</td>
<td>Depth of relationships</td>
<td>Mental control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcoming</td>
<td>Non-judgment</td>
<td>Mental attitude (a winning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obstacles</td>
<td>One)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushing through hard stuff</td>
<td>Interacting with people</td>
<td>Recognizing strengths/Weakness in self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing events</td>
<td>Communicating with a variety of people</td>
<td>Knowing limits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate your situation</td>
<td>Getting ideas across</td>
<td>Dealing with expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing patterns</td>
<td>Saying what I think</td>
<td>Knowing your role</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate things</td>
<td>Being open</td>
<td>Having fun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance analysis</td>
<td>Learn how to read people</td>
<td>Appreciation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing when to do things differently</td>
<td>Recognize emotions in others</td>
<td>Not taking things for granted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letting things go</td>
<td>Recognize others needs</td>
<td>Builds responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with uncontrollable</td>
<td>Learning how others work/learn</td>
<td>Being accountable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randomness</td>
<td>How to approach people</td>
<td>Selflessness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling many situations</td>
<td>How to treat others</td>
<td>Being self-critical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping skills</td>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>Self analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with what comes at you</td>
<td>Taking one for the team</td>
<td>Measure self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things not in your control</td>
<td>Team is bigger than you</td>
<td>Not comparing to others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with defeat - bouncing back</td>
<td>Sacrifice for the greater good</td>
<td>Being positive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to win and lose</td>
<td>Being supportive and listening</td>
<td>Taking things in stride</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting things in perspective</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>To not care so much</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realizing the big perspective</td>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td>Open mindedness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusting</td>
<td>Being liked</td>
<td>Needing feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapting to new situations</td>
<td>To lie</td>
<td>Saying no</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Not taking things personally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work habits</td>
<td>Boundary setting</td>
<td>Trying new things/new views</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing 100%</td>
<td>Common Interests with others</td>
<td>Thick skin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working when others aren’t</td>
<td>Becoming un-shy</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working smarter not harder</td>
<td>Pick your battles</td>
<td>Ego</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not being scared of an outcome</td>
<td>Dealing with poor attitudes</td>
<td>How you view yourself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk taking</td>
<td>Patch things up</td>
<td>Belief in self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>Working through things with teammates</td>
<td>Self-talk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facing consequences</td>
<td>Delegating</td>
<td>Realizing when you are learning something</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking/giving orders</td>
<td>Knowing what’s important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivating others</td>
<td>Importance of school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping track of others</td>
<td>Dealing with success and failure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning from superiors</td>
<td>Overcoming nerves</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a role model</td>
<td>Dealing with disappointment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with many skill levels</td>
<td>Overcoming mental barriers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with superiors</td>
<td>Drive to be better</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor</td>
<td>Pushing self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Self improvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a teacher</td>
<td>Competitiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminating jealousy of teammates</td>
<td>Being the best</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging against others</td>
<td>To have dreams/ Aspirations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushing each other</td>
<td>No trouble</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desire to achieve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not being one dimensional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keep you on track</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direction/ Purpose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aware of how I act or what I say</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dealing with pride and dignity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX I. Categories of Life Skills Deemed Transferable to Other Settings

CATEGORIES OF LIFE SKILLS DEEMED TRANSFERABLE TO OTHER SETTINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teamwork</th>
<th>Setting and Achieving Goals</th>
<th>Personal Drive</th>
<th>Perspective Taking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Hard work</td>
<td>Balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do your part</td>
<td>Knowing your role</td>
<td>Push yourself</td>
<td>Staying positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting along with others</td>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Being able to say no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>Showing up on time</td>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>Realizing what’s important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your goals vs. team goals</td>
<td>Setting goals</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Controlling your response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with many types of people</td>
<td>Set and achieve goals</td>
<td>Working towards success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team-work – being able to work with other people</td>
<td>Working through something</td>
<td>Putting maximum effort into it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with others you don’t like</td>
<td>Dealing with pressure situations</td>
<td>Needing praise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with conflict immediately</td>
<td>Adapting to different situations</td>
<td>Keep going</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Working when others aren’t</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not giving up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Measure own success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Passion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>